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A NIETZSCHEAN ACCOUNT OF HUMAN FLOURISHING: AFFIRMING THE WILL TO
POWER INSIDE THE CONTOURS OF FRIENDSHIP

A NIETZSCHEAN ACCOUNT OF HUMAN FLOURISHING: AFFIRMING
THE WILL TO POWER INSIDE THE CONTOURS OF FRIENDSHIP

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

By

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I examine Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of the will to power, his account of friendship and his understanding of human flourishing. Through textual analysis, I offer a new way of interpreting the will to power, as the achieving of self-realization. The process of achieving self-realization is undergirded by the satisfaction of seven existential needs that are rooted in the paradoxical human conflict between instincts and consciousness. The existential needs are the need for a frame of orientation, the need for devotion, the need for unity, the need for rootedness, the need for stimulation, the need for effectiveness and the need for self-love. While there are a variety of ways in which these needs can be satisfied, I propose a norm of satisfaction: beauty. I appropriate the ancient Greek concept of *to kalon* and claim that this notion of "action for the sake of the beautiful" is the primary normative standard that Nietzsche would advocate for how an individual *ought* to satisfy his existential needs. I then turn to an analysis of friendship in order to demonstrate its supportive role in self-realization. I claim that Nietzsche does in fact have an account of friendship, albeit one that must be pieced together from various middle works and that he presents genuine friendship as a mean condition existing between various sets of excessive and deficient vices that are constantly in tension. Friendship is the virtue that, if authentic, can bear a mutually supportive relation with the will to power. I argue that the will to power and the virtue of friendship are two primary elements that constitute human flourishing, but a particular kind of human flourishing that includes both happiness and unhappiness as siblings.

This dissertation is approved for
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Graduate Council

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Daniel and Elizabeth. Without their love and support, I would not have been able to become who I am.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BGE-*Beyond Good and Evil*

CPR-*Critique of Pure Reason*

D-*Daybreak*

EH-*Ecce Homo*

GM-*On the Genealogy of Morals*

GS-*The Gay Science*

HAH-*Human, All Too Human*

NE-*Nicomachean Ethics*

OBM-*On the Basis of Morality*

TI-*Twilight of the Idols*

TSZ-*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

SE-“Schopenhauer as Educator”

SL-*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*

WEN-*Writings from the Early Notebooks*

WP-*The Will to Power*

WWP-*World as Will and Presentation*

Chapter One

Introduction

Through the Nietzschean lens, what does it mean to flourish as a human being? If human flourishing is possible, then what are the constitutive elements of such an existence? What kind of happiness can we possibly hope to occupy in modernity, where our “new happiness” is not merely one of pleasure and comfort, but one that is representative of an excellent human life? In order for us to properly understand what Friedrich Nietzsche’s conception of human flourishing is, we must question the traditional understanding of happiness. This inquiry will involve an examination and a re-thinking of the will to power, which is one of the central themes in Nietzschean thought and one of the most often misunderstood. Comprehension of what a Nietzschean picture of human flourishing is will also require us to think seriously about the role of friendship in our understanding of the “new happiness.”

In chapter two, I construct a Nietzschean picture of human nature, appropriating Erich Fromm’s characterization of humanity as a fundamental conflict between instincts and consciousness. I offer a new interpretation of Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power as the achieving of self-realization, a process which is constituted by the satisfaction of the existential needs arising from the instinct/consciousness inner split. I then provide an assessment of the will to power in which I argue that such a process of achieving should not be understood as a moral phenomenon but as a psychological one. I make an inquiry into what the true essence of power is and how it manifests itself in multifarious ways. I then look into the relationship between power and wisdom, specifically as this relationship is presented by Nietzsche’s Zarathustra. The

second chapter concludes with a discussion of beauty, which I argue is the fundamental norm for the satisfaction of our existential needs.

In chapter three, I make a detailed analysis of each of the existential needs as they present themselves within the human condition. First, we explore the existential needs for rootedness, effectiveness and excitation/stimulation. Next, we delve into the existential needs for a frame of orientation, devotion and unity. I pay special attention to the existential need for unity, since the kind of inner unity for which Nietzsche advocates is complex and idiosyncratic. Upon improving our conception of this Nietzschean unity, we will also improve our understanding of selfhood. I then attempt to untangle two related processes: the satisfaction of an existential need and the sublimation of a drive. Finally, I examine the existential need for a relation of self-love, an existential need which I add to Fromm's set.

In chapter four, I investigate the ontological status of the will to power and ask, "Does the doctrine of the will to power express a myth or is it a truth?" In order to answer this question, I claim that we must first understand what Nietzsche takes to be the nature of philosophy: "Is philosophy an art or a science?" Because the doctrine of the will to power lies within the realm of philosophical discourse, gaining insight into the broader sphere of philosophical inquiry will enhance our insight into this particular doctrine. I then provide three models of achieving self-realization in order to make more concrete the process of self-realization. These three models are the saint, the artist and the philosopher; however, the first two models are in a sense merely steps toward the becoming of a philosopher, which serves as the ultimate model of an individual who exemplifies a will to power. Drawing from Nietzsche's discussion of higher selves in his essay, "Schopenhauer as Educator," I argue that Arthur Schopenhauer actually serves as an

exemplar of the will to power, despite such a notion not being a part of his own philosophical perspective.

In chapter five, I claim that Nietzsche does in fact have an account of friendship, and I interpret his account of friendship as a mean condition, appropriating Aristotle's notion of a *mesotês* [mean condition] lying between a plurality of vicious conditions. I discuss and reply to a few objections that might be raised against such an account of friendship and also that might be raised against this virtue ethical approach more generally. I then explain how the virtue of friendship supports the achieving of self-realization (i.e. the will to power) and reciprocally how exemplifying the will to power supports the activity of friendship. I conclude this chapter with some distinctions between erotic love, neighbor-love and friendship.

My interpretation of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power provides new insight into Nietzsche's understanding of selfhood and also offers a new way to think about the relation between power and the self. My argument that, properly understood, the will to power is the achieving of self-realization shows Nietzsche to have anticipated and be a precursor to the recognition of the importance of selfhood in social psychology, analytical psychology and psychoanalysis in the twentieth century. Exploring Nietzsche's notion of the self, and particularly the higher self, throughout this project draws closer the link between philosophy, as an enterprise that promotes becoming an excellent human being, and psychology, as a discipline that investigates the human psyche. In addition, my claim that Nietzsche does in fact provide an account of friendship provides a segue to viewing Nietzsche as a virtue ethical thinker. Because Nietzsche wrote and thought more about friendship than any other virtue, our exploration of this virtue could enhance our inquiry into the nature of other forms of excellence, both as represented

by Nietzsche and by other thinkers. Finally, the climax of this project lies in my claim that friendship is the virtue that best supports the process of self-realization, and it is this connection that illustrates just how the self-oriented aspect of the will to power and the other-oriented aspect of friendship are not only compatible but mutually supportive. It is my hope that we can leave behind the conception of Nietzsche as the advocate of an *Übermensch* who is isolated and without companions and that we can improve our own understanding of how to possibly become real selves and how to genuinely engage in friendship.

Human Flourishing: Rethinking Happiness and Unhappiness

It is an error to conceive of unhappiness and happiness as metaphysical opposites. We must first recognize the error of placing our faith in such metaphysical opposites. In this inquiry, the two “opposites” that must be exposed as such are happiness and unhappiness.¹ One dimension of happiness is the acceptance of two essential features of human existence in the natural world: suffering and death. One must yield to the reality of the necessity of suffering in human existence and to its apparent senselessness. To do otherwise and act on the impulse to place as much distance as possible between one’s existence and suffering opens the way for the tendency to create another world, absolutely free of suffering, that is more real than this one—e.g. Christianity’s Kingdom of Heaven. Such an attitude would only be conducive to the kind of (false) happiness that represents spiritual sickness and life-negation. The second dimension of happiness is the acceptance of the absence of the objective (or absolute) meaningfulness of

¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, Volume I, Sec. 1. See also Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: The Modern Library, 2000, Sec. 2.

existence and the absence of objective values. These two affirmations will likely involve a significant kind of unhappiness, perhaps even an engendering of an attitude of horror at the seemingly vast nothingness of existence. However, there is “wisdom in pain,” especially this aforementioned kind of existential pain. Of this painful sort of life-affirming attitude, Nietzsche says:

[The bold seafarers’] expression is never prouder, more warlike, and happier than it is when a storm comes up; indeed, pain itself gives them their greatest moments. This is the heroic type, the great *pain bringers* of humanity, those few or rare human beings who need the very same apology that pain itself needs—and truly, one should not deny it to them. They contribute immensely to the preservation and enhancement of the species, even if it were only by opposing comfortableness and by not concealing how this sort of happiness nauseates them.²

This pain should be understood as an existential kind and as one associated with the “stormy sea of existence,” for Nietzsche consistently uses the image of “the sea” to represent “existence” throughout the *GS*. But there is a third dimension of this new happiness that one must consider: a recognition of the degree of danger *within oneself* in not confronting the inner demands placed on one by his needs and instincts.³ While there is a danger in not facing up to these inner demands, there is an even more pressing potential danger with how an individual can satisfy the collection of existential needs that may possibly conflict with each other or which may be hidden from one’s consciousness.

So far, these dimensions of the new happiness appear to create a picture of happiness that is quite far from the more traditional conceptions of happiness. The kind of traditional happiness that Nietzsche attacks consists of a splitting off and destruction (or quieting) of the affects and a single-minded promotion of the rational faculty’s hegemonic dominance. Any conception of

² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974, Sec. 318.

³ *BGE*, Sec. 198.

happiness that equivocates happiness with reason's triumph over the appetites, desires and drives misunderstands the nature of humankind. So, the Socratic idea of a happy soul being three entities fused into one—a many-headed beast (desires), a lion (the spirited element) and a man (reason) all contained within the image of a man—but where reason rules the other two parts, is not going to give due weight to the force that emotions and instincts have as constitutive elements in the human psyche nor to the integral role that they play in the process of self-realization.⁴ Also, Nietzsche would find problematic any conception of happiness that is life-negating. Hence, the Kantian *summum bonum*, the exact correspondence of happiness with morality that can exist only in an eternal kingdom of God, which he claims we ought to strive to promote, along with its Christian forerunner would also be defunct. For Nietzsche, the traditional account of happiness may appear to be tranquil, yet such sought-for tranquility denies the affective reality of humanity's inner needs and destroys the possibility of harmonizing desires with reason, or of harmonizing instinct with consciousness. The traditional conception of happiness finds expression in several thinkers in the Western tradition, a few of which will suffice to get an idea of Nietzsche's target of attack. For Nietzsche, the utilitarian promotion of the "happiness of the greatest number" implicitly assumes an equality between all human beings and portrays an idealized leveling of any possible greatness downward to mediocrity.⁵ As such, it is the opposite of the promotion of the kind of excellence and greatness associated with genuine selfhood. As the classic utilitarian, John Stuart Mill's general happiness principle is characterized by impartiality and disinterestedness for all, yet it advocates such dispositions without questioning the psychological possibility of being completely impartial and being

⁴ Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Trans. Francis MacDonald. London: Oxford University Press, 1945, [line numbers] 588-589.

⁵ *TSZ*, "On the Higher Man," Sec. 3, pp. 399-400. See also *BGE*, Sec. 225.

completely disinterested. The utilitarian's conception of happiness also incorrectly features pleasure (and the absence of pain) as the defining criterion that constitutes happiness; however, this is a mistake, for according to Nietzsche it is the degree of self-realization, or the exemplification of a will to power, that is the central criterion for human flourishing. As we will see, a self's process of becoming is not essentially rational. The process requires a certain degree of cognizance of the reality of the human condition. It is possible that not everyone is capable of realizing a self. And the traditional notion of happiness will have to be sacrificed in order to attain a higher measure of selfhood.

Despite the long-lived promotion of such traditional notions of happiness, there is a dimension of hope and possibility for one who experiences the new happiness. Nietzsche presents the idea that in order to discover and make "one's own way" through the apparent meaninglessness of suffering and pain, that one should develop a personal relationship to one's problems. What is this uniquely personal problem? I take it to be the problem of one's own unique and personal suffering being "incomprehensible and inaccessible to almost everyone."⁶ No one can with absolute certainty understand my suffering, nor can I with absolute certainty understand anyone else's suffering. The language that one uses to describe his state of suffering can be a distorting force that prevents him from reaching all the way down to such suffering. In addition, because each action has a complex and unique history that can only be retrieved by a shared (and leveling) language, our actions are also for the most part unknowable to others

⁶ *GS*, Sec. 338. It is also the case that our most personal and profoundest joy is just as unknowable to our neighbors; however, Nietzsche emphasizes the unknowability of one's suffering by another because such the most intense kinds of suffering feel more real to us. Think of how our the suffering of one's conscience has "more reality" when it experiences shame or regret as opposed to the "felt reality" of the joy of one's conscience when it praises itself. There is an asymmetry between the felt experience of suffering and joy, one of Schopenhauer's insights that I take to be correct.

and for many human beings unknowable even to themselves. Nietzsche correctly stresses this important sense in which we are unknown to each other. He also underscores the idea that an individual must let his own suffering lie upon him in order to find his way:

...if you experience suffering and displeasure as evil, hateful, worthy of annihilation, and as a defect of existence, then it is clear that besides your religion of pity you also harbor another religion in your heart that is perhaps the mother of the religion of pity: the *religion of comfortableness*. How little you know of human *happiness*, you comfortable and benevolent people, for happiness and unhappiness are sisters and even twins that either grow up together or, as in your case, *remain small* together.⁷

In this same passage, Nietzsche continually speaks of “one’s own way”, “my own way”, “living for yourself”—all as different expressions of one and the same goal. The preceding thought about the necessity of affirming one’s own suffering as part of this new happiness presents the new happiness as the condition for the possibility of selfhood. One loses one’s way toward the realization of one’s self either by feeling a “weakening pity” toward others whereby one sees the vulnerability and fragility of the other in oneself: realizing that the suffering of another could possibly be *my* suffering; or by feeling this “weakening pity” toward oneself in which one forgets that distress is “a sister to” happiness: unhappiness and happiness are siblings in that the presence of the former makes its active overcoming a possibility. So the hallmarks of the new happiness that Nietzsche advocates are danger, distress, and the capacity for suffering but also risk, adventure and the possibility of creating a real self out of a destroyed apparent self. One upshot of viewing happiness in this Nietzschean way is that the new happiness (and its accompanying sibling unhappiness) is a disposition one must already occupy that makes possible the exemplification of a will to power and the realization of a self. It has been thought that such

⁷ *GS*, Sec. 338. For a continued treatment of this “sisterhood” of happiness and unhappiness but one that expands upon and further problematizes the religion of pity into two different kinds of pity, pity “for the creature in man” and pity “for the creator in man,” see *BGE* 225.

Nietzschean enterprise is a solitary commitment, yet Nietzsche articulates a social dimension to the process of self-realization: the virtue of friendship. On my account, the will to power and the virtue of friendship are mutually supportive of each other in human flourishing. A related upshot from adopting this view is that human flourishing cannot be interpreted as (or equivalent to) the traditional conception(s) of happiness. The activity of flourishing, hence, is more closely associated with the Nietzschean notion of “new happiness,” which involves realized selfhood rather than the traditional notion of happiness. Interpreting the relation between Nietzsche’s new happiness, the virtue of friendship and the will to power in this manner makes more intelligible his problematizing of what he refers to as the error of cause and effect and of his reversal of the moralistic and religious formula, “Do this and that, refrain from this and that—then you will be happy!”:

In my mouth, this formula is changed into its opposite—first example of my “revaluation of all values”: a well-turned-out-human-being, a “happy one,” *must* perform certain actions and shrinks instinctively from other actions; he carries the order, which he represents physiologically, into his relations with other human beings and things. In a formula: his virtue is the *effect* of his happiness.⁸

Nietzsche postulates that humankind is not in a state of progress but is possibly in a state of decline due to our unquestioned faith in truth, the negation of this world for some other “true” world and the potential nihilistic consequences that may emerge from such post-Enlightenment historical events. According to him, it is possible for a higher individual to internalize the existential grief felt in recognizing that humankind is not progressing but potentially in a slow state of deterioration, and it is in that internalized grief within a single individual that one can see and welcome a new kind of happiness to embody. So even though Nietzsche claims that he does

⁸ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols: Or, How One Philosophizes with a Hammer in The Portable Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Penguin Books, 1954, “The Four Great Errors,” Sec. 2.

not advocate a particular morality, he does appear to advocate a particular kind of egoism that makes the realization of a self possible. The revaluation of the up-till-now devalued suffering, pain and distress just is the active condition of a “happy one.” Some balance between self-contempt (of one’s former failure to affirm life and self) and self-admiration (of one’s potential *vis creativa* drawn up from his *vis contemplativa*) must be struck in order to work towards satisfying one’s existential needs.⁹ Such a precondition is the experience of “the sadness of the most profound happiness.”¹⁰ The adoption of this stance prepares the way for one to consciously tend to one’s existential needs. It is the satisfaction of one’s existential needs, rooted in the internally agonistic nature between consciousness and needs—and between need and need—that constitutes the achieving of self-realization. And it is through this achievement that one can exemplify a will to power. I argue that friendship is the virtue that can best facilitate the exemplification of the will to power, where both the embodiment of the will to power and participation in genuine friendship are mutually supportive in attaining what Nietzsche considers to be “a new happiness.”

⁹ This thought thematically connects sections 213, 214 and 301 of the *GS*.

¹⁰ *GS*, Sec. 183.

Chapter Two

Bringing Forth a Self into the World: From Existential Needs to the Will to Power

We begin with the question: What is the will to power? A number of accounts have been undertaken to render this crucial Nietzschean doctrine intelligible. As soon as one begins to inquire into what the will to power is, its elusive and ambiguous nature begins to reveal itself. But where does one even begin to inquire into this doctrine? How has the will to power been defined? Philosophers have characterized the will to power in various ways—as a drive, as a self-conscious myth, as a means to some further end, as the development of an activity pattern and as an activity of overcoming resistance. Each of these views does not seem to accurately get at the heart of the will to power's essence. I define the will to power as an existential phenomenon: one that structures the satisfaction of our existential needs and that structures how we come to value activities, things and people in the world. The will to power should be considered existential because it is grounded in the social conditions of human existence. There are a number of ways to categorize the conditions in which we exist: aesthetic, political, social, meaning-laden, psychological, biological, physical, etc. Conceiving of the will to power in only one of these fashions would be limiting because human existence is a comprehensive project in which our becoming occurs simultaneously in terms of all the above categories. So while much of my discussion of the will to power is psychological, thinking of it as a merely psychological phenomenon would be incorrect. The will to power should be defined as the following: a potential achieving of self-realization that is integral to the human condition but that is infinitely differentiated for each human being. Two provisions to the will to power are that one can succeed or fail in achieving self-realization (hence it being *potential*) and that the process of

achieving is fundamentally insatiable, in that the striving for self-realization is an ongoing process and not an end-state (hence it being an *achieving* and not an *achievement*). In claiming the will to power to be “infinitely” differentiated, I mean that it manifests itself or fails to manifest itself (with varying levels and degrees between a more complete manifestation and a less complete manifestation) in multifarious ways that are unique and particular to each human being. Conceiving the will to power as infinitely differentiated does not mean that for each person there are an infinite number of ways in which it can manifest itself—where a person could act out of the will to power in any way he chooses. As human beings we are conditioned by the limits that are imposed upon us by our contradictory nature: an instinctual life at odds with consciousness. That contradiction generates existential needs that partially determine how we engage with the world, yet the conscious dimension of our selves-in-progress makes possible the capacity to choose how we will satisfy such needs and allows what we do to be evaluated through the normative attitudes of oneself and of others. So, while there is an endless set of ways in which particularity manifests itself, any one individual’s particularity is conditioned by the structure of universally human needs.

I will employ Erich Fromm’s description of the human condition—whereby we possess a complex and related set of existential human needs—in order to expound how the will to power, as *the* human potential, is the “energy” that compels us to satisfy such needs. In focusing on those needs dealing with human relationships, I augment Fromm’s list with a new existential need—the existential need for self-love. The satisfaction of this need bears upon how other social needs may or may not be successfully dealt with. In chapter three, I reference Karen Horney’s account of the inner conflict between the despised self and the idealized self in order to explicate this dimension of the will to power. An analysis of what Nietzsche says regarding the

will to power supports my conception of the will to power as the potential achieving of self-realization that is integral to the human condition but that is infinitely differentiated with each human being. So, all human beings possess the will to power, but it expresses itself in different forms. Within each of those forms of expression, the will to power can present itself with varying levels of strength and weakness, depending upon the psychology and history of an individual and depending upon the social conditions in which she finds herself.

Human beings are both part of the natural world and are creatures who strive to become more than mere natural beings. We struggle to stay alive and remain sane, but with varying levels of success and failure. We also have a drive to feel at home in the world in which we exist. So we ask ourselves: what is our nature as human beings? To answer this, I appropriate Fromm's idea that we can only define humankind's nature "in terms of fundamental *contradictions* that characterize human existence and have their root in the biological dichotomy between missing instincts and self-awareness."¹¹ Today we exist with an ever-decreasing determination of behavior by instincts and with an ever-increasing capacity for self-awareness, reflectivity and imagination. Because of the growth of our brains (especially of the neocortex) and these capacities, we are aware of our frailty, our helplessness, our separateness, our powerlessness and our lostness. We are aware of our contradictory nature, and it can sometimes generate a feeling of horror at its unintelligibility. This problem of consciousness in Fromm's thought strikingly echoes a Nietzschean line of thinking less than a century earlier in which consciousness can be a danger to humanity if it is not balanced with action guided by our instincts. In the *GS*, Nietzsche pinpoints consciousness' late arrival on the human stage:

¹¹ Fromm, Erich. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973, p.226. See also Fromm's *The Sane Society*.

Consciousness is the last and latest development of the organic and hence also what is most unfinished and unstrong. Consciousness gives rise to countless errors that lead an animal or man to perish sooner than necessary, “exceeding destiny,” as Homer puts it. If the conserving association of the instincts were not so very much more powerful, and if it did not serve on the whole as a regulator, humanity would have to perish of its misjudgments and its fantasies with open eyes, of its lack of thoroughness and its credulity—in short, of its consciousness; rather without the former, humanity would long have disappeared.¹²

According to Nietzsche, our instincts have a kind of potency in guiding what we do, and that strength forms more of “our core” than our consciousness in virtue of the fact that it has been dominant for a longer period in our history. Nevertheless, there is a new tension that exists between our instinctual life and our conscious life, and it is the very experience of that tension through our consciousness that gives credence to its force. We feel ourselves pulled by an instinct, but through the hesitance felt by our reflecting on the instinctual pull, a multitude of new feelings of anxiety, guilt, shame and embarrassment can take the reins and be inhibiting forces preventing action. Another way of describing this tension between instincts and consciousness lies in the transition from how we experience instinctual drives to our consciousness of those drives. A distortion occurs in this transition because we are limited by language how to convey the idiosyncratic experiences of our instincts. Since we exist as social and political beings, a need for communication presents itself—a need to communicate that which can be immeasurably difficult to communicate in an accurate and meaningful way. Take the experience of fear that an individual may have. One can say that he is “afraid of” someone or something, which results from his cognitive and affective experience of some phenomenon that threatens his mental stability, his bodily integrity or his life. Nevertheless, the linguistic expression, “I am afraid of X,” is a distant approximation to what the experience of that fear feels like from the inside. Even

¹² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974, Sec. 11.

providing a very detailed description of the subjective experience of some particular fear does not come close to actually representing the experience itself. A similar problem presents itself with several other emotional attitudes, especially the supposedly more extreme ones that are designated by the words “love” or “hate.” This disparity between the instincts (and needs) and our consciousness of such inner content causes our consciousness to continually attempt to render such instincts meaningful. Thus, it is not incoherent for one to ask questions such as, “Why do you love the person that you love?” or “Why do you feel animosity toward someone that you hate?” The fact that answering such questions through reason and language is so labyrinthine testifies to the inherent tension between instincts and consciousness. I take this tension to be part of the contradiction that Fromm believes to define human nature, a notion that is already present in Nietzsche:

*...consciousness has developed only under the pressure of the need for communication; that from the start it was needed and useful only between human beings... [man] needed to “know” how he felt, he needed to “know” what he thought... Man, like every living being, thinks continually without knowing it: the thinking that rises to *consciousness* is only the smallest part of all this—the most superficial and worst part—for only this conscious thinking *takes the form of words, which is to say signs of communication*, and this fact uncovers the origin of consciousness. ...Fundamentally, all our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be.*¹³*

We are walking contradictions in that so much of our waking life is this struggle to make sense of and communicate the first-personal experiences to others. Much of this “figuring out” one’s instinctual life is constituted by the manifold estimations that we make regarding our instincts and the valuations that are already in place and shaped by those instincts. This complex relationship constituting the inner world of the soul—the battlefield between instincts and

¹³ GS, Sec. 354.

between one's consciousness and one's instincts—where meaning must be given to instinctual drives is the foundation of our existential needs.¹⁴

The zenith of this overlap between Fromm and Nietzsche on humanity as a contradiction comes to the fore in Nietzsche's examination of conscience in the second essay of *GM*. There the contradiction between instincts and consciousness has been transformed into a contradiction between instincts and *conscience* in such a way that conscience is a more sharply evaluative combatant against the instincts. Conscience, at least in its "bad" form, prevents one from acting on instincts properly and thus from acting on the will to power as it can exist in its most excellent form. "Bad conscience" originates out of the internalization of the instinct to cruelty in man.¹⁵ As we became civilized beings, the weaker were forced to live in conditions of "peace" and "security" by those beings with stronger natures. According to Nietzsche, the inability to express one's instinct to cruelty forced that instinct to turn inward, and the delight in selflessness, self-sacrifice and self-denial secretly remained tied to the power felt by the cruelty done to oneself. One legitimates such behavior by disguising it with the feeling of guilt and justifying it in terms of punishment that one deserves. The particular form of guilt associated with a "bad conscience" that is detrimental to the achieving of self-realization is the guilt experienced concerning the aspects of one's character and one's personal history over which one has no control. Clearly not all forms of guilt work against the realization of a self, for one should feel a sense of guilt if one has placed oneself in a deed that is expressive of psychological sickness or of a life-negating attitude. As we will see, operating under a "bad conscience" prevents one from satisfying the existential need of developing a relation of self-love. The "bad conscience" therefore represents

¹⁴ See *GS*, Sec. 333.

¹⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals* in the *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: The Modern Library, 2000, Second Essay, Sec. 16.

a reactive response to an instinct that is stifled, and such reactivity does not allow for a more affirming attitude towards one's instincts. Nietzsche elucidates the bad conscience as an illness arising from discord between one's evaluative consciousness and one's instincts:

But thus began the gravest and uncanniest illness, from which humanity has not yet recovered, man's suffering *of man, of himself*—the result of a forcible sundering from his animal past, as it were a leap and plunge into new surroundings and conditions of existence, a declaration of war against the old instincts upon which his strength, joy, and terribleness had rested hitherto....on the other hand, the existence on earth of an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, was something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, *and pregnant with a future* that the aspect of the earth was essentially altered.¹⁶

Observe that Nietzsche leaves open the possibility of humankind working to transfigure the fundamental contradiction that defines it. I argue that this transfiguration takes place when an individual achieves self-realization through the satisfaction of his existential needs. While we may not be able to nullify our defining contradiction, we may be able to harmonize the internal agonistic structure between instincts and consciousness. "The future" that an individual is potentially "pregnant with" is a realized self: a genuine human being who learns to live excellently with both his instincts and his conscience. Despite the first impression one might adopt upon reading the *Genealogy's* second essay, then, conscience is not an entirely bad phenomenon. The "bad conscience" should be contrasted with the intellectual conscience. As Nietzsche says in the *GS*, the intellectual conscience is the reflective ability to question one's conscience, which has a pre-history in one's instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences and lack of experiences.¹⁷ It is the conscience behind one's "conscience," itself capable of providing a reasoned account of one's pros and cons, one's valuations and one's moral judgments. The

¹⁶ *GM*, Second Essay, Sec. 16.

¹⁷ *GS*, Sec. 335. For a fuller understanding of the intellectual conscience, see *GS* 2, 319, 357 and 374.

intellectual conscience is an active faculty that involves self-examination, self-discovery and self-creation—a turn inward that makes possible a reflective and evaluative attitude toward oneself. This type of conscience is supportive of the project of “becoming who you are” while the “bad conscience” frustrates the achieving of self-realization.

Based on this existential view of humankind, Fromm elucidates a set of existential needs that are common to all human beings, and he refers to them as “existential” because they are rooted in the very conditions of human existence—incorporating our multiple levels of existence from the biological to the social. The following is a modified version of Fromm’s list of human existential needs containing the psychic needs that are outlined by Fromm and the need that I have added to it (the addition is italicized):

- 1. Need for a frame of orientation
 - 2. Need for devotion
 - 3. Need for rootedness
 - 4. Need for unity
 - 5. Need for effectiveness
 - 6. Need for excitation and stimulation¹⁸
 - 7. *Need for a relation of self-love*
- Achieving of Self-Realization**
-

¹⁸ Fromm, pp. 230-242. In addition to their presence in his *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, the existential needs are also elucidated in Fromm’s *The Sane Society*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955, pp. 27-66.

This comprehensive set of human existential needs sets the stage for us to become actors in the social conditions in which we find ourselves. As we will see, there is a potentially infinite set of drives that are extensions of one or more of the more primal existential needs. For example, in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche identifies an “instinct to cruelty” and a “will to truth,” and it might be argued that these should also be included in the set of existential needs. However, the instinct to cruelty is an extension of the need for effectiveness in that cruelty is one particular kind of effectiveness amongst many kinds and also an extension of the need for excitation in that cruelty is one particular form of stimulation.¹⁹ Similarly, the will to truth is an extension of the need for a frame of orientation and the need for devotion in that truth is one object of devotion amongst others insofar as one can be myth-oriented as opposed to knowledge-oriented.²⁰ I mention these two drives, as opposed to the existential needs, because they would be the first to be misinterpreted as existential needs in the Nietzschean corpus. Later in chapters three and four, I will unpack this set of needs in some detail and decipher whether Nietzsche himself would endorse such a list. Partitioning out the needs into groups will prove helpful in understanding how they relate to each other and how they structure the larger project of potentially achieving self-realization—and thus constituting the will to power.

¹⁹ Nietzsche discusses the instinct to cruelty (or really *drive* to cruelty) in *GM*, Second Essay, Sec. 16, 17 and 18. In these sections, Nietzsche also mentions an “instinct to freedom.” However, the instinct to freedom should not be considered to be one of the existential needs. The “instinct to freedom” is another name for the will to power, or in my language, for the achieving of self-realization.

²⁰ Nietzsche discusses the will to truth in the third essay of *GM* but especially in Sec. 24 and 27 of that essay.

Assessing the Will to Power

We can respond to the constellation of existential needs in multifarious ways. A good starting point to begin thinking about how we *ought* to satisfy our existential needs are the two distinct ways that Fromm describes in which one can cognitively and affectively respond to one's existential needs. Fromm believes that two general patterns of response show themselves, and he refers to them as syndromes: (1) the life-furthering syndrome, a productive orientation consisting of love, solidarity, justice and reason and (2) the life-thwarting syndrome, a destructive orientation consisting of sadomasochism, greed and narcissism.

We ought to be suspicious about the neatness of these two syndromes, however. The character-rooted passions may not be so easily compartmentalized into one syndrome containing nothing but supposedly positive values and emotions and an opposing syndrome containing nothing but supposedly negative values and emotions. Fromm claims that love, solidarity, justice and reason are interrelated and that they are all manifestations of the same productive orientation that he calls the life-furthering syndrome. Additionally, he claims that sadomasochism, destructiveness, greed, narcissism and incestuousness belong to the opposing life-thwarting syndrome.²¹ It is questionable whether in fact there is such a unity between love, solidarity, justice and reason, or whether there is such a unity between sadomasochism, destructiveness, greed, narcissism and incestuousness. A single human being's psychological interior could be fragmented in such a way that would not allow a neat unity of virtues or conversely a neat unity of vices. The same worry holds for a single human life stretched out over time. Could there be spheres of a person's life where dramatically different aspects of a single person manifest themselves, yet all still belong to the same person? It is possible for a

²¹ Fromm, p. 254.

person to be masochistic in his morbidly dependent personal relations but to sincerely work to promote social justice in his public life. It is also possible for a person to be greedy in his dealings in the business world, considering his competitors to be nothing more than just that—business competitors—and yet to be a loving father to his children to whom he can devote himself fully. A good fictional (and conceptually possible) example of a character who exemplifies both the life-furthering and life-thwarting syndromes in different dimensions of his life is Dexter, from the Showtime drama of the same name. As a serial-killer who is obsessed with and compelled to kill and dismember murderers, Dexter expresses the life-thwarting syndrome: he despises the fact that he cannot change the tragic and horrific death of his mother (the origin of his rage towards his experience of the senselessness of suffering), and he becomes a slave to his vengefulness, which is never sublimated but only intensified with each kill. On the other hand, as a husband and father, Dexter expresses the life-furthering syndrome in his commitment to being a moral exemplar for those whose lives he desires to enhance in a life-affirming manner. Even though the example is somewhat extreme, its extremity is instructive in exposing the plurality of roles that one can fill and the discord that can exist within an individual.

As our inquiry into the nature of the will to power moves forward, it is worth including *BGE 23* in our analysis because it refigures the doctrine of the will to power as a psychological doctrine, in that it exists within the particular lived circumstances of human existence. It is neither laden with metaphysical nor moral presuppositions. The “development of the doctrine of the will to power” is performed under the rubric of psychology, “the queen of the sciences.” Nietzsche stresses that we should not look away from a truth because it is hard to swallow. The main theme of this section is that good (physio-) psychology should not allow the moral prejudices to distort our picture of human needs and emotions. We are conditioned to think of

our drives as “good” or “bad”, but we must look past such moral prejudices to see that our drives (and needs) are not good or bad in themselves. The entities that can be “good” or “bad” at most are the complex affective and cognitive responses to our existential needs, and these needs condition the possible responses that do or do not result. Nietzsche again attacks the faith in opposites in this passage:

A proper physio-psychology has to contend with unconscious resistance in the heart of the investigator, it has “the heart” against it: even a doctrine of the reciprocal dependence of the “good” and the “wicked” drives, causes (as refined immorality) distress and aversion in a still hale and hearty conscience—still more so, a doctrine of the derivation of all good impulses from wicked ones.²²

Nietzsche gives a robust description of his account of the will to power in *BGE* 259, one that supports viewing the will to power as the potential achieving of self-realization, which is a psychological and existential process underlying organic human life. Warning his reader to be receptive to “the bottom of the matter” even though our “heart” may experience a sentimental weakness in pondering what must be considered, Nietzsche says:

...life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation—but why should one use those words in which a slanderous intent has been imprinted for ages?²³

Here the will to power is depicted in terms of growth and development even if such growth and development is sometimes (but not always) at the expense of others. Notice also that the terms in which he conveys the will to power are terms that already have a certain morally negative connotation and “slanderous intent” associated with them. Something’s being difficult to accept about the nature of a thing is not an argument against it though, especially when that alleged

²² *BGE*, Sec. 23.

²³ *BGE*, Sec. 259.

argument is based on preformed moral prejudices. Nietzsche further explains that for any individual:

...it will have to be an incarnate will to power, it will strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant—not from any morality or immorality but because it is *living* and because life simply *is* will to power.²⁴

Here we again notice that the will to power is not moral in nature, but more importantly that it is not *immoral* in nature. The process of striving to continually achieve a self that is more harmonized and realized is part and parcel of the 'who-we-are' of the human condition. It is interesting that Nietzsche uses and reuses the word “exploitation” to describe one of the possible consequences of the essence of the will to power. To exploit something or someone is to use them for one’s own growth and improvement, yet according to Nietzsche exploitation is not an immoral phenomenon:

“Exploitation” does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect and primitive society: it belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life.

Another possible consequence of the essence of life is benevolence, or improving the condition of another out of love for her own sake. Such a consequence would also assist in the process of self-realization.

Manifestations of Power

The section entitled “On the doctrine of the feeling of power” in *The Gay Science* is the first place in Nietzsche’s body of work where he explicitly frames the feeling of power as a doctrine. Here he refers only to “power” and to “the feeling of power” and not to the more

²⁴ *BGE*, Sec. 259.

specific “will to power,” but the exercise of one’s power is characterized as if it is an attempt to satisfy certain human existential needs. As Nietzsche indicates, the preservation of our feeling of power (and of power itself) has a certain prefiguring priority over any moral phenomena or moral interpretations in that benefiting others or harming others are simply ways of exercising one’s power upon others.²⁵ One feature to notice is that the desire for power is more basic than the moral phenomena of benevolence or malevolence. The concept operates on the plane of human existence and of the existential conditions determining what we need to potentially progress as human beings and not on a moral register. A second feature is that Nietzsche’s discussion of power is essentially involved with an individual’s relation to others and how we experience such relations to others. There is a close relationship between how we view ourselves and how we view our relation to others. A third feature of the doctrine as presented here is the idea that hurting others is a sign that we are still lacking power; hurting others reveals a sense of frustration in the face of this poverty.²⁶ Harming others is rooted in a lack of power in the individual who acts destructively or thwarts the lives of others. This may initially appear to be counterintuitive, yet if this is not the case, then Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler and Kim Jong Il would exemplify the highest forms of the will to power, having near completely realized selves. To further problematize the situation: if ability to dominate and control others is in fact the best way of achieving self-realization, then some of the most villainous characters from literature and film would also have to be Nietzsche’s exemplars of having the highest will to power.

²⁵ *GS*, Sec. 13.

²⁶ Bertrand Russell radically misinterprets Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power along with most of Nietzsche’s themes. He views the will to power as a feature of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* expressed in the capacity to be mercilessly cruel to all weaker human beings. See his chapter entitled “Nietzsche,” in his *History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1945, p. 766.

How are we justified in viewing the domination and control of others—as *the opposite* of or as *a failure to realize one's will to power*? There are two phenomena that illuminate this claim: 1) an individual's attitude toward revenge and mercy and 2) an individual's attitude toward fate. In terms of the first phenomenon, it is important to recognize that an act of revenge is motivated by the inability to erase the harms/wrongs done to an individual in his past. He feels powerless to change his status as a victim or as one made to feel inferior, the fact that he suffered a trauma or harm as part of his history. Furthermore, because of this past impotence and helplessness, he refuses to accept that part of his fate that he cannot possibly undo. These internal schisms—between a person and his history and between that person and his unrelenting attempts to “equalize” his own past sufferings with the future suffering of others—seem to be the crux of the spiritual weakness underlying such an individual's ability to undo that which is necessary, i.e. his own past. Nietzsche draws an analogy between the individual and the community to contrast the revenge against fate that is made external when one harms others, and the transfiguration of that attitude into one of love and/or forgiveness (The idea warrants being quoted at length.):

As its power increases, a community ceases to take the individual's transgressions so seriously, because they can no longer be considered as dangerous and destructive to the whole as they were formerly...As the power and self-confidence of a community increase, the penal law always becomes more moderate; every weakening or imperiling of [the power and self-confidence of a community] brings with it a restoration of the harsher forms of [the penal law]...It is not unthinkable that a society might attain such a *consciousness of power* that it could allow itself the noblest luxury possible to it—letting those who harm it go *unpunished*. “What are my parasites to me?” it might say. “May they live and prosper: I am strong enough for that!”...This self-overcoming of justice: one knows the beautiful name it has given itself—*mercy*; it goes without saying that mercy remains the privilege of the most powerful man, or better, his—beyond the law.²⁷

²⁷ *GM*, Second Essay, Sec. 10.

Here, the idea is that as a community develops and re-interprets its relationship to the past “crimes” done against it, the community can come to “discharge” the deeds of the criminal, relieving the resentful attitude it holds towards the past wrongs. Like the community, the individual’s ability to endure its sufferings without seeking compensation for them becomes the “measure of his wealth.” So, contrary to the view that domination and control of others is a sign of power, for Nietzsche it is in fact a sign of weakness that is grounded in *odium fati*. The individual who increases his power and approaches the creation of a self operates on a new “principle”: he sublimates his *odium fati* into his *amor fati*.²⁸ The growing wealth of the community parallels the growing wealth of the powerful individual. Justice, understood as the discharging of every crime by punishment, overcomes itself and transforms into a higher, more enriched form of justice—justice as mercy [*Gnade*]: the active liberation of oneself from the imprisoning idea that all debts must be paid back or else every debtor must be punished!²⁹

When discussing how the sadist seeks power over others as the more barbaric form of domination and control, Fromm expresses a line of thinking that is not very different from the presentation of the will to power in the *Genealogy*. Of the sadistic character-type, Fromm states: “He is sadistic because he feels impotent, unalive, and powerless. He tries to compensate for this

²⁸ The idea of *amor fati* is introduced in *GS*, Sec. 276. The phenomena of revenge against one’s past and revenge against particular others are discussed in *TSZ*, Book II, “On the Tarantulas,” in which Nietzsche suggests that the overman will have delivered himself from revenge. This notion of the overman as overcoming revenge is connected to theme of *amor fati* in *The Gay Science* and the theme of power as mercy in the *Genealogy*. For an alternative account of the will to power as a metaphysical phenomenon, see Martin Heidegger’s “Who is Zarathustra?”

²⁹ If we understand *amor fati* as a condition for the possibility of creating values and of creating meaning for oneself and *odium fati* as the condition that prohibits one from doing so, then a good example of this difference is shown by the two main characters from *The Matrix* trilogy: Neo and Agent Smith. Neo adopts the attitude of *amor fati* that allows him to “see as beautiful what is necessary in things” and thereby some possibility of “choice” within necessity. Agent Smith possesses the attitude of *odium fati* in which he only feels pure animosity toward the necessity of his past and in which he is thereby prevented from any possibility of choice.

lack by having power over others, by transforming the worm he feels himself to be into a god. But even the sadist who has power suffers from his human impotence.”³⁰ Both Fromm and Nietzsche recognize the contradictory nature of the individual who acts on a will to power in a life-thwarting manner, yet which gives rise to apparent power as opposed to a will to power.

The Self-Command of the Wise

Nietzsche’s Zarathustra provides a substantive look into the nature of the will to power as a potential achieving of self-realization in the section of *TSZ* entitled “On Self-Overcoming.” The section is addressed to “you who are wisest,” and Zarathustra says to the wisest that it is their whole will that is the will to power. This might imply several things: that those who are unwise do not possess the will to power as their whole will; that the unwise do not recognize that the will to power is the will of life; or that those who are wise know that the will to power is the very heart of life but that they do not act out of and from the will to power. Zarathustra’s three points regarding commanding and obeying may illuminate which implications we should accept. Those who are unwise are “the people”—the herd; the ignorant; those who have chosen to follow their conscience without identifying themselves with their intellectual conscience. What does it mean that the unwise do not possess the will to power as their whole will? I take it to mean that they are capable of obeying but not capable of commanding. If one has the capacity to command oneself, then one has the capacity to command oneself *to do something* or *to perform some action*. I am assuming that commanding and acting are closely intertwined such that it would not make sense to think of someone who would have the ability to command (herself or others) but

³⁰ Fromm, Erich. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973, p. 292.

not be able to act and place herself within the action. Thus, the unwise are too impotent for genuine action. The second implication also seems to be the case: not only are the unwise incapable of a full realization of their will to power but they also are not cognizant that the very heart of life is the will to power. The third implication seems to be the most curious because in it we draw a contrast between wisdom and action. Does the increase of wisdom inhibit genuine action? Does genuine action preclude the possession of wisdom? Neither of these seems to be true. A certain amount of practical wisdom is needed in order to act well and to do so successfully: knowing when to act, with whom to act, how to act, and for what causes to act. Having the ability to command oneself, and thus to place oneself in one's deed, is what is required for one to achieve self-realization in and through a deed. When one takes one's piece of wisdom, "that the heart of life is the will to power," and places that wisdom and oneself in one's action, then one has "overcome" one's *self*, by bringing a self into reality and bringing that self out of one's mere wisdom. Think of the way that an artist brings her idea out of her mind and realizes it on a canvas. Thus, progress is made in achieving a more fully realized and more fully overcome self. Interpreting self-overcoming as self-realization seems to be the most intelligible and coherent way of explicating the notion.³¹

³¹ It is not enough for Zarathustra's disciples to be "believers" in Zarathustra. As developmental learners of virtue, his disciples start out "believing" in Zarathustra, as those who imitate an exemplar without understanding why he acts in the ways that he does. Nevertheless, it is not enough for his disciples to be mere "believers" in Zarathustra. The disciples must first seek out and find themselves as a precondition of making any particular virtue "their own." Similarly, once one has realized a self and internalized an understanding of a particular kind of exemplarity, then and only then will the exemplar "return to you." See *TSZ*, "On the Gift-Giving Virtue," Sec. 3.

There is one peculiar passage in “On Self-Overcoming” that further characterizes the nature of the will to power, yet this alleged definition of the will to power can be easily misinterpreted. Life itself appears to provide its definitive stance on the will to power:

Rather would I perish than forswear this; and verily, where there is perishing and a falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself—for power. That I must be struggle and a becoming and an end and an opposition to ends—alas, whoever guesses what is my will should also guess on what *crooked* paths it must proceed.³²

Bernard Reginster uses this as a definitive passage for his account of the will to power. He argues, “Since the will to power is not simply a will to *resistance* [*Widerstand*] either, or the desire for a condition in which some striving is perpetually frustrated by resistance or obstacles to its fulfillment (there would be no ‘expansion, incorporation, growth’ unless the striving were eventually successful), we must conclude that the will to power is a will to the very *activity of overcoming resistance*.”³³ Nevertheless, the will to power is not merely the activity of overcoming resistance as he claims it is. Even though the will to power possesses the quality of insatiability, there is yet a directedness to its movement. Reginster’s use of “resistance” is somewhat on track, but it is too vague to fully characterize Nietzsche’s doctrine. What kind of resistance should an individual overcome? There can be and often is resistance against the satisfaction of our existential needs, yet the needs do coalesce and aim at a kind of goal—that of self-realization. If the will to power were equivalent to the activity of overcoming resistance, then one could be overcoming various forms of resistance but those instances of resistance could be completely unconnected. In such a case there would be no unification of the diverse

³² TSZ, “On Self-Overcoming,” p.227.

³³ Reginster, Bernard. “The Will to Power and the Ethics of Creativity,” *Nietzsche and Morality*. Eds. Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, p.36.

occasions of overcoming resistance, leaving out the importance of unity and failing to acknowledge the actual essence of the will to power, which is the realization of a self.

Beauty: The Fundamental Norm

The discussion above allows us to develop a more complex understanding of the norm operative in assessing manifestations of the will to power than Fromm's simplistic understanding of 'life-affirming' and 'life-denying' assessments. How should an individual satisfy his existential needs? Is there a norm of satisfaction that guides one toward the goal of realizing a self? The concept that plays this role in Nietzsche's thought is *beauty*. It is beauty that captures all of the dimensions of flourishing that we touched on in the preceding discussions.

The norm of beauty addresses the complex and unsystematic dynamic between the existential needs and our responses to them. First of all, the norm of beauty does not correlate with what is traditionally thought of as good. We may have to rid ourselves of standard conceptions of "good" and "evil" and replace them with the more appropriate "beautiful" and "shameful", two norms that might be considered opposites, but that both lie within the human world of experience. Nietzsche presents this idea early on in the fifth book of *Daybreak*:

As we go about in nature, with joy and cunning, bent on discovering and as it were catching in the act the beauty proper to everything; as we try to see how that piece of coastline, with its rocks, inlets, olive trees and pines, attains to its perfection and mastery whether in the sunshine, or when the sky is stormy, or when twilight has almost gone: so we ought to go about among men, viewing and discovering them, showing them their good and evil, so that they shall behold their own proper beauty which unfolds itself in one case in the sunlight, in another amid storms, and in a third only when night is falling and the sky is full of rain. Is it then forbidden to *enjoy* the *evil* man as a wild landscape possessing its own bold lineaments and effects of light, if the same man appears to our eyes as a sketch and caricature and, as a blot in nature, causes us pain, when he poses as

good and law-abiding?—Yes, it is forbidden: hitherto we have been permitted to seek beauty only in the *morally good*—a fact which sufficiently accounts for our having found so little of it and having had to seek about for imaginary beauties without backbone!—As surely as the wicked enjoy a hundred kinds of happiness of which the virtuous have no inkling, so too they possess a hundred kinds of beauty: and many of them have not yet been discovered.³⁴

We discover an individual's beauty "in the sunlight" or "amid storms" or "only when the night is falling." There is a vast range of different human beings that have the ability to exemplify beauty, and we ought not to seek such beauty only in the morally good. Since we should be looking for "beauties with backbone," it may very well be the case that the kind of beauty that should guide our satisfaction of existential needs will be associated with courage and fearlessness of some sort. Even though we ought to look to individuals other than "the morally good" for this new standard of action, we also should not think that we are to only find this standard instantiated in "the evil." We should conceive of Nietzsche's standard in the following terms: the existential needs should be satisfied not merely for their own sake but for the sake of the beautiful, and they ought not to be satisfied in a shameful way.

In order to better understand what it means to act for the sake of the beautiful, we should try to get a handle on what kind of shameful existence people can occupy in modernity. Nietzsche uses the metaphor of nakedness to indicate how we tend to view ourselves as existential creatures stripped of our moral clothing. We dress ourselves up with the notions of "duty, virtue, sense of community, honorableness, self-denial"—and yet the reason why we fashion ourselves in such a way is not to hide "human malice and villainy." The reason why we wear moral costumes is our sickness. Nietzsche says that "it is precisely as *tame animals* that we are a shameful sight and in need of the moral disguise, that the 'inner man' in Europe is not by a

³⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, Sec. 468.

long shot bad enough to show himself without shame (or to be *beautiful*).”³⁵ Thus, our shame has its basis in a kind of psychological sickness—a sickness of “profound mediocrity, timidity and boredom with itself.” One who is too weak to have a real effect on anything or who is too much a coward to begin the activity of self-realization experiences himself as impotent and naked, which causes him to adorn himself with the moral decorations of self-sacrifice and neighborly-love, for this is all that he is capable of. This kind of other-oriented attitude that stems from a shameful weakness is precisely the kind of so-called “compassion” that Nietzsche rightfully derides. Observe also that Nietzsche intimates that part of the reason for being “a shameful sight” is that “[the ‘inner man’] is almost an abortion, scarce half made up, weak, awkward.”³⁶ The image of one being an abortion signifies the following: incompleteness, destruction before wholeness, lack of full development, premature resignation. Similarly, the picture of being “half made up” conveys fragmentation and being unfinished work-in-progress. It is therefore reasonable to identify the primary source of shame as failing to realize a whole self—evident, for example, in the person who acts on cruelty rather than mercy.

With careful eyes and digging tools, we can unearth further evidence of the connection between beauty and selfhood in the section entitled “On Those Who Are Sublime” in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Who are those who are sublime? The sublime represent a type of people who are “ascetics of the spirit” and who have the capacity to make judgments—for we internally possess weights and scales and are inherently “weighers”—and to act on their judgments, yet who have withdrawn from transforming themselves into graceful beings. Perhaps only those who have

³⁵ *GS*, Sec. 352.

³⁶ *GS*, Sec. 352. The “inner man” is used in a pejorative sense here and is not the same as the “higher self” that is sought and whose identification with is praised in “Schopenhauer as Educator” and *HAH* Sec. ???.

strong wills and the potential to be even stronger wills can embody the kind of gracefulness that Nietzsche closely associates with the great-souled person. The beautiful serves as a *telos* for one for whom it is possible to achieve self-realization, a figure whom I believe takes on various labels for Nietzsche: the strong will; the great-souled person; the hero; the sublime one. The core passage in this section is the following:

To stand with relaxed muscles and unharnessed will: that is most difficult for all of you who are sublime. When power becomes gracious and descends into the visible—such descent I call beauty. And there is nobody from whom I want beauty as much as from you who are powerful: let your kindness be your final self-conquest. Of all evil I deem you capable: therefore I want the good from you. Verily, I have often laughed at the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had no claws.³⁷

Such an account of what characterizes ‘beauty’ clearly echoes our earlier discussion of power in terms of the transition from cruelty to justice to mercy. Thus ‘beauty’ refers to a particular manner in which power manifests itself. Possessing the ability to “stand with relaxed muscles” but yet to stand with an “unharnessed will” is an apt description of one who has self-mastery and the discipline to harness one’s will in a purposive way. Power only becomes beautiful when it transforms into graciousness and “descends” into concrete actuality (i.e. becomes “visible”). Kindness performed from the motive of over-flowing power serves as the pinnacle of beautiful action, or action done for the sake of the beautiful. It’s interesting that perhaps only those who are capable of great evil are capable of sublimating such coarse acts into actions which are fine and beautiful. The final sentence about “the weaklings” exhibits the same sense of shame that is present in the earlier discussion of *GS* 352, in that such weak wills are likely to be the ones who must mask their impotence with “moral” disguises.

³⁷ *TSZ*, “On Those Who Are Sublime,” p. 230.

Taking what we have gleaned from *Zarathustra* and *The Gay Science*, we discover a dual sense in which beauty serves as the normative standard for the Nietzschean project of satisfying one's existential needs in order to achieve self-realization: an action's virtue lies in its being done for the sake of the beautiful and a self becomes more fully realized as it makes itself a beautiful human being. Both senses are present in Nietzsche's thought and both senses of beauty bear a strong resemblance to the ancient Greek idea of *to kalon* that we find in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. As Aristotle says, we should start to understand the relation between beauty and excellence by first looking at particulars and then work our way toward the general conception of excellent actions as done for the sake of the beautiful.³⁸ In Book III of the *NE*, Aristotle says that there are many things of which we are afraid—e.g., loss of reputation, poverty, disease, loss of friends, death, etc.—but that death is the most frightening thing to most people. However, he suggests that the virtuous person is more afraid of shame and disgrace than dying a beautiful death, and that such a person has developed the kind of ethical perception to decipher what is genuinely to be feared and what not:

...[the courageous person] will endure [frightening things] in the way one ought and keeping them in proportion, for the sake of the beautiful, since this is the end that belongs to virtue....So one who endures or fears what one ought, for the reason one ought, as one ought, when one ought, and is confident in similar ways, is courageous, since the

³⁸ The difficulty of determining what the beautiful itself is was recognized by Aristotle's teacher, Plato. However, in the *Greater Hippias*, Socrates seems to provide clues as to what kind of thing we should be interested in when inquiring into the nature of beauty. At 294d Socrates asks Hippias whether everything beautiful—"customs and activities"—both are thought to be beautiful and are seen to be that way. Putting aside the distinction between reality and appearance, it's interesting that Socrates chooses customs and activities, rather than certain objects. And at 298b Socrates questions whether the beautiful is what is pleasant through hearing and sight, but again the kinds of beautiful things that he wonders about are "activities and laws." Such a read may support the link found in Aristotle between virtue as an active condition and beauty.

courageous person undergoes things and acts in accordance with what is worthy and in a way that is proportionate.³⁹

A person who exemplifies courage has the ability to recognize those things that are worth defending or are worth achieving, and he has the ability to endure the frightening things that threaten that which has true worth. Throughout his remarks on courage, Aristotle continuously contrasts a courageous activity as a beautiful thing with a cowardly activity as a shameful thing. Beauty thus serves as the determining feature of what is excellent, and shame serves as the determining feature of what is base. The norm of beauty and its counterweight shame are not diametrically opposed poles. Courage is an active condition that, when it done from the right motivation, will be performed for the sake of the beautiful, and one will situate oneself appropriately toward the emotions of fear and confidence. Similarly, acting under the norm of beauty will then constitute the Nietzschean becoming of a person's higher self.⁴⁰

We might wonder what the source is of norms of beauty and shame. Richard Schacht claims that for Nietzsche the “*Ur-source*” of normativity is “the indisputably real historically engendered, culturally configured and socially encoded macro- and micro-*forms of human life* or broader and narrower *Lebenssphären*, (‘spheres of life’)...in which our human reality expresses and develops itself.”⁴¹ While Schacht speaks about normativity in general arising out of our

³⁹ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Joe Sachs. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002, 1115b11-1115b20.

⁴⁰ The notions of “the beautiful” [*to kalon*] and “what is shameful” [*aischros*] play a significant role in the discussions of courage [1116a12; 1116a28; 1117a16; and 1117b9]; temperance [1119a19; 1119b16; generosity [1120a13; 1120a10; 1120a30; 1121a2; 1121b4; 1122a]; magnificence [1122b7; 1123a8; 1123a25]; greatness of soul [1123b20; 1124a4; 1125a27]; honor [1125b11]; “judgment in social relations”[1126b29; 1127a5]; and friendship [1155a15; 1155a30; 1168a10; 1168a8; 1168a35; 1168b30; 1169a8; 1169a3; 1169a25; 1169b11; 1171a6].

⁴¹ Schacht, Richard. “Nietzschean Normativity,” in *Nietzsche's Postmoralism: Essays on Nietzsche's Prelude to Philosophy's Future*. Ed. Richard Schacht. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 159.

forms of life, I believe the same can be said about the more specific norms of satisfaction of beauty and shame. Their existence and reality *qua* norms goes no further than human existence and human reality. Conceiving of normativity in this way creates a space in which Nietzschean norms can hold some degree of relativity between socio-culturally differentiated forms of life yet possess a kind of universal “what-it-is” that is shared by those varied instantiations.⁴²

According to Aristotle, the norms of beauty and shame play a role in determining when a person exemplifies the active conditions of temperance, generosity, magnificence, greatness of soul, the nameless mean condition concerning honor, truthfulness [*alētheia*] about oneself, and friendship. Concerning temperance, the virtuous person’s desires must be in harmony with his reason, “for the aim to which both look is beautiful.”⁴³ With regard to generosity, Aristotle associates beauty with the activity of giving and says that “it is more characteristic of virtue to act well than to be acted upon well, and to do beautiful things rather than not do shameful ones, and it is not unclear that acting well and doing beautiful things go with giving, while being acted upon well or not doing what is shameful goes with getting.”⁴⁴ This account of generosity resembles my account of the overflowing power of genuine self-realization, in which one desires to give out of an abundance of stored-up spiritual health. Additionally, this account of generosity also resembles Nietzsche’s account of the gift-giving virtue. Zarathustra says that the highest virtue is uncommon and useless and that it is gleaming and gentle in its splendor: “a gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue.” However, the work of art is more the generous person himself rather than what is given. Thus, the gift-giver is selfish, but his selfishness “flows back

⁴² Schacht appropriates Wittgenstein’s “language games” to describe these “forms of life” and in a Nietzschean tone calls them “value games.” I would take it a step further and refer to the kind of normativity that Nietzsche espouses as “aesthetic games” or “aesthetic-ethic games.”

⁴³ Aristotle. *NE*. 1119b15.

⁴⁴ Aristotle. *NE*. 1120a13.

out of [his] well as the gifts of [his] love.”⁴⁵ Similarly with magnificence, Aristotle says that the work that is valued most is one that is great and beautiful and that the excellence of a work is in its grandeur. The kinds of things that a magnificent person concerns himself with are on things shared in common, and “his gifts have some likeness to offerings devoted to the gods.”⁴⁶ So the work of art which the magnificent/generous person creates for others will celebrate or honor that to which a community devotes itself: festivals, music, temples—or even a warship, which indicates that even justice may be something toward which an individual can devote himself.⁴⁷

Thus we must recognize that beautiful actions require the presence of others in most situations, and they do not merely require the presence of just any others but of others with whom the person of virtue shares his life in a graceful way. The excellence lies in the giving and not the receiving, and the relation of artist to work of art is used by Aristotle to illustrate this: the parent as artist of her child and the poet as artist of his poem.⁴⁸ However, some of these virtues are self-oriented, such as *megalopsuchia* and *sôphrosunê*. Both Aristotle and Nietzsche realize that the virtuous person ought to strike a healthy balance between one’s attitude toward oneself and one’s attitude toward others, yet according to Nietzsche, giving style to one’s character seems to have a certain priority over one’s relations with others. If done in an authentically virtuous manner, one will create oneself according to one’s own artistic plan. This artistic plan involves a certain level of constraint and balance—knowing when to engage in playfulness but with a graceful spirit. This mixture of gracefulness and playfulness ought to foreground a kind of self-legislation, a form of legislating that both Aristotle and Nietzsche advocate. In one of his

⁴⁵ *TSZ*, “On the Gift-Giving Virtue,” Sec. 1, pp. 186-187.

⁴⁶ Aristotle. *NE*. 1123a5.

⁴⁷ This is contrary to what one might think of justice, as it is represented in the *NE*, for there is not a single mention of beauty or the beautiful in Book V on justice.

⁴⁸ Aristotle. *NE*. 1120b14.

concluding thoughts on how to associate with others, Aristotle states that “someone with a gracious and generous spirit will hold himself to such limits, being like a law to himself.”⁴⁹ And similarly, Nietzsche partially explicates the thought of “giving style to one’s character” in saying that it will be the strong and domineering natures that will “enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own.”⁵⁰

One may object to such a comparison of Nietzsche with Aristotle and claim, for example, that the Aristotelian account of the rational nature of the virtues is incompatible with the Nietzschean irrationalism. Alisdair MacIntyre claims that the power of Nietzsche’s position depends upon the truth of one central thesis: “that all rational vindications of morality manifestly fail and that *therefore* belief in the tenets of morality needs to be explained in terms of a set of rationalizations which conceal the fundamentally non-rational phenomena of the will.”⁵¹ This claim is mistaken. Nietzsche does not completely abandon the value of reason as a constitutive element in living well. Think of his notion of intellectual conscience discussed in the *GS*, or his praise of science and truthfulness in *HAH*.⁵² MacIntyre argues that Aristotle’s ethics and politics would have to rank with all those “degenerate disguises” of the will to power, yet it is not clear that this is actually the case.⁵³ Firstly, according to Aristotle, the person who becomes virtuous (and thus possibly flourishes) undergoes an internal harmonization between the desiring part of the soul and the rational part, where “the aim to which both look is the beautiful.”⁵⁴ This harmonization is not completely unlike the Nietzschean harmonization of opposing drives.

⁴⁹ Aristotle. *NE*. 1128a32.

⁵⁰ *GS*, Sec. 290.

⁵¹ MacIntyre, Alisdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, p. 117.

⁵² *HAH*, Sec. 237.

⁵³ MacIntyre, p. 117.

⁵⁴ Aristotle. *NE*. 1119b15.

Furthermore, choice is described by Aristotle as “either intellect fused with desire [*dianoetic orexis*] or desire fused with thinking [*orektik nous*], and such a source is a human being.”⁵⁵ Aristotle recognizes the opposition between desire and reason, and he sees the synthesis (or fusion) of such opposing parts of the soul as something to be accomplished by the virtuous person who strives to flourish. What character type exists as such a unitary source of action whereby mind and desire are synthesized?—the lover of wisdom, the genuine philosopher.⁵⁶ And finally, both Aristotle and Nietzsche have a similar understanding that the end of a genuine ethical life is not merely contemplating the good: “Or, as has been said, is the end in matters of action not contemplating and knowing each of them but rather doing them? Then it is not sufficient to know about virtue, but one must try to have it and use it, unless there is some other way that we become good.”⁵⁷ It is not entirely clear whether Aristotle holds the purely contemplative life or a synthesized existence of contemplation and action to be the best kind of human life. However, the former option of the contemplative life, which is only significantly discussed in chapters six through eight of Book X, is somewhat of an anomaly in the larger context of Aristotle’s ethic of virtue: in which the end is *energeia* [being-at-work]. The latter option of contemplation-fused-with-action gains support from the conclusive remarks at the end of Aristotle’s discussion of friendship in Book IX, where human flourishing seems to be impossible without the presence of others. The last three steps of that argument reach what seems to be a climactic conclusion about the conditions to be a *eudaimon*:

So if being is choiceworthy in itself to a blessed person, since it is good and pleasant by nature, and that of one’s friend is very nearly the same, then a friend would also be

⁵⁵ Aristotle. *NE*. 1139b5.

⁵⁶ Burger, Ronna. *Aristotle’s Dialogue with Socrates: On the Nicomachean Ethics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008, p. 115.

⁵⁷ Aristotle. *NE*. 1179b.

something choiceworthy. But that which is choiceworthy for him ought to be present to him, or he will be deficient in that respect. Therefore, for someone who is going to be happy, there will be a need for friends of serious worth.⁵⁸

This strong connection between friendship and *eudaimonia* will be further examined later in this project when the relationship between realized selfhood, i.e. the will to power, and friendship is explored.

⁵⁸ Aristotle. *NE*. 1170b15.

Chapter Three

In this chapter we will analyze each of the seven existential needs whose satisfaction under the norm of beauty serves as the foundation for achieving self-realization, which is itself the exemplification of the will to power. The first grouping of needs consists of the need for rootedness, the need for effectiveness and the need for stimulation. The second grouping of needs consists of the need for a frame of orientation, the need for devotion and the need for unity. My investigation of what kind of a need for unity arises from the human conflict between instincts and consciousness will be more thorough because it holds a considerably elevated status amongst the other needs. The special kind of unity sought for—genuinely realized selfhood—will be further explicated through an examination of how the process of sublimation handles the vast array of drives, which are extensions of the existential needs. The chapter will conclude with an inquiry into the need for a relation of self-love and how self-love differs from self-contempt and self-dissatisfaction.

The Existential Needs for Rootedness, Effectiveness and Excitation/Stimulation

Three of the existential needs—rootedness, effectiveness and stimulation—illustrate how existence cannot be tolerated without an individual having a real effect on others in the world and without being “stimulated” by others in that world. This group deals with the individual’s relatedness to the natural and the human worlds; these existential needs concern the inevitable separation from nature that occurs in infancy, and the problem of recouping the intimacy of the mother-child symbiosis. Fromm claims that the source of the existential need for rootedness is the departure of the infant from his mother’s womb, “the situation in which he was still part of nature,” but unable to return to the security and protection of his mother’s womb, each individual

becomes aware of his separateness and needs to establish new ties with others.⁵⁹ So this problem of separateness from nature and from others substantiates the need for rootedness. In terms of drives, the separated individual has an intense drive for a new emotional condition of security and protection. What would Nietzsche's attitude be toward the need for rootedness? Would he be an advocate of the existence of our desire for strong affective ties? The manner in which we are speaking of rootedness mostly appears to be a drive to be cognitively and affectively planted in some social structure that provides some sense of security and protection. It appears to be the feeling of separateness and isolation that we want to be secured against and protected from. This need makes sense, yet this kind of rootedness, whether it is being rooted in a career, a family, a city, a religious group or a political organization, does promote the tendency to achieve the kind of happiness that Nietzsche negatively criticizes: the happiness of comfortableness, passivity and resignation. Nietzsche would not endorse the satisfaction of the need of rootedness if it were responded to under the assumption that happiness and unhappiness—unhappiness as a complete absence of conflict and suffering—are opposites and that being rooted suffices for human flourishing. In a bold condemnation of such a conception of happiness, Nietzsche states:

If you, who adhere to this religion [of pity], have the same attitude toward yourselves that you have toward fellow men; if you refuse to let your own suffering lie upon you even for an hour and if you constantly try to prevent and forestall all possible distress way ahead of time; if you experience suffering and displeasure as evil, hateful, worthy of annihilation, and as a defect of existence, then it is clear that besides your religion of pity you also harbor another religion in your heart that is perhaps the mother of the religion of pity: *the religion of comfortableness*. How little you know of human *happiness*, you comfortable and benevolent people, for happiness and unhappiness are sisters and even twins that either grow up together or, as in your case, *remain small together*.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Fromm, pp. 232-233.

⁶⁰ *GS*, Sec. 338.

It may be the case that a certain kind of “uprootedness” is necessary for the new happiness Nietzsche advocates.⁶¹ When one dislodges oneself from the security and protection of what is familiar—the existing customs and conventions of one’s local culture—one thereby opens oneself up to the possibility of intellectual conflict through exposure to new perspectives. This often untraveled mode of living would further make possible the questioning of old values, their potential destruction and the occasion to create new values. Nietzsche illumines this new mode of living in the following passage where he describes the preparatory courageous human beings that are capable of the new happiness:

For believe me: the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is—to live dangerously! Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves!⁶²

Thus, we should be somewhat wary of the extent to which and the manner in which the existential need for rootedness plays a constitutive role in the more comprehensive need of achieving self-realization. We ought to not entirely reject the need for rootedness, since one condition for the possibility of a constructively agonistic existence is the possession of peers (and by possession I mean “active engagement with”). We should not just be at war with ourselves but spiritually at war with others as well. There is usually a sense of community within which a free spirit embarks to find new “truths” on the sea of existence:

⁶¹ The idea and specific term of “uprootedness” was brought to light by a helpful conversation with Nicholas Barber.

⁶² *GS*, Sec. 283. The entire aphorism is one of Nietzsche’s best expressions of what kind of a person can possibly achieve the new happiness: a condition that depends upon the contestation of ideas (and perspectives) between the preparatory human being and others and one that depends on the contestation of ideas (and perspectives) within that individual himself. This middle work is ripe with the theme of distinguishing a new happiness from the traditional conception of happiness (as complete freedom from pain and suffering and as the maximization of pleasure and restful tranquility). The related notion of a “new justice” is also introduced in 289. See also *GS* 45, 56, 289, 301, 302, 318, 337, and 343.

At long last the horizon appears free to [we philosophers and “free spirits”] again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an “open sea.”—⁶³

In addition to the community-oriented tone of this passage, there is an emphasis on what the consequences might be from the death of God for “ourselves.” Perhaps the destruction of the monolithic old truths of Christianity makes room for a richer and more diverse “sea” into which a free spirit travels. Such diversity of perspectives would then have the opportunity to be harmonized in the unity that is required for self-realization.

The existential need for effectiveness can be closely associated with the human fear of being powerless. To exist in the world and to be unable to have any meaningful impact on other individuals or on any community in any way is to exist as if one were approaching a kind of nothingness. Fromm expresses this concern when he says that “the sense of being condemned to ineffectiveness—i.e., to complete vital impotence—is one of the most painful and almost intolerable experiences, and man will do almost anything to overcome it, from drug and work addiction to cruelty and murder.”⁶⁴ How has this need developed such an enormous intensity? Fromm is operating with a more refined sense of “effecting.” He refers to the Latin of “to effect” which is *ex-facere*, meaning to bring to pass, to accomplish, to realize, to carry out, and to fulfill. He stresses the weight of this need by considering it a kind of proof that one exists: *I effect. Therefore, I am.*⁶⁵ As a caution, we should not take this as formulaic or as prescribing the essence of humankind in its entirety. I do not see Fromm making the same kind of move that Descartes made when he defined humankind to be essentially thinking, non-corporeal things: *I*

⁶³ *GS*, Sec. 343.

⁶⁴ Fromm, p. 237.

⁶⁵ Fromm, p. 235.

*think. Therefore, I am.*⁶⁶ Fromm is merely acknowledging one dimension of a cluster of interconnected existential needs. From an early age, we are forced to succumb to the necessities of nature, merely affected by others and tossed about in a sea of existence which we cannot control. As infants we are virtually inefficacious. Fromm makes an interesting claim: Because of such biological and social limitations, “it seems that man is profoundly attracted to move to the personal, social, and natural borders of his existence, as if driven to look beyond the narrow frame in which he is forced to exist.”⁶⁷ Nietzsche would stand behind the existence of such a need, but he would not attest to the two overly streamlined patterns of response to this existential calling: life-furthering and life-thwarting. As we discussed in chapter two, such categories are overly simplistic. Specifically in the relationships to others, it is not simply a dichotomous matter of either effecting love or effecting fear and suffering; nor in the relationship to things is it clear-cut choice of either affecting constructively or affecting destructively. Unfortunately for Fromm, his faith in opposites shows itself here and its presence creates an inappropriate polarization of possible responses to the need. Consider the experience of love. Though we tend to assume that it is purely altruistic and ‘life-affirming’ in the way Fromm discusses, love may just be the most ingenious expression of egoism, in which both love and greed are extensions of the same basic instinct: the drive for the feeling of conquest through possession. Most forms of erotic and romantic love contain some measure of “avarice” in them, which is caused by the lover’s desire to be “supreme” and “supremely desirable.” Being the loved one’s “all and everything” creates a feeling of pleasure in oneself: a feeding of the ego. According to a Nietzschean line of thought, in addition to the other side of this self-oriented aspect of love, there

⁶⁶ Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on the First Philosophy in Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings*. Trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff & Dugald Murdoch. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 81-83.

⁶⁷ Fromm, p. 236.

is also the lover's desire to exclude the whole world from his object of desire: "if one considers that the lover aims at the impoverishment and deprivation of all competitors and would like to become the dragon guarding his golden hoard as the most inconsiderate and selfish of all "conquerors" and exploiters," we recognize that there is an element of destruction (the destruction of competitors) within the constructing of oneself as a lover that cannot be denied.⁶⁸ We could even go so far as to say that the lover wishes to affect fear and suffering in those who might steal away his precious beloved. So, while Nietzsche would agree that there are different ways to satisfy the need for effectiveness (particularly in affecting others), we must move beyond the polarized responses characterizing Fromm's account of what we are to do with our need for effectiveness.

Another worry is that Nietzsche would likely not sanction this need as one for mere effectiveness but perhaps as one for a continuous enhancement of effectiveness. Fromm may have this in mind in his explication of these existential needs, but he does not make it clear that our need to affect is a desire to affect more strongly, more excellently. Under this consideration, Fromm ought to change his principle to this: *I effect my effecting. Therefore, I become.*

How does the existential need for stimulation serve as a constitutive element in the larger framework of self-realization? Fromm draws from observations of daily life that show that the human organism (as well as the animal organism) is in need of a certain minimum of excitation and stimulation. We are eager to respond to and seek excitation. He rightly points out that the

⁶⁸ *GS*, Sec. 14. It is important to note Nietzsche's recognition of the possibility that there is a kind of love where the "possessive craving" transforms itself into a higher form of possession—namely, friendship. It is not entirely clear in the case of friendship whether the drive is to possess the "ideal above them" or is to possess each other but in a different manner. I refrain from going into a discussion of friendship here because I will give a detailed account of it in a later chapter.

list of excitation-generating stimuli is endless and that the difference between people (and cultures) lies only in the form taken by the main stimuli for excitation.⁶⁹ This distinction between the forms of stimuli is where things get particularly stirring. Fromm distinguishes between a simple stimulus and an activating stimulus. The simple stimulus produces a *drive*: the person is driven by it. Here is an apt description:

If a man is threatened with danger to his life, his response is simple and immediate, almost reflexlike, because it is rooted in his neurophysiological organization. The same holds true for the other physiological needs like hunger and, to a certain extent, sex. The responding person “reacts,” but *he* does not act—by which I mean to say he does not actively integrate any response beyond the minimum activity necessary to run away, attack, or become sexually excited. One might also say that in this kind of response the brain and the whole physiological apparatus act *for* man...Stimuli of the first, simple kind, if repeated beyond a certain threshold, are no longer registered and lose their stimulation effect. Continued stimulation requires that the stimulus should either increase in intensity or change in content: a certain element of novelty is required.⁷⁰

As depicted simple stimuli engender a more reactive response, one in which there is not really an agent *doing* anything. A biological/neurophysiological response merely *happens*. There is no thought, no reflection and no time to alter one’s attitude toward the simple stimuli. Most of contemporary existence functions on the level of simple stimuli: on the Internet, in the media, in office cubicles and unfortunately sometimes even within educational institutions. A large portion of the economy operates on the level of simple stimuli. The mechanisms of advertising and marketing within our economy utilize simple stimuli in order to sell a product, make a profit and continually work to produce those desires for such products within us. Because it operates merely on the level of simple stimuli, commercials must reinvent themselves, advertisements

⁶⁹ Fromm, p. 239.

⁷⁰ Fromm, pp. 239-240.

must be re-fashioned and each product has to generate the appearance of novelty.⁷¹ Otherwise, we become bored with the stimuli and consumerism breaks down. Simple stimuli affect only one side of the existential split between instincts and consciousness: one merely instinctually responds to simple stimuli. There is no conscious reflectivity or conscious thought present when one unquestioningly accepts some traditional moral theme of a sitcom or when one lusts after the newest model of I-phone (2G? 3G? 4G?) from a bombardment of advertisements. To satisfy one's need for stimulation and excitation through only simple stimuli is to allow only a mere semblance of satisfaction.

On the other hand, the activating stimulus shows itself to possess a significantly different structure:

Such an activating stimulus could be a novel, a poem, an idea, a landscape, music, or a loved person. None of these stimuli produce a simple response; they invite you, as it were, to respond by actively and sympathetically relating yourself to them; by becoming actively *interested*, seeing and discovering ever-new aspects in your "object" (which ceases to be a mere "object"), by becoming more awake and more aware. You do not remain the passive object upon which the stimulus acts, to whose melody your body has to dance, as it were; instead you express your own faculties by being related to the world; you become active and productive.⁷²

Activating stimuli are those which provoke critical thinking and aesthetic appreciation, while expressing and inquiring into the complex themes associated with human life. A key feature of such stimuli is timelessness: no matter how many times you come back to it, there is always something new to discover. Some personal examples are the ancient Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; the Platonic dialogues; the essays of Montaigne; the writings of Nietzsche; the novels of Aldous Huxley; or, the contemporary rock music of Pink

⁷¹ I share this line of thinking with Fromm about the overabundance of simple stimuli in contemporary society.

⁷² Fromm, pp. 239-240.

Floyd or Tool. These are the activating stimuli that I find compelling, yet everyone should seek out those kinds of activating stimuli that are in closer proximity to her life and relative to her experience of the world.

What would Nietzsche's position be concerning this existential need for stimulation? I think that Nietzsche would attest to the existence of this need.⁷³ Further, I think that he was already cognizant of the growing prevalence of "simple stimuli" in modern living, and that that partially formed his opinions about how we are becoming "the last men." So, he would approve of Fromm's distinction between the two general kinds of stimuli. Nietzsche would go further (and Fromm would likely be on board with this extension) and argue that we can produce simple and activating responses, just as there are simple and activating stimuli. These two forms of response can be possibilities even within the same human phenomenon. A good example is that of revenge and the attendant ambiguity of that concept. Simple revenge (or "restitutional revenge") is sought out of self-preservation: one only thinks of oneself in delivering the counter-blow, not of the other and the harm done by the blow. Another side of the motivation of the first species of revenge is fear—i.e. the fear of remaining in a seemingly inferior and powerless position. On the other hand, activating revenge requires the passage of time and allows one to pre-meditatively reflect on how to direct the counter-blow:

⁷³ The 'activating/simple' distinction that Fromm makes among stimuli is not strictly analogous to the 'master/slave' distinction that Nietzsche makes between types of morality, although we might wonder what kind of valuing is happening when an individual experiences simple stimuli. It is more obvious that some kind of valuing is being performed when one is exposed to activating stimuli. It is not so obvious that valuing is happening at all in the former case of simple stimuli. It is likely the case that a more crude form of valuation takes place when one is exposed to simple stimuli, and a more sophisticated form of valuation (and re-valuation) when one engages with activating stimuli.

One needs *time* if one is to transfer one's thoughts from oneself to one's opponent and to ask oneself how he can be hit at most grievously. This happens in the second species of revenge: its presupposition is a reflection over the other's vulnerability and capacity for suffering: one wants to hurt. To secure himself against further harm is here so far from the mind of the revenger that he almost always brings further harm upon himself and very often cold-bloodedly anticipates it.⁷⁴

The motives by which revenge is sought stand in opposition to each other in the two species described here. The simple form of revenge is rooted in fear and in self-preservation, with an orientation directed more toward the self. The activating form of revenge is rooted in an absence of fear and in the drive to demonstrate a lack of fear (or to acquire the feeling of superiority). As a concluding thought, the difference in types of stimuli and the difference in the types of responses to those stimuli highlight the complexity of the need for stimulation. The more that one is exposed to simple stimuli and the more that one simply responds to stimuli in his environment, the less one *will place himself inside* his/her "deeds." However, the more that one is exposed to activating stimuli and the more one actively responds, the more he will *put himself inside* his actions: thereby contributing to the achieving of self-realization. But what exactly does it mean to put oneself inside one's deeds? This process consists of some degree of contemplation about one's potential future actions and the necessary solidification of that contemplation within one's deeds. This process can be further understood in terms of the nature of virtue and vice, for the interplay between one's desire/emotions and the (rational and affective) response to them are an expression of the existing character and give rise to how that character can be shaped over time. In Aristotelian terms, the right motives, the right reasons and the right desires must be internalized by contemplation but then externalized into action, but action in which there is no longer any hesitation but only pure willfulness. What is this

⁷⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Wanderer and His Shadow in Human, All Too Human*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, Sec. 33.

difference between the “pure willfulness” of the simple response differ from the pure willfulness of the active response? Regarding the “pure willfulness” of simple responses would be present in the unrestrained person who acts purely out of his desires or out of his spiritedness, regardless of whether his desires happened to be good or bad and regardless of what his spiritedness is directed toward. Such a figure’s “pure willfulness” is contrasted with the self-restrained person, who has bad desires but who does not act according to them. Such an inner tension prevents any sort of pure willfulness. However, the pure willfulness of the active response would be present in both the virtuous *and* the vicious persons, for both achieve a kind of harmony between their desires and their intellect. Both choose to do what they do, and the difference between them then becomes action for the sake of the beautiful (for the virtuous person) and dissipated action (for the vicious person).

Zarathustra claims that there is no reward for virtue and that virtue is not even its own reward, yet he does intimate that the “reward” for virtue, if there is any reward at all, is the realization of a self through genuine agency. Speaking to that individual who is capable of virtue, Zarathustra says, “You love your virtue as a mother her child; but when has a mother ever wished to be paid for her love? Your virtue is what is dearest to you,” and later in the same section states even more fervently, “Oh, my friends, that your self be in your deed as the mother is in her child—let that be *your* word concerning virtue!”⁷⁵ Both images represent an artistic process of creation and discovery, except that what the mother of the virtuous deed discovers is the new self that is realized and embodied through such action. There is a rough parallel between the process whereby the calm reflection of contemplation (i.e., deliberation about what to do and about what is valuable concerning each doing) transforms into the intense passion of

⁷⁵ *TSZ*, “On the Virtuous,” p. 206 and 208.

genuine action and the movement of beauty as it is associated with virtue. Speaking to those who are only apparently “virtuous,” Zarathustra begins his teaching on virtue as the personified voice of beauty—but a beauty that undergoes a transformation:

Slack and sleeping senses must be addressed with thunder and heavenly fireworks. But the voice of beauty speaks gently: it creeps only into the most awakened souls. Gently trembled and laughed my shield today; that is the holy laughter and tremor of beauty. About you, the virtuous, my beauty laughed today. And thus its voice came to me: “They still want to be paid.”

At first, the voice of beauty carefully and gently enters that soul who is capable of contemplating the nuanced differences between excellence and baseness. Upon considering what the *telos* of one’s virtue should be, whether it should be some divine reward, honor, praise or its own end, beauty playfully begins to undergo the transformation from the contemplative activity into the somewhat ferocious realization of beauty into virtue and self. Nietzsche’s Zarathustra mocks “the virtuous” who deem themselves to be so with the expectation that their virtue must be paid for. Two ways of manifesting such apparent virtue would then be operating under the expectation that virtue sufficiently guarantees happiness and/or operating under the assumption that virtue grants one supernatural reward in an afterlife. The hope for compensation undermines the true nature of the virtuous human being, whose actions are performed for the sake of the beautiful. Zarathustra continues to describe the process by which beauty manifests itself:

Alas, that is my sorrow: they have lied reward and punishment into the foundation of things, and now also into the foundation of your souls, you who are virtuous. But like the boar’s snout, my words shall tear open the foundation of your souls: a plowshare will I be to you. All the secrets of your foundation shall come to light; and when you lie uprooted and broken in the sun, then will your lies also be separated from your truths.⁷⁶

In this latter part of this movement of beauty, Zarathustra’s words, which are the voice of beauty, become fierce in the tearing open of souls as both the images of the boar’s snout and the

⁷⁶ *TSZ*, “On the Virtuous,” pp. 205-206.

plowshare suggest. The souls that are torn open are the souls within slave morality and the innards that are eviscerated are their conceptions of reward and punishment that they hold to be part of the foundation of slave morality. In the above passage, it is beauty itself that is opposed to this aspect of slave morality, which praises virtues because of their utility—e.g., to compensate for one’s impotence and thus to compensate for an inability for active self-consciousness—and which serve as pieces of the slaves’ “imaginary revenge.” Nevertheless, beauty’s uprooting of the slave’s truths and lies (as activity of contemplation) makes possible the identification of the right desires and right motives with one’s virtuous action. It remains a possibility that one embedded in slave morality can transcend his notions of “good” and “evil,” but such a transcendence would require an embodiment of beauty in one’s actions, a moving beyond good and evil. Zarathustra’s image of a dying star possesses a two-fold meaning: as the “work” of true virtue, which again symbolizes a necessary death of oneself (as a slave who is “virtuous” because such virtue is useful) that gives birth to a light that continues to shine even after the work has been performed; and as a work of art, as a child is the mother’s work of art or as the play is the playwright’s creation.

In order to improve our understanding of the relation between virtue, deed and self such that we understand the nature of the existential need for complex stimuli, we ought to consider what the weaker (or false-images) of virtue are. There are at least four ways in which virtue takes on an imposter-like form: when there is only a simple response with no reflection; when there is a mere absence of vice; when there is a negation of the natural world; and when there is no active condition present. Concerning the viciousness of mere simple responses, Zarathustra says that “there are those for whom virtue is the spasm under the scourge.” Such individuals merely react instinctively to some insult or injury performed unto them, yet their “virtue”

remains nothing more than a spasm and not an active condition. Regarding the absence of vice, Zarathustra states that “there are others who call it virtue when their vices grow lazy,” but the mere incapacity to be vicious due to apathy is not sufficient for genuine virtue. With respect to world-negation, Zarathustra says that there are others who are drawn downward by their devils, lust for their god and holler, “What I am not, that, that to me are God and virtue!” Such individuals return to the faith in metaphysical opposites, placing vice in the realm of this world and virtue in the realm of some supernatural world (Heaven). Finally, Zarathustra underscores the idea that genuine virtue is an active condition. He says that “there are others who are like cheap clocks that must be wound: they tick and they want the tick-tock to be called virtue.” Such individuals only act “virtuously” because they adhere to the dogma of some doctrine and are like mechanical animals that fail to deliberate with themselves about what course of action is truly excellent.

Here, as elsewhere in this project, I agree with Nietzsche that human action is the means by which intentions and desires are realized. The same way that a virtue cannot merely be a disposition or a state of being (and as such would not be an *active condition*), when it comes to selfhood, the potential doer does not really know what it is that he wants or intends until an intention or a motive actually becomes embodied in a doer. When discussing the nature of the self, Zarathustra makes an interesting link between the self and the body:

Instruments and toys are sense and spirit: behind them still lies the self. The self also seeks with the eyes of the senses; it also listens with the ears of the spirit. Always the self listens and seeks: it compares, overpowers, conquers, destroys. It controls, and it is in control of the ego too. Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage—whose name is self. In your body he dwells; **he is your body.**⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *TSZ*, “On the Despisers of the Body,” pp. 146-147.

This passage further illuminates what it means for someone to place himself in his deeds. An individual's intentions, desires and motives can only be concretized into a self through action. "Thoughts" and "feelings" must be embodied. So, when Nietzsche's Zarathustra says that the self "dwells" inside your body and then that he just is your body, he is expressing the idea that the embodiment of one's intentions and desires in action is a condition of selfhood.

The Existential Needs for a Frame of Orientation and Devotion

Three of the above-mentioned needs—frame of orientation, devotion and unity—foreground the urgency to make the world intelligible and to create purpose within a human life. People tend to align themselves with metaphysical, religious and political doctrines (just to mention a few) in order to generate a story within which they feel they appropriately belong and through which a life can be meaningful. Having a purpose or having a set of purposes provides an individual with a goal or set of goals. To use Fromm's expression, human beings need "a map of their natural and social world," and even if the map is wrong, it fulfills its psychological function of explaining as many phenomena as possible in order to serve the purpose of living.⁷⁸ Fromm claims that the sometimes irrational nature of doctrines and ideologies can be explained by this need for a frame of orientation. This does seem to be the case in that the doctrine or ideology with which people align themselves does not have to get at the truth or be the right one. Rather, what is sought is the *belief* in the truth of the doctrine or the *belief* in the righteousness of the ideology. Fromm notes that the more an ideology pretends to give answers to all questions, the more attractive it is; though its attraction lies in its ability to provide answers that are

⁷⁸ Fromm, p. 230.

intelligible to the individual or culture, not to answers that necessarily get the world right.⁷⁹ Nietzsche anticipates the need for a frame of orientation early in the *GS*: “Gradually, man has become a fantastic animal that has to fulfill one more condition of existence than any other animal: man *has to* believe, to know, from time to time *why* he exists; his race cannot flourish without a periodic trust in life—without faith in *reason in life*.”⁸⁰ Three clear examples of doctrines or ideologies in modernity that serve this life-promoting function are Christianity, liberal democracy and science. One or all of these make the world intelligible for millions of people: they satisfy the need for a frame of orientation. Christianity has invented the interpretation of the world in terms of “sinfulness” and the possibility of “redemption by God” to ease the pain of humanity’s impotence and helplessness. This interpretation is a consolation that provides a map for the world:

Christianity in particular may be called a great treasure house of ingenious means of consolation: it offers such a collection of refreshments, palliatives, and narcotics; it risks so much that is most dangerous and audacious; it has displayed such refinement and subtlety, such southern subtlety, in guessing what stimulant affects will overcome, at least for a time, the deep depression, the leaden exhaustion, the black melancholy of the physiologically inhibited. For we may generalize: the main concern of all great religions has been to fight a certain weariness and heaviness grown to epidemic proportions.⁸¹

Christianity thus provides an answer to the question: Why does man exist? However, its answer is the possible redemption by God for the sinfulness of man. Although the Christian perspective adopted by its priests may be ingenious, it causes psychological sickness and a life-negating attitude. This is why Nietzsche considers Christianity to be a bad mode of interpretation, not primarily because it is constituted by false beliefs.

⁷⁹ Fromm, p. 231.

⁸⁰ *GS*, Sec. 1. See also *GS* 347.

⁸¹ *GM*, Third Essay, Sec. 17.

The second example of a doctrine that provides a frame of orientation is that of the state. The two kinds of political state that Nietzsche criticizes most often are democracy and socialism. He points out that even though following such political ideologies as absolute doctrines may prevent individual autonomy and the realization of selfhood, they do provide the appearance of a strong framework of meaning:

Every philosophy which believes that the problem of existence is touched on, not to say solved, by a political event is a joke- and pseudo-philosophy. Many states have been founded since the world began; that is an old story. How should a political innovation suffice to turn men once and for all into contented inhabitants of the earth?...[That people think that answers to existential questions might come from politics shows that] we are experiencing the consequences of the doctrine, lately preached from all the rooftops, that the state is the highest goal of mankind and that man has no higher duty than to serve the state: in which doctrine I recognize a relapse not into paganism but into stupidity.⁸²

A state ideology, whether it be democracy or socialism or some other form of government, can provide *some kind of* frame of orientation, yet one who conceives of such an ideology as absolute and as the ultimate goal of humankind ignores the potentially disastrous consequences of promoting the values of “equal rights for all” and “sympathy for all that suffers.” They make less possible the existence of a self that exceeds the masses in courage, wisdom, creativity and autonomy. Such a self would always have to fight the tide of “levelization” that both democracy and socialism bring with them. According to Nietzsche, it is a mistake to think that meaning or purpose can be found in a political event or innovation. He views selfhood as an individual project.

A third example of a wide-spread and exponentially growing frame of orientation for people is science. In science there is an absolute value placed on “objective” truth, and the scientist supposedly explains nature through empirical observation of natural processes and the

⁸² Nietzsche, Friedrich. “Schopenhauer as Educator,” in the *Untimely Meditations*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, Sec. 4, pp. 147-148.

effects of natural “laws.” Many people are inclined toward the scientific explanation of reality because it presents itself as offering just that: reality. However, the absolute value of truth (and that it shows us reality independent from our subjectivity) is the very presupposition that is taken for granted in science. Nietzsche explains how we still show a kind of reverence towards “the truth” as if it were a god itself:

Thus the question “Why science?” leads back to the moral problem: *Why have morality at all* when life, nature, and history are “not moral”? No doubt, those who are truthful in that audacious and ultimate sense that is presupposed by the faith in science *thus affirm another world* than the world of life, nature, and history; and insofar as they affirm this “other world”—look, must they not by the same token negate its counterpart, this world, *our world*? But you will have gathered what I am driving at, namely, that it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests—that even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine.⁸³

Although Fromm combines the two together, I separate the need for devotion from the need for a frame of orientation because the need for devotion appears to be more focused, although not necessarily singular. What does it mean to devote oneself to something? In the sense that we are concerned with, devotion seems to be the activity of discovering and/or creating something to live for. Fromm suggests that an individual can devote herself to “an idol” or to “an ideal” and that regardless of whether she devotes herself to a single goal or several goals she needs to possess purpose in her doings. The object of devotion can be either the furtherance of life or its destruction. It can be one or a cluster of virtues: courage, greatness of soul and justice; or it can be one of many allegedly lesser goods: wealth, fame and fortune. This line of thinking implies that it is not possible for one to exist without striving to satisfy the need for devotion. One might argue that it is possible for one to exist, maybe for only a short period

⁸³ GS, Sec. 344.

of time, without being devoted to some goal or purpose and that such a possibility would refute the existence of this existential need. Supporting Fromm, I would reply that even if a person ceases in her activity of devotion and goes without the guidance of an idol or ideal that she could only exist in such a way for a very brief period. The “emptiness” of meaning characterizing this interim would be an even stronger impetus for this individual to begin a new project of satisfying her need for devotion. Just as soon as one idol “dies,” the existential imperative to either find or create a new “god” takes over. Such a thought calls to mind the way a person’s devotion can oscillate from a dead object of devotion to one that has sprung to life—e.g. a drunk’s devotion to booze as a method of coping with life transformed into her devotion to Alcoholics Anonymous; an atheist’s devotion to reason transformed into his devotion to being a Born-Again Christian; a Republican’s disappointed devotion to the established GOP’s conservatism transformed into his devotion to even smaller government as a Tea Party member. Whatever the situation may be where one’s need for devotion is *apparently* killed or frustrated, that need re-emerges in a fairly immediate way. Living without purpose, without meaning, potentially results in practical nihilism which can lead one to hopelessly succumb to mental and physical nothingness.

I believe that Nietzsche would endorse both the need for a frame of orientation and the need for devotion. The main theme of the third essay of the *GM* is how humankind responds to the problem of the senselessness of suffering. Suffering pervades each human life, and each person ultimately ends in that which we find most unintelligible: death. We might say that it is our awareness of our own mortality and the knowledge that one day we will not exist that causes the most tremendous suffering. This dimension of the human condition remains unintelligible to most. The fact that we do suffer and that such suffering appears meaningless to us intensifies the unintelligibility of the world. The evidence that humankind seeks more than just life—that we

seek meaning for our lives—is provided by the various ascetic ideals to which we devote ourselves. Nietzsche frames the idea in the following way:

Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the human *animal*, had no meaning so far. His existence on earth contained no goal; “why man at all?”—was a question without an answer; the *will* for man and earth was lacking; behind every great human destiny there sounded as a refrain a yet greater “in vain!” *This* is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something was *lacking*, that man was surrounded by a fearful *void*—he did not know how to justify, to account for, to affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He also suffered otherwise, he was in the main a sickly animal: but his problem was *not* suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the crying question, “*why* do I suffer?”⁸⁴

Regardless of whether the character type that one occupies is that of the priest, the scientist, the historian or whatever, the need for devotion presents itself and compels the individual to devote himself to that which gives meaning to what is meaningless. In Nietzschean style, we address “the problem of our meaning” in and through the existential need for devotion and the existential need for a frame of orientation.

The Existential Need for Unity

The existential need for unity has an important status among the existential needs, since they can all be understood, in a way, as the need for unity. After all, these needs arise out of the experience of a break or divide between consciousness and instinct. But here we mean something more specific: as a striving to be a part of, or in some kind of union with (or connected to) the story that one builds for oneself through the satisfaction of the prior two existential needs...the successful achieving of which produces the experience of feeling at home in the world. Fromm speaks of the need for unity as arising from a kind of existential split

⁸⁴ *GM*, Second Essay, Sec. 28.

between the human world and the natural world, a split having generated a fracture even within humankind itself. (It is not clear how helpful it would be to look at the manner in which the existential need for unity historically manifests itself on a kind of world-historical scale. The primary sense of the need for unity—that between our instincts and our consciousness—arises in the face of significant historical events such as: the invention of agriculture during the Neolithic Revolution; the invention of religions during the first millennia B.C.E.; the dawn of philosophy in and around 6th century B.C.E; the European Renaissance; the Protestant Reformation; the Industrial Revolution; the construction of nuclear energy and nuclear weapons in the early 20th century; and the advent of the Age of Technology in which we now exist.) As far as the appearances tell us, we find ourselves existing in the here and now having torn ourselves apart into mere pieces of a broken whole, but according to Nietzsche the existential split between our instincts and our consciousness was not so gradual. In accounting for the evolutionary change of humankind from “semi-animals well adapted to the wilderness, to war, to prowling, to adventure” to men “enclosed within the walls of society and peace,” Nietzsche describes the change as abrupt: “...suddenly all their instincts were disvalued and ‘suspended’,” and “[the forcible sundering from his animal past was] a leap and plunge into new surroundings and conditions of existence.”⁸⁵ Perhaps because man’s new suffering of himself was such a radically different mode of existence from his purely instinctual mode of existence did Nietzsche feel the need to speak of this change in hyperbolic terms. However gradual or swift the change was, we will put aside the question of just how consciousness historically emerged, and we will instead focus on the nature of the existential split between instincts and consciousness and our need for unity between these two dimensions of our existence.

⁸⁵ *GM*, Second Essay, Sec. 16.

Fromm claims that there are three dimensions to the existential split: 1) the split within an individual human being; 2) the split between humankind and the natural world; and 3) the split between one human being and others. Fromm offers some possible solutions to such splits, one solution having to do with the supposed common features of religions and the other solution requiring that we reverse our attitude from experiencing ourselves as things to recognizing ourselves as persons. From the above list of historical milestones of humanity, Fromm chooses to focus on the creation of religions. Drawing from origins of various religions and making a unifying move, Fromm's first solution appears to be untenable and somewhat overly idealistic. He conceptualizes an amalgamation of world religions and makes the following claims:

The great religions springing from the soil of these cultures taught that man can achieve unity not by a tragic effort to undo the fact of the split, but by fully developing human reason and love. Great as are the differences between Taoism, Buddhism, prophetic Judaism, and the Christianity of the Gospels, these religions had one common goal: to arrive at the experience of oneness, not by regressing into animal existence but by becoming fully human—oneness within man, oneness between man and nature, and oneness between man and other men.⁸⁶

It is not clear whether we ought to take the advice of the so-called “great humanists” that are the founders of these religions. It is not the case that the common mission of these religions is to develop human reason and love. That is an oversimplification. But even if it were, reason and love are not just valuable *simpliciter*—as Nietzsche has shown, a more complex understanding of what is genuinely ‘life-affirming’ is necessary than the overly positive vision that Fromm endorses. This is evident, for example, in the fact that the nature of the love taught by at least some of the religions that he mentions, especially Christianity, do not fully acknowledge the need for *self-love*. Further, this idea that the one common goal of religions is oneness within a human being, between humankind and nature, and between all members of humankind is

⁸⁶ Fromm, p. 234.

misguided. I will begin with the last form of oneness. Oneness between all members of humankind is not psychologically possible, nor should it be desirable. Conflict is part of the essence of the human condition. We define ourselves by our struggles, our pain and our suffering, all of which originate in our head-butting attitudes about who should be in power, about who deserves what amounts of money, about who gets to use what resources and about who has the bigger “ego.” Think of any great piece of literature, and you will see that cruelty by the antagonist is what makes him interesting and that the desire for justice/revenge is what makes the protagonist praiseworthy. On an individual or a global scale, oneness between man and other men is a fantasy. The second form of oneness between humankind and nature is also not (humanly) possible. As a species we have changed things. Not only have we changed things, but we have changed them forever! There is no going back to a hunter-gatherer society. We cannot return to some pre-technological or pre-industrial mode of living. The schism between human beings and the natural world is only going to become more pronounced in the future. So I am not sure what hope there is to be had for this kind of unity. The first kind of oneness within the individual is something that is possible to accomplish, but it is not clear that doing so guided by religious teachings is the best way. Another problem with Fromm’s first possible solution is its omission of polytheism. Why does he not include Hinduism or the worship of the Greek and Roman gods and goddesses on his list of “great” religions? Perhaps his praise of the ideal of oneness shows a prejudice resulting from Fromm’s entrenchment in a monotheistic world. It is possible that a more pluralistic but not necessarily fragmented interpretation of the world might be healthier than our demand for oneness allows, where by *pluralistic* I mean a pluralism of values, ideals and perspectives that do not share a one size fits all motif.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ See *GS*, Sec. 143. Nietzsche contends that the greatest advantage of polytheism is the plurality

If we reject Fromm's emphasis on 'oneness', then how should we understand Nietzsche's attitude toward the existential need for unity? The answer to this question depends on what kind of unity we are considering. I will put aside the unity between humankind and nature for the moment, as it will surface in chapter four's analysis of what it means, for Nietzsche, for an individual to transcend nature. The issue of unity between individual members of humankind will be considered in chapter five, where we discuss the nature of friendship. Here, I will focus on the possibility of unity *within* a single individual, since this is the kind of unity with which Nietzsche is primarily concerned. One aspect of Nietzsche's philosophical project is re-integrating humankind into nature: showing through metaphor and argumentation that human beings are part of the natural world despite our tendency to think of ourselves otherwise, and as such we must conform to natural processes and natural laws just as everything else does. The part of the human being—the instincts, or “the will”—that is linked to the natural world in which we participate draws Nietzsche's focus. His critique of the absolute freedom of the will is one prominent example of this attempt to illustrate that “the will” is a piece of nature, not something that metaphysically or religiously transcends the human condition. Nietzsche possesses a strong tendency toward naturalism for two related reasons. He wishes to expose the errors of the supernatural and metaphysical views of humanity that are life-negating and that have helped to dissociate humankind from itself. The supernaturalist (or metaphysician) has often proclaimed that that which is good, right, beautiful and virtuous are of the “real” world, of the world of

of norms, which makes it possible for an individual to create and own *his* ideal. This garners a certain sovereignty and freedom, first attributed to one's god in relation to other gods, that one adopts as his own sovereignty and freedom *to* create his own values. On the other hand, monotheism spawned the belief that there is only one normal type and ideal for the human species and that type is modeled after “the one true God.” This advantage of polytheism is likely to be part of the explanation for why Nietzsche has such a peculiar reverence for Hinduism. The other reason for his interest in the Hindu gods is possibly its rank ordering of society, which is antithetical to the equality of the liberal democracy of Western culture.

Platonic Forms, of the noumenal realm or of the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus half of our values, and half of our constitution as esteemers, is banished from this world. The other reason for needing to retain a naturalist position is that Nietzsche promotes the perfection of human beings, and this process of perfecting seems to require the promotion and affirmation of life—and life *qua* a part of the natural world is the only life that we have reason to think exists. So looking into how we work as natural beings will require facing up to the reality and complexity of our humanness.

Unifying the Self

Nietzsche is interested in illustrating the complexity of the will, especially the way it is an “oligarchy” of drives that tend to “be at war” with each other. His rejection of the I and his theme of self as multiplicity is prevalent throughout his corpus. In *BGE* Nietzsche rejects *soul atomism*: “the belief which regards the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, as a monad, as an *atomon*: this belief ought to be expelled from science!”⁸⁸ A few sections later in *BGE*, he expands upon this rejection of ‘the I’ with the idea that the will is a manifold thing where the synthetic concept “I” takes sides with the commanding element of the will:

...our body is but a social structure composed of many souls—to his feelings of delight as commander. *L’effet c’est moi*: what happens here is what happens in every well-constructed and happy commonwealth; namely, the governing class identifies itself with the successes of the commonwealth. In all willing it is absolutely a question of commanding and obeying, on the basis, as already said, of a social structure composed of many “souls.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸ *BGE*, Sec. 12.

⁸⁹ *BGE*, Sec. 19.

Nietzsche's Zarathustra also rejects the unity of the I in saying, "'I,' you say, and are proud of the word. But greater is that in which you do not wish to have faith—your body and its great reason: that does not say 'I,' but [performs] 'I'."⁹⁰ 'The I' lies not in mere language, but in action. Because of the lack of a singular subjectivity and because of the agonistic nature of multiplicity of drives, we could conceive of the will as continually in a state of discord or fragmentation—in other words, possessing a lack of unity.⁹¹ Achieving some sort of wholeness amidst manifoldness is one of Nietzsche's ideals, a hierarchical ordering of drives that is perhaps led by some commanding drive. The key to the kind of inner unity that Nietzsche praises consists of a continual improvement of the actual "waging of war" against oneself such that each of the warrior drives becomes more adept and skilled in response to his opponent.⁹² The air of paradox seems to draw near with this idea. How can something simultaneously be whole and manifold? How can something simultaneously be unified yet discordant? To shed light on this puzzle, Nietzsche appropriates the Heraclitean notion of unity amidst opposites. Heraclitus states, "People do not understand how that which is at variance with itself agrees with itself. There is a harmony in the bending back, as in the cases of the bow and the lyre," and "Opposition brings concord. Out of discord comes the fairest harmony."⁹³ Heraclitus metaphorically shows that without tension in a bow, which is created by the string, that the arrow could not find direction and hit its target. Similarly with music, without tension in the strings of the lyre, notes in a harmonized arrangement could not be produced. In both senses, there is simultaneously

⁹⁰ *TSZ*, "On the Despisers of the Body."

⁹¹ This theme of the self as multiplicity and the rejection of the I are central not only in Nietzsche's published works but also in his unpublished notebooks. Because of the consistency between how this theme is presented in both published and unpublished works, this is one area where it would not be poor scholarship to cite from the *Nachlass*.

⁹² See *BGE*, Sec. 200.

⁹³ Heraclitus. *Heraclitus: The Complete Fragments: Translation and Commentary and the Greek Text*. Trans. William Harris. Middlebury College, 1994, DK line numbers 51 and 8.

harmony and tension—or more precisely, tension is a condition for harmony. Nietzsche uses these metaphors and applies them to the human being, turning what is often interpreted as metaphysical opposites into psychological opposites. Without a certain kind of tension between the multiplicity of drives (or inner perspectives) in an individual, the resulting harmony could not possibly be attained. When Nietzsche endorses the value of having enemies, there is a double meaning being conveyed. He does value external others as enemies, but he also values the “internal enemy”:

Here too we have spiritualized hostility; here too we have come to appreciate its value. The price of fruitfulness is to be rich in internal opposition; one remains young only as long as the soul does not stretch itself and desire peace. Nothing has become more alien to [we immoralists and Antichristians] than that desideratum of former times, “peace of soul,” the *Christian* desideratum; there is nothing we envy less than the moralistic cow and the fat happiness of the good conscience. One has renounced the *great* life when one renounces war.⁹⁴

For he who realizes a self, the “hostility” of external opposition becomes internalized, and the “war” of the opposing enemies becomes “spiritualized”: a spiritual war.⁹⁵ Keep in mind that while there may be a countless number of drives within any given individual, drives *simpliciter* must not be confused with the existential needs, which are basic and are rooted in human existence as a walking contradiction between instincts and consciousness.⁹⁶ To further unravel

⁹⁴ *TI*, Morality as Anti-Nature, Sec. 3, p. 488.

⁹⁵ Chuck Palahniuk’s character of Tyler Durden first expresses his hostility toward the external enemies of consumerism, corporations and “the ruling class” physically through fight club; however, that external expression of opposing forces is then internalized, and Tyler realizes that the true war is between internally opposed drives: his spiritual war.

⁹⁶ In her comparison and contrast of Nietzsche’s will to power and Carl Jung’s notion of Self, Lucy Huskinson claims that the “‘central organizing power’ [of psychological opposites] is the ‘power of adaptation’, or the ‘Will to Power’: that power that increases the capacity for creation through the union of opposites” (33). Huskinson’s view of the will to power is remarkably similar to my own; however, she fails to realize the existential priority of the seven existential needs that I have outlined over the wider spectrum of particular drives that seek to be expressed

the apparently paradoxical nature of this notion of unity, one needs to think of the unified whole not as a static ‘oneness’ but as an active dialogue—an inner spiritual war but one where the warriors possibly ascend to new heights. In the *GS* Nietzsche describes this as a process of incorporation [*Einverleibung*] (or assimilation) of truth:

A thinker is now that being in whom the impulse for truth and those life-preserving errors clash for their first fight, after the impulse for truth has proved to be also a life-preserving power. Compared to the significance of this fight, everything else is a matter of indifference: the ultimate question about the conditions of life has been posed here, and we confront the first attempt to answer this question by experiment. To what extent can truth endure incorporation? That is the question; that is the experiment.⁹⁷

Here is an example of praise for that thinker who is an arena where the drive to truth and the drive to live (grounded in preserving certain life-preserving errors) clash, but do so in such a way as to assimilate as much truth as possible or to consider as many perspectives as possible in order to arrive at a wholeness.⁹⁸ Notice that both truth and error can each be life-preserving powers. The value of each depends on whether and to what extent each preserves and in turn enhances life. As we amass more affects, drives and perspectives, the more complete does our “objectivity” become.⁹⁹ Nietzsche uses Goethe as a prime example of a figure who approaches the ideal of unity:

and to garner a response from an individual. See her *Nietzsche and Jung: The Whole Self in the Union of Opposites*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2004.

⁹⁷ *GS*, Sec. 110.

⁹⁸ In the second to last section of the *GS* (382) entitled “The great health,” Nietzsche refers to those who embody this ideal of incorporating a manifold of “battling” perspectives within a whole as “premature births” [*Frühgeburten*]. Being a “birth” has a two-fold meaning: one is being born and simultaneously birthing oneself, and doing so “early” or “prematurely” signifies that one should undergo this process with care and caution. Such a free spirit does not possess the great health which he needs to flourish but acquires it and re-acquires it over and over again in exploring uncharted boundaries and new territories. We might say that the great health is paradoxically acquired by living dangerously—dangerously healthy!

⁹⁹ *GM*, III 12.

[Goethe] bore [the Renaissance's] strongest instincts within himself: the sensibility, the idolatry of nature, the anti-historic, the idealistic, the unreal and revolutionary... He sought help from history, natural science, antiquity, and also Spinoza, but, above all, from practical activity; he surrounded himself with limited horizons; he did not retire from life but put himself into the midst of it; he was not fainthearted but took as much as possible upon himself, over himself, into himself. What he wanted was *totality*; he fought the mutual extraneousness of reason, senses, feeling, and will...; he disciplined himself to wholeness, he *created* himself.¹⁰⁰

So according to Nietzsche, we are illusory I's—sets of affects, drives, “wills”, perspectives, and feelings that continually tend to resist and overcome each other—that nevertheless still have the always-present capacity to become harmonized albeit with a certain tension into an integrated whole.

There are problems with this picture though. How does one achieve self-conscious unified selfhood when it seems that a self already needs to be present in order to achieve this? And even if we are valuing poorly, how can a mere sack of drives (or just one of those drives) perform the activity of valuation that would appear to require a self in place to do such? There seems to be a huge tension between Nietzsche's elimination of any substantial I and his dependence upon a substantial I as the ground of valuation. Sebastian Gardner explicates the “fundamental, pervasive, and ineliminable” role of ‘the I’ in the following two ways:

(1) First, the subject who values must understand himself—his self—as the *ground* of the value that he affirms.

(2) Second, there is reciprocal relation in Nietzsche between valuing, self-creation, and self-determination: to determine such and such to be of value is to determine *oneself*, and to affirm oneself *by way of* affirming what one values, and vice versa.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols* in *The Portable Nietzsche*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” Sec. 49.

¹⁰¹ Gardner, Sebastian. “Nietzsche, the Self, and the Disunity of Philosophical Reason,” in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. Eds. Ken Gemes and Simon May. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 8-9.

Gardner points out that the sovereign individual of the second essay of *GM* and Zarathustra both speak and act as if there is already a unified self in place because this is what is needed to identify with and have a sense of ownership over what one values. Gardner contends, “Elimination of this I in favour of thinkings ascribed to complexes of will to power or any other units within the psychological composite would produce a profound self-alienation and undermine the normative dimension of valuation, i.e., the possibility of its being thought that the valuation in any sense ‘gets things right’.”¹⁰² Gardner suggests that one possible solution to this problem (one that we might wonder why Nietzsche did not take) is for the Nietzschean to demarcate the boundary between legitimate transcendental claims for the necessity of the I-representation and illegitimate claims regarding the constitution-in-itself of a corresponding object of this representation. Just as certain individuals (free spirits; *Übermenschen*; realized selves) may artistically posit the existence of particular values as useful fictions, the transcendental I should be viewed as another “honest illusion,” one whose actual non-existence is forgotten in the normal course of everyday human life.¹⁰³ This proposal would make sense out of how it is possible for one to be the ground of one’s valuations. Being a transcendental self would then just be how one must experience the world and how one must experience the activity of valuing. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* (in the “Transcendental Deduction”), Kant elaborates the nature of the transcendental I:

¹⁰² Gardner, p. 9.

¹⁰³ Nadeem Hussain interestingly uses the notion of “honest illusions” to explain how we can create values and act according to those values even though we “know” that values do not exist out there in the world. This would be a beautiful and life-affirming kind of forgetting that makes living well possible. See Hussain’s “Honest Illusion: Valuing for Nietzsche’s Free Spirits,” in *Nietzsche and Morality*. Ed. Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 168-173.

We are conscious *a priori* of the complete identity of the self in respect of all representations which can ever belong to our knowledge, as being a necessary condition of the possibility of all representations. For in me they can represent something only in so far as they belong with all others to one consciousness, and therefore must be at least capable of being so connected. This principle holds *a priori*, and may be called the transcendental principle of the *unity* of all that is manifold in our representations, and consequently also in intuition.¹⁰⁴

And somewhat later in the “Paralogisms of Pure Reason,” where Kant argues that we cannot know or prove that the soul possesses substantiality, simplicity, personality or ideality, he states:

Self-consciousness in general is therefore the representation of that which is the condition of all unity, and itself is unconditioned. We can thus say of the thinking ‘I’ (the soul) which regards itself as substance, as simple, as numerically identical at all times, and as the correlate of all existence, from which all other existence must be inferred, that it does *not* know *itself through the categories*, but knows the categories, and through them all objects, in the absolute unity of apperception, and so *through itself*. Now it is, indeed, very evident that I cannot know as an object that which I must presuppose in order to know any object, and that the determining self (the thought) is distinguished from the self that is determined (the thinking subject) in the same way as knowledge is distinguished from its object.¹⁰⁵

Despite the appeal of this suggestion, simply positing a transcendental self is insufficient for the exemplification of the will to power. The will to power is the achieving of self-realization. The self that is realized to a more full degree—one that nearly approaches wholeness—is not the same as a mere transcendental self. As a necessary condition for the possibility of human experience (and of valuation), a transcendental self could still be wildly fragmented in terms of conflict between needs and drives, yet all the while think of itself as “a self.” So the Kantian solution to this problem of how the existential need for unity could be satisfied does not give us a complete answer. The individual who comes to exemplify the will to power will not merely have to operate under the assumption that she is a unified self-conscious self. She will have achieved the privilege of being a unified self-conscious self.

¹⁰⁴ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. Boston: Macmillan & Co., 1965, A116.

¹⁰⁵ Kant, A402.

But the process of achieving self-realization is still *a process*, and until one becomes a unified self-conscious self, how is it possible for “him” *qua* one of his strongest drives to genuinely value what he takes to be valuable? In other words, is it intelligible to say that ‘my drive for companionship’ values and loves my friend? Until I am a fully realized self, do I say that my ‘drive to sex’ is what is lusting after some potential lover? This does sound strange indeed. No, even in the earlier phases of self-realization, the experience that I have *from the inside* is that *I* value and love my friend and that *I* value and lust after my potential lover. Remember that the criticism against Nietzsche is that valuing as a unit within a psychological complex would produce a “profound self-alienation” and “undermine the normative dimension of valuation,” and those early valuations might be necessary steps in the development of a more fully realized self. In the case of the genuine philosopher undergoing the process of becoming who he is, such an individual must not “let himself go” or “let oneself drop,” but he must “find” his greatness in “his range and multiplicity, in his wholeness in manifoldness” and how much responsibility he can bear to unify himself.¹⁰⁶

In our analysis of the will to power, we should not fall into the tendency of being overly systematic or of stripping out all normativity. John Richardson falls prey to these tendencies in his work on *Nietzsche’s “System.”* Richardson proposes a systematic account of the will to power where “a drive wills power by trying to develop its activity pattern” and “each such activity pattern wills its own ‘self-overcoming’ [*Selbstüberwindung*]: it wills to rise toward a new and higher level of effort—perhaps indeed a level at which its internal ends are also

¹⁰⁶ See *BGE*, Sec. 212 for these references and notice how Nietzsche defines “greatness” as “being capable of being as manifold as whole, as ample as full.” Where the genuine philosopher must arrive is at his realized self: that self in which he feels at home [*zu Hause*] with himself and at home in the world.

overcome and replaced by descendants—one that will then have to be overcome in turn.”¹⁰⁷ Richardson tends to speak of drives as opposed to persons, and he along with Nietzsche considers persons as collections of drives. For Richardson, the will to power neither seeks the objects of desires nor desires themselves. What the will to power seeks is the improvement of the activity pattern of each desire—to enhance through sublimation [*Sublimierung*] or spiritualization. There is a continual process of one mastering drive integrating other “weaker” drives into the service of the mastering drive’s end, thereby “enhancing” *how* that drive actively pursues its end, thus increasing its power. Richardson’s power ontology is a worthy attempt to systematize the doctrine of the will to power and integrate it with Nietzsche’s values and his perspectivism, but this ontology falters in several respects. According to Richardson, each drive seeks to improve (and enhance) its own pattern of activity, which requires each drive to already have an end in place, to pursue that end, to pursue the opposition to that end and to pursue overcoming the opposition to that end—all of this stemming from the will to power, which is the essence of all drives. There are some problems with this schema. Firstly, Richardson’s account appears to claim that the will to power is an already-existing phenomenon that is at work, developing activity patterns and enhancing those integrative processes, for all drives, and I take it, for all human beings. If this were the case, then any and every drive would originate from the will to power, yet needs and drives which are satisfied in a base or vicious manner, and not satisfied under the norm of beauty, cannot be constitutive of a realized self and thus also not constitutive of a will to power. Secondly, Richardson seems to place too much personified autonomy on a single drive. Even if it be fictional, or a necessary condition for human experience (in Kantian language), some kind of transcendental self must be posited for the

¹⁰⁷ Richardson, John. “Nietzsche’s Power Ontology,” in *Nietzsche*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 158-159.

possibility of realizing a self which exemplifies a will to power. We do hold that there is a movement from existing as a mere disorganized collection of drives toward some sort of a unified self, yet just *who* is doing the unifying (one particular drive or some already-existing self) does not have a clear answer for us. Richardson does foreground the difficulty in determining just what the relation is between a drive and the individual in which it inheres. There is an ambiguity in his claim that a drive itself seeks or wishes to increase its own pattern of activity. There is a sense in which each drive has the “aim” of enhancement, but this is only a partial account of what is “the goal” of a collection of drives. The enhancement of each drive’s activity pattern aims at the achieving of self-realization. Realizing a unified self is the ultimate target toward which any set of drives takes aim. What does it mean for a drive to want to enhance its pattern of activity? A drive cannot intend or want anything because it is just a part of a larger whole, the larger whole being that collection of drives that is striving for some kind of further unification. An individual can identify himself with his most dominating drive, as a nation might identify itself with its strongest class of citizens, yet the drive cannot *do* or *desire* anything outside of its relation to the whole collection of drives. Further, the sustained emphasis on what the drives are striving for makes it difficult to make sense of how the relationships between individuals develop. Does a set of my drives bear some attitude? Can drives (or a drive) do this? No, it is an individual who loves another or an individual who is attempting to understand the psyche of another. Nevertheless, it is possible that such an individual *qua* oligarchy of drives and affects may not yet be a realized self. Thirdly, positing that the will to power is the essence of all drives (the basic stuff of the world) and holding that the ultimate goal of that essence is the ongoing development of each drive’s “activity pattern” do not allow us to discover when we have actually succeeded in performing a genuine action. It is the case that the will to power is

insatiable, and as such “development” never really has a stopping point; however, at what point can an individual recognize that he has reached a successful level of development (or that he has successfully performed an action)? I contend that it is when a more fully realized self has been brought forward into existence, one that is more whole than a cluster of completely non-integrated drives.

This issue leads into my third worry: there is nearly no social or intersubjective aspect to Richardson’s power ontology. Richardson defines human beings as drives early in his account when he states that the “ ‘will to power’ is most basically applied not to people but to ‘drives’ or ‘forces’, simpler units which Nietzsche sometimes even calls ‘points’ and ‘power quanta’.”¹⁰⁸ This seems rather simplistic to consider us to be *only* or *basically* drives. While drives may be part of how we are psychologically and conceptually structured, we are more than just that: we are human beings and are striving to become whole selves. There is a more holistic kind of unity, even if incomplete or incompletely unified that is already somewhat present in a human life. Finally, Richardson makes Nietzsche a value monist where his supposed principle would be the following: “act so as to maximize power in general” and because of this crude reductionism the relationship between the will to power and our other values is strained. If the above were our sole principle to act on, then one could not value a friend for his own sake because he would have to value him for the sake of increasing one’s own power. Richardson does address the question of “whose power” each ethical agent should be maximizing, but his answer of “power egoism” is not quite accurate.¹⁰⁹ He views agents very atomistically and ignores our social nature, especially the fact that we look to select an other (or a group of others) for their honor

¹⁰⁸ Richardson, John. *Nietzsche’s System*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Richardson, 1996: 153.

and admiration, and more especially to notice when they show disgust or indignation toward some act that we have done. Richardson gets to an impasse between Nietzsche's idea that each agent ought to maximize her own power and Nietzsche's apparently counter-idea that each agent ought to maximize the power of the overman.¹¹⁰ One possible resolution of this impasse involves not thinking of the overmen as some distantly future individuals for whom we are supposed to devote our lives here and now. Conceiving of our lives purely instrumentally makes little sense. Who exactly am I living my life for? When is this future overman supposed to arrive on the scene? Aren't I supposed to be improving my relationship with myself? Nowhere do we find explicit textual support for the idea that the overman as this separate figure in some distant future that Nietzsche thinks we ought to promote. That is often an assumption that is upheld prior to an analysis of the figure of the overman. The imagery that Zarathustra uses to characterize the overman is rendered more intelligible if we conceive of the overman as a realized self, one that any free spirit can bring into existence. For example, Zarathustra portrays the overman as a lightning bolt coming forth from a thundercloud, but if we place this image alongside Nietzsche's conception of a genuine philosopher "who is perhaps himself a storm pregnant with new lightnings" *and* who is "a being that often runs away from itself, often is afraid of itself—but too inquisitive not to 'come to' again—always back to himself," then the image can be understood as the process of achieving self-realization.¹¹¹ A second image that Zarathustra uses to portray the overman is the sea. He says that man is a polluted stream and that one must be a sea in order to be able to receive such a polluted stream without becoming

¹¹⁰ Richardson, 1996: 150-151.

¹¹¹ For the images of the overman as a lightning bolt, see *TSZ*, Prologue, Sec. 3, Sec. 4, and Sec. 7.

unclean.¹¹² Zarathustra states that the overman is this sea, which represents a complex entity that may potentially be at-odds with itself but which has the ability to take in “polluted streams” (unsublimated instincts), being conscious of these flowing streams, and transform them into rich and variegated “sea” (a fully realized self or overman). Such a reading especially makes sense if we think of how Nietzsche uses the image of the sea *qua* existence in the *GS*, but as an existence that comprises both danger and hopefulness. The overman is even pictured as “a supreme achievement” in Nietzsche’s reflections in *Ecce Homo*.¹¹³ If we think of the overman as a potential higher self that may be discovered/created within each free spirit—and it is possible and likely that not everyone is capable of realizing his higher self or being a free spirit—then we can have a rough schema about self-realization—one that is partially egoistic, but also one that holds the self to potentially include certain others, and thus is partially other-oriented.

Recall that in order to better understand the existential need for unity (of the self), we should extrapolate the notion of the will to power as it is expressed in Nietzsche’s primary works. Moving on to how Nietzsche expounds the will to power in *Beyond Good and Evil*, we discover new insight into the doctrine mainly in the first part of the work, “On the Prejudices of Philosophers,” and in the ninth part, “What is Noble.” In *BGE* 13 Nietzsche connects the final thought concerning the will to power from the section “On Self-Overcoming” in *TSZ* with the introduction to the doctrine in *BGE*. The main distinction is that self-preservation is not the cardinal instinct of an organic being but is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results* of the will to power. The almost exact same idea is also expressed in *GS* 349. Here again it is important to recognize that Nietzsche is making a claim about the human condition, yet his

¹¹² For the images of the overman as a sea, see *TSZ*, Prologue, Sec. 3.

¹¹³ *EH*, “Why I Write Such Good Books,” Sec. 1.

remarks about the will to power will be best understood if correlated with his remarks about the complexity of the human psyche and how concepts about the inner world of an individual need to be reinterpreted. One example is the soul-hypothesis: the concept of the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, monadic and atomic does not necessarily have to be thrown out, but merely reconceived as “mortal soul,” and “soul as subjective multiplicity,” and “soul as social structure of the drives and affects.”¹¹⁴ Nietzsche appropriately acknowledges the complexity of the inner world of human willing which involves various (and various kinds of) sensations, thinking, a ruling thought, and an affect—the will is a manifold thing, and the word “will” cannot capture all that happens in human willing.¹¹⁵ The thought that willing is really always composed of a social structure of many “souls” should be an accompanying provision to the will to power. This meets the objection that the notion of the will to power is overly simplistic. Nietzsche has to use language to discuss the will to power as the central motive-force behind human existence; yet he is mainly concerned with human beings insofar as they are meaning-users and value-creators. So he is not going to spend time with the vast array of physical, biological and chemical processes that occur at the micro-level of human willing. There *is* complexity even at the level of meaning, thought and affect—and it is this dynamic configuration of “moving parts” that substantiate human willing.

In order to resolve this difficulty, we ought to think of the process of achieving self-realization as a transcendental self sublimating drives into a realized self. As we will discuss in the following section, the process of sublimation makes room for the existence of becoming a self and for the potential achieving of self-realization by that becoming self—sublimation

¹¹⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil* in the *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: The Modern Library, 2000, Sec. 12.

¹¹⁵ *BGE*, Sec. 19.

provides a middle position between a completely naturalistic picture of “selves” as sacks of conflicting drives and a Christian metaphysical picture of “selves” as eternal and indestructible souls.

The Satisfaction of the Existential Needs and the Sublimation of a Thousand Drives

How might a mere collection of animosity-laden drives possibly begin a process of cohesion? Is there a specific name for such a process? Nietzsche is the first to recognize and to begin to explicate the nature of this complex internal psychological activity: its name is sublimation (also often referred to as spiritualization). As we have seen, unity in the traditional sense of perfect harmony between parts may have to be rethought. Is some kind of unity possible within an individual even if there is enmity between the drives? When there is a conflict between two drives, the more powerful drive will not completely squash the other into oblivion. It would do better to sublimate the weaker drive into the service of the reigning drive. The phenomenon of sublimation arises out of the internal agonistic nature of the drives that constitute a human being.

Even though we must use the Nietzschean notion of sublimation to account for this possibility, we must make a departure from his restriction that sublimation can only occur beneath consciousness. It seems that someone can become aware of an instance of sublimation (even one that occurred over a period of time) that has occurred in his past. Becoming aware of the sublimation of one particular drive into new channels may make future potential instances of sublimation more successful. Even though most instances of sublimation occur on an unconscious level and without our “choice” in the matter, it is possible for such a process to enter

into consciousness. How does this happen? A first and primary step is self-examination of one's drives, desires, affects, etc. As discussed earlier, the intellectual conscience can be a tool in evaluating a particular "vehement" drive and possibly sublimating that drive through conscious thought and action. There does not have to be complete mutual exclusivity between the unconscious and the conscious.

When Nietzsche refers to an individual being made up of "many mortal souls," such is a metaphor for drives. In order to demonstrate how sublimation is required for the beauty and self-mastery characterizing genuine self-realization, we must look at some examples of how the process of sublimation works. It has been argued that neurotic repression occurs in what I am calling the failure to achieve self-realization, whereas sublimation occurs in what I refer to as the successful achieving of self-realization.¹¹⁶ In other words, those who do not exemplify a will to power repress drives that are not so much socially unacceptable, but drives that are unacceptable to the free spirit's vision of itself. On the other hand, sublimation occurs in those who succeed at self-realization and thence do exemplify a will to power—i.e. the drives are not repressed but given appropriate expression. Because, *prima facie*, sublimation appears to be a mysterious process, we will now focus on how sublimation might underwrite the achieving of self-realization.

Nietzsche outlines essentially six different methods of how one might possibly combat the vehemence of a drive. Since we are speaking the languages of drives [*der Triebe*], it is important to enhance our understanding of what kinds of drives we have in mind and to do so from thinking about the drives that we find in experience. Ranging in intensity from weakness to

¹¹⁶ Gemes, Ken. "Freud and Nietzsche on Sublimation," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*. Issue 38, 2009, pp. 38-59.

ferociousness, some of the more-or-less common drives are the following: the drive to sexual enjoyment, the drive to murder for revenge, the drive to steal money, the drive to commit suicide, the drive to restfulness, the fear of disgrace, the drive to love, the fear of humiliation, the fear of ineffectiveness, the fear of shame, the drive to possess, the fear of failure, the fear of purposelessness, the drive to cruelty and the drive for praise.¹¹⁷ For all intents and purposes, this non-exhaustive list is comprised of some of the basic drives of the human psyche. Some of the drives refer to “fears” because they are best conceived of in terms of a strong aversion to or a forceful pulling away from something that causes one’s humanity to disintegrate or that causes one’s self to shrivel down to nothing.

The first method of sublimation that Nietzsche considers is to avoid opportunities for gratification of the drive with the intention of weakening the drive and making it wither away. The second method is to implant regularity into the drive which encloses its ebb and flood within firm time-boundaries again with the intention of exterminating the drive. However, these two methods are ultimately forms of repression, which are likely to result in neurotic behavior and a stunted development of a self. Nietzsche includes them to contrast the more unhealthy methods of combat with the healthier ones. The third method is to deliberately give oneself over to the wild and unrestrained gratification of a drive in order to generate disgust with it. This method is similar to the first two in that it is likely to result in a failure to extinguish the intensity of the drive, like “the rider who rode his horse to death and broke his own neck in the process.”¹¹⁸ The

¹¹⁷ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, Sec. 64. Some of these are examples that Nietzsche himself uses when presenting the six methods of combating the vehemence of a drive.

¹¹⁸ *D*, Sec. 109. This may be an allusion to Plato’s *Phaedrus* [253d-254a] where the soul is composed of a charioteer being led by two horses: the charioteer symbolizes reason; the white

fourth method of combating a drive is to associate its gratification in general so firmly with some very painful thought that the gratification of that drive comes to be experienced as painful. This method is slightly more sophisticated because it does not seek to destroy the vehement drive. Instead, it associates the vehement drive with imagined or potentially real bad consequences that would arise from its continued existence. Its sophistication lies in its “intellectual artifice.” Nevertheless, this method is still akin to the first three because it is an unconscious attempt to eliminate the vehement drive. All of these methods assume that it is possible to completely extirpate one of the more vehement drives. While it may be possible to entirely extirpate a drive, it nevertheless would seem to require a great deal of spiritual effort. Even though it is possible to fully rid oneself of a drive, it may not be possible to destroy the existential needs, which have a certain foundational primacy underneath an individual’s diverse set of drives. The force of each of these drives is rooted in the “chemistry” of our existential needs: we are compounds made up of instincts, imagination, reason, consciousness—all or any of which may be masked drives themselves. In other words, there is a certain quantum of energy behind one’s reason, behind one’s intellect, behind one’s imagination and behind each of the “faculties” of our inner experience. Because of this forcefulness of each of these faculties, we can say that they are the skeletal framework fleshed out by developed and developing drives. Let us jump to the sixth method which is to generally weaken and exhaust the entire bodily and physical organism, thereby weakening the vehement drive. This method is less than ideal because of its more comprehensively life-negating quality. To sacrifice one’s body simply in order to combat a

horse is a lover of moderation [*sōphrosunē*] and shame [*aidōs*]; and the black horse is a lover of pride [*hubris*] and boasting [*alazoneia*]. It is interesting to notice that it is the two horses that ultimately control the movement of the charioteer, not the other way around. All that the charioteer can do is to “rein in” the “vehemence” of his horses. The charioteer cannot destroy his horses, or he would surely “break his own neck.”

single violent drive would be to sacrifice the possibility of self-realization. The body plays too integral a role in the process of self-realization to give it up.¹¹⁹

Nietzsche's fifth method of combating a vehement drive is the one involving actual sublimation and works in the following manner:

...one brings about a dislocation of one's quanta of strength by imposing on oneself a particularly difficult and strenuous labor, or by deliberately subjecting oneself to a new stimulus and pleasure and thus directing one's thoughts and plays of physical forces into other channels. It comes to the same thing if one for the time being favours another drive, gives it ample opportunity for gratification and thus makes it squander that energy otherwise available to the drive which through its vehemence has grown burdensome.¹²⁰

The vehement drive, disapproved and unaccepted by the individual and society, transforms itself into a new drive that can be approved and accepted. The channels into which the overly violent drive flows may retain some semblance of the pre-sublimated drive: cruelty sublimated into punishment; sexuality sublimated into art; possession sublimated into love; "evil" actions sublimated into "good" actions.¹²¹ The distinction between the existential needs and the drives,

¹¹⁹ In "On the Despisers of the Body," Zarathustra states, "Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage—whose name is self. In your body he dwells; he is your body." The self here is considered an unknown sage because his wisdom is his recognition that he is the higher self to which the ego, the reason, the sense and the spirit all aim. Of these instruments, the higher self says they are: "A detour to my end. I am the leading strings of the ego and the prompter of its concepts."

¹²⁰ *D*, Sec. 109.

¹²¹ See *HAH*, Sec. 107 for another set of related thoughts on the error of belief/faith in opposites. Even though the central theme of this section is that humankind is a part of nature and that everything that occurs in nature happens out of necessity, Nietzsche does still hold that genuine freedom is possible. Three passages reveal this: 1) Nietzsche's metaphor that mankind is a butterfly that wants to tear itself out of its cocoon ends with it beholding the light, which he refers to as "the realm of freedom." 2) Nietzsche suggests that the belief that "everything is necessary" is *itself* necessary, but its necessity seems more like a necessity for humanity to reach some goal and not a strictly epistemic necessity. 3) Regarding the domain of morality, Nietzsche claims that despite the mutability of all moral "phenomena" (interpretations), "everything is also flooding forward, and towards one goal." This goal is either genuine freedom, the realization of real selves, or perhaps some combination of the two in which fully realized selves exemplify the will to power and do so with genuine freedom.

which are all extensions of the more basic needs, should be recognized here. The sublimation of some inner entity implies an attempt to annihilate that entity upon its sublimation where the entity in which it transforms itself replaces the former one. An individual's drives are what are sublimated, for the drives are entities that can be, and sometimes ought to be, extinguished. On the other hand, the existential needs are the raw materials of what we are—walking contradictions between our instincts and our consciousness—and they cannot be extinguished, for to do so would be to cease to be human. Despite this distinction that complexifies our picture of the psyche, the process of sublimation does appear to play a crucial role in the realization of a self. The more refined the processes of sublimation are—the closer will an individual be to achieving self-realization: this is the primary sense of what it means to exemplify the will to power. Bear in mind that the fundamental norm of need-satisfaction is that it is performed for the sake of the beautiful and that acting for the sake of the beautiful involves some kind of self-mastery, especially the conscious self-mastery over one's instincts and needs. Both the elements of beauty and self-mastery appear to be inextricably linked to sublimation. When an individual manifests the most elevated form of the will to power, such a refined activity of sublimated drives finds itself as a process beautification.

The Existential Need for a Relation of Self-Love

The notion of the self as multiplicity (or at least as duality in which the self “sees” and “relates” to itself) and this continual return to the self's complex inner world has influenced me to add a further existential need to Fromm's list: the need for a loving relationship to one's self. The need to form a loving relationship to one's self ought to be added because the previous

needs do not sufficiently address the “many mortal souls” that exist within a single individual and how those souls quarrel and potentially can coexist without internal discord. The kinds of inner discord that we are most concerned with result from feelings of impotence, self-contempt and resentment that have the potential to be externalized toward others. Christine Swanton says that self-love is a solid bonding with oneself expressing strength, vitality and energy, one that is devoid of the resentment of the threatened, vulnerable, hostile and envious.¹²² Such harmful feelings turn inward when the human needs remain present yet when these existential needs cannot be satisfied (and hence when the self undergoes dissolution). It seems that the various forms of self-hate and self-contempt that frequently arise in the face of this discord prohibit a real self from being fully realized. Whether it be of the whole or of a part of oneself, self-hatred causes further fragmentation in which there is inner distance between the parts of a self but no communication between such parts. Similarly, certain forms of self-contempt that do not allow healthy growth and development stifle the possibility of realized selfhood. Along with Nietzsche’s idea that thoughts are the shadows of our feelings—always darker, emptier, simpler, I assume that the affects possess a primacy over cognitions.¹²³ This being the case, the affect oriented toward oneself that best exemplifies beauty is that of love. All of the existential needs—including that of self-love—coalesce into a kind of harmony between instincts and consciousness which makes possible the achieving of self-realization, and it is this undertaking that I take the will to power to be.

First, how does one go about developing self-love? It might be useful to provide some examples of how one can fail to love oneself. Imagine a vindictive person—let’s call him Mr.

¹²² Swanton, Christine. *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 133-136.

¹²³ *GS*, Sec. 179.

V—who must humiliate and triumph over everyone with whom he comes into contact. Mr. V glorifies that aspect of himself in which he does have a high degree of power, perhaps in logical acuity and conceptual analysis. His superiority in intellectual games and abstract theoretical analysis spills over into how he sees his whole self, causing him to feel superior *in toto* to others. However, in focusing his efforts on showing his felt superiority over others through humiliating and shaming them in their intellectual deficiencies, he simultaneously represses his inability to care for others and develop strong emotional attachments to them. Mr. V may feel contemptuous towards his inability to enter into romantic relationships and thus tends to be especially rude to intelligent women, who threaten his glorified self. The relationship that Mr. V has with himself is one of self-contempt and self-hatred: he hates himself for not being more physically attractive, for lacking the ability to be intimate and for being the primary source of his own loneliness and solitude. I draw the example of Mr. V from what Karen Horney calls the arrogant-vindictive type, which is merely one of three sub-types (the narcissistic, the perfectionistic and the arrogant-vindictive type) in which the despised self is repressed and the individual identifies himself completely with his idealized self.¹²⁴

A second example of a failure to develop a loving relationship to oneself is that of a person who undergoes a shrinking process where everything is sacrificed in order to achieve love from others. Imagine a person that we can call Mrs. E who views all manifestations of selfishness and aggression as taboos. Mrs. E experiences herself as mostly helpless and as not having many talents or even the resources to develop the few talents that she possesses. Because of her inability to be effective or to have any sway over those who are ambitious, she idealizes

¹²⁴ Horney, Karen. *Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1950, pp. 197-204.

the image of herself into “a composite of ‘lovable’ qualities, such as unselfishness, goodness, generosity, humility, saintliness, nobility, [and] sympathy.”¹²⁵ The character traits of a subdued self become virtues to be praised for Mrs. E. Such an individual bears a strong resemblance to the individual experiencing *ressentiment* in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*, where an imaginary revenge takes place against those who are strong and powerful.¹²⁶ The key to why the self-effacing neurotic solution prohibits the development of building a relation of self-love is that the self approximates to a point that approaches self-annihilation. Because Mrs. E sacrifices everything to be loved by others, one of things that she has sacrificed is herself. This is counter to some of Nietzsche’s suggestions that faith in oneself can only be acquired through a dialogue between the skeptic and the doer both inside an individual, and it is by way of good, beautiful and great actions that the doer can overcome the skeptic, thereby achieving and maintaining a love for oneself.¹²⁷

A third example of how one might fail to develop a relation of self-love is by resigning from active living. Let’s call our third neurotic Mr. R. This individual has settled for a peace which is merely the absence of conflicts, and the direct expression of this neurotic solution is his being an onlooker at himself and his life. Mr. R does not strive to achieve anything and has an aversion to effort, influence, pressure, coercion, ties of any kind or change—he has resigned from the conflicts between the pride of the idealized self and the inner “should’s” of the despised self. Mr. R experiences himself as having achieved a freedom from his inner conflicts and a

¹²⁵ Horney, p. 222.

¹²⁶ *GM*, First Essay, Secs. 10 and 11.

¹²⁷ Loving oneself and having faith in oneself appear to be closely related relations. See *GS*, Sec. 284. See also *BGE*, Sec. 287 as a contrast where faith in oneself is already present in a noble soul and not gained through “works.” The similar thread in both passages is this: even if faith in oneself is already present in a noble soul, such faith can only be fully realized through action.

freedom from human attachments. His idealized image is a composite of self-sufficiency, independence, self-contained serenity, freedom from desires and passions, stoicism, and fairness.¹²⁸ The space where Mr. R hides, or “has freedom from,” the world is on his couch watching hours and hours of television and living vicariously through the doings of fictional characters, only to wake up one day and realize that he has spent his entire life, not in the whoop and whirl of life, but as a resigned couch potato.¹²⁹ Because Mr. R never *does* anything, he cannot be praised for doing anything and there is then no self there to love.

Thus it appears that the three modes of neuroses—the appeal to mastery, the appeal to (neighborly) love and the appeal to freedom—make a relation of self-love impossible. The absence of the satisfaction of this existential need prohibits the possibility of achieving self-realization. To get a better picture of why the satisfaction of the existential need for self-love is a requirement for the overall possibility of achieving self-realization, we ought to think of what the opposite sort of relation to oneself might produce. What is going on inside one who undergoes self-hate, and what are the consequences of this relation? Horney outlines six modes of operation (or expressions) of self-hate: relentless demands on the self, merciless self-accusation, self-contempt, self-frustrations, self-tormenting and self-destruction.¹³⁰ The common phenomenon in all of these modes of operation is “the should” and the pride system tyrannizing the real self. Neurotics are driven to reach beyond themselves and do so by setting absolute values to be the measuring rod by which they measure themselves. The neurotic must be as

¹²⁸ Horney, p. 277.

¹²⁹ There are several manifestations of the neurotic solution of self-resignation, and this is only one example among many possible ways of resigning from the striving toward self-realization. Horney’s lists three sub-groups for this solution: the persistently resigned group, the rebellious group and the shallow living group.

¹³⁰ Horney, p. 117.

charitable as possible, the best lover possible, the most successful businessman, the most selfless as she can possibly be...all of which become oppressive demands because they are unreasonable or even impossible to meet. The neurotic's pride is then damaged by the inability to "measure up" to the created absolute dictates. He then feels contempt, hatred, and/or frustration toward himself. He despises his powerlessness. The potential results are a stunting of the growth and development of the real self and potentially even self-destruction. What is the end game for one who sets goals/values that are impossible to meet? There is no end game. There is only the continual and progressive tormenting of the self by the self, even if this occurs on an unconscious level.

This kind of self-contempt is not the same attitude as that of self-dissatisfaction. On the one hand, to feel contempt towards oneself is necessarily pejorative and such an attitude is caused by some deficiency or excess in one's life. That to which one directs a contemptuous attitude is perceived as worthless and hopelessly vile, or at least so much so that such would not be worthy of an attempt at redemption. But does self-contempt always result in a failure to make headway in the process of self-realization? One might argue that there is sometimes a need for self-contempt, or ask the question: How do we distinguish between the self-contempt that contributes to producing a realized-self, or 'who I am,' and the self-contempt that does not? Or with my distinction: How do we distinguish between self-contempt and self-dissatisfaction? Nietzsche may help provide an answer. In the *GM*, he describes the attitude that someone with a bad conscience possesses toward himself: someone who fails to satisfy his need for effectiveness and internalizes this need due to one of many forms of external restraint imposed by society and civilization:

This secret self-ravishment, this artists' cruelty, this delight in imposing a form upon oneself as a hard, recalcitrant, suffering material and in burning a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a No into it, this uncanny, dreadfully joyous labor of a soul voluntarily at odds with itself that makes itself suffer out of joy in making suffer—eventually this entire *active* “bad conscience”—you will have guessed it—as the womb of all ideal and imaginative phenomena, also brought to light an abundance of strange new beauty and affirmation, and perhaps beauty itself.—After all, what would be “beautiful” if the contradiction had not first become conscious of itself, if the ugly had not first said to itself: “I am ugly”?¹³¹

The norm of beauty here plays a role. If an individual with an attitude of self-contempt results in the lowering of humankind or some portion of it, then he chooses a disfiguring mode of need-satisfaction. However, if an individual possesses self-contempt (or self-dissatisfaction) and recognizes the contradictory nature of the bad conscience, then such a self-conscious soul might give birth to beauty. In other words, self-contempt can be viewed as an incurable cancer or as a pregnancy, just as there are two primary ways of viewing the bad conscience.¹³² The former fails to move beyond the internalization of its instinct for freedom, while the latter imagines a possibility of realizing the instinct for freedom. Keep in mind that Nietzsche equivocates the “instinct for freedom” with the will to power, and hence, by “instinct for freedom” I mean the achieving of self-realization. Where self-contempt is a purely negative stance towards oneself, self-dissatisfaction is simultaneously a negative and a positive stance towards oneself. Robert Pippin describes this state of self-dissatisfaction in the following terms:

All action involves a negation of a sort, an alteration of what would have remained the same without one's intervention, but Nietzsche appears particularly interested in a kind of inward-looking self-negation, a transformation of what had been a subject's restraints, or commitments, basic desires or passions, all in a way that makes possible a new kind of outward-looking relation to the world. In those paradigmatic cases (where, especially,

¹³¹ *GM*, Third Essay, Sec. 18. One might argue that the “instinct to cruelty” should be on the list of existential needs. This is incorrect. The instinct to cruelty is an extension of the more basic need for effectiveness, or more precisely, cruelty is one mode of response to this need.

¹³² See *GM*, Third Essay, Sec. 19.

the direction and course of one's whole life are at stake), he often focuses our attention on what he calls a "tension of the spirit" that allows a genuine "self-overcoming."¹³³

So, Pippen's claim that self-dissatisfaction allows self-overcoming and genuine agency coincides with my claim that self-dissatisfaction allows the achieving of self-realization.

Another mode by which self-hate might exist is when an individual acts under the assumption that he has not set *any* values to guide his existence. Even though it appears that such a person is "beyond value," he is still valuing the feeling of power derived from harming others. For example, the profiteering hedge fund manager (or the Modern Blond Beast) whose primary goal is to greedily make as much money as possible through whatever means of manipulation and deception, does what he pleases regardless of who it harms. He acts only to satisfy his greed (and any number of figures could replace him: the corrupt politician, the insurance salesman, the banker, the CEO of B.P. Oil, etc.). This figure's conscience may never come to recognize his vices; however, such a figure may possibly come to experience self-hate if he were to realize his identification with his idealized self, i.e. the epitome of capitalist wealth taken to the extreme without restraint. In a general sense, feelings of guilt, shame, remorse and regret are the sparks that ignite the warring factions within a self. It is more than just a decentralization of drives. It is a desire to extinguish that which cannot be destroyed (the self) and a desire to extinguish the self without justification, at least in the cases in which absolute values have become tyrannical. In the case where it is simply the wrong values that are being tyrannical (greed or apathy), it is possible that the desire to punish the self may become coercive instead of being directed towards self-improvement or moral education. As far as our social existence goes, the problem with self-hate is its strong tendency to be externalized toward our

¹³³ Pippen, Robert. *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010, p.112.

interpersonal relationships. Horney echoes a thought that is already present in Nietzsche: “We have cause to fear him who hates himself, for we shall be the victims of his wrath and his revenge. Let us therefore see if we cannot seduce him into loving himself!”¹³⁴ This hatred of others further minimizes the possibility of others being genuine companions of any sort, a deficiency of rootedness which thereby diminishes the possibility of self-realization. We will return to this issue of the relatedness between a self and others in the discussion of friendship in chapter five.

Another kind of self-hate is that which is promulgated by Christianity’s dogmatic view that humankind is sinful and that we are forever in need of redemption from our sinful nature. If we are sinful by nature and if hatred is one of the common passions felt by sinners, then we are also hateful by nature. But how could one ever develop a relation of self-love under such a picture? Nietzsche suggests forgiveness as a means of transforming this self-relation from one of guilt and shame into one of love:

If, as Pascal and Christianity maintain, our ego is always *hateful*, how could we ever allow and accept that another should love it—whether god or man! It would be contrary to all decency to let oneself be loved while being all the time well aware that one *deserves* only hatred—not to speak of other defensive sensations. —‘But this precisely is the realm of clemency.’ —Is your love of your neighbor an act of clemency, then? Your pity an act of clemency? Well, if you are capable of this, go a step further: love yourselves as an act of clemency—then you will no longer have any need of your god, and the whole drama of Fall and Redemption will be played out to the end in you yourselves!¹³⁵

This passage seems to be the beginning of a new movement of argument present in *Daybreak*, one inquiring into the possibility of self-love and the possibility of loving others. Under the Judeo-Christian moral guise, we appear to need forgiveness for *how we exist* from God and

¹³⁴ *D*, Sec. 517.

¹³⁵ *D*, Sec. 79.

neighbor, yet if are waiting for divine forgiveness or forgiveness from other selves (neither of which can possibly *know* us), then we will be waiting for an eternity. If these are the conditions for self-love, then self-love becomes impossible to attain. However, if one re-focuses on developing a relation of self-love with oneself—as an attitude of *amor fati* perhaps¹³⁶—then it is possible to recognize the nonexistence of one’s “sinful nature” imposed from God and neighbor. Not that every feeling of guilt or shame is inappropriate, but the mere acknowledgement that many of such self-negating feelings are self-imposed is a small step toward inner integration.

Does Nietzsche have a positive account of self-love? Yes, there is an account of self-love in Nietzsche’s works, but it must be pieced together from various sources. In the section entitled “The Spirit of Gravity,” Nietzsche’s Zarathustra characterizes self-love as something not simply possessed by all human beings but as something that one has to learn. Thus begins the ambiguous status of whether self-love (and love in general) is something that can be taught and learned at all. Zarathustra proclaims the following good news:

But whoever would become light and a bird must love himself: thus *I* teach. Not, to be sure, with the love of the wilting and wasting: for among those even self-love stinks. One must learn to love oneself—thus *I* teach—with a wholesome and healthy love, so that one can bear to be with oneself and need not roam. Such roaming baptizes itself “love of the neighbor”: with this phrase the best lies and hypocrisies have been perpetrated so far, and especially by such as were a grave burden for all the world. And verily, this is no command for today and tomorrow, to *learn* to love oneself. Rather, it is of all arts the subtlest, the most cunning, the ultimate, and the most patient. For whatever is his own is well concealed from the owner; and of all treasures, it is our own that we dig up last: thus the spirit of gravity orders it.¹³⁷

Two curious thoughts present themselves in this passage. The first is that self-love is not something to which everyone should aspire. If one possesses a poor character that is “wilting

¹³⁶ See *GS* 276 for Nietzsche’s initial account of *amor fati* and *EH*, “Why I Am So Clever,” Sec. 10 for further thoughts on the attitude.

¹³⁷ *TSZ*, “On the Spirit of Gravity,” Sec. 2.

and wasting,” then one should not love oneself, for there is not anything there that is lovable. However, if one possesses a more free-spirited character whose love is “wholesome and healthy,” then such a person ought to work to develop the relation of self-love.¹³⁸ The second curious thought is that Zarathustra teaches those who can fly “to learn to love oneself” and yet he also says that this command, “to *learn* to love oneself,” is *not* a command for today and tomorrow. Rather than completely negate itself, this further suggestion that Zarathustra’s teaching is not a command for the present and for the future may indicate that self-love is not something that can be learned. It is either present but concealed within an individual, or it is not present and will never be so. Instead of being learned, perhaps self-love is something that is realized through one’s actions both toward oneself and toward others. Such a process of realization would be one that requires “subtlety”, “cunning”, and “patience,” for the instinct-consciousness split can be a source of self-deception. Insofar as one’s instincts (and existential needs) are frustrated or are not satisfied for the sake of the beautiful, there is the possibility that those coarsened instincts will be unconsciously disguised often by moral masks that glorify passivity, humility and compassion. Disgusted by his own weakness, an individual will turn a blind eye toward himself, as a mere set of frustrated instincts, and the individual *qua* frustrated instincts will hide from himself as consciousness. Such is the dimension that is “concealed from his owner”—one does not conceal what is beautiful; one conceals what is ugly, deformed and frustrated. The “treasure” that we may potentially “dig up” at last is not a treasure that one simply and purely discovers, like a treasure on a deserted island. The digging up of the treasure of selfhood is more a realization, which is a blend of discovery and creation. Digging up a self

¹³⁸ This distinction is similar to the one Aristotle makes in Book IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that a person who performs beautiful actions should love himself while a corrupt person who follows base passions should not love himself. See Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Joe Sachs. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002, 1169a10-1169b1.

takes work! This is the sense in which a subtle inner-look, a cunning seeker and a patient creator are all required for the activity of self-realization.

The ambiguity between whether love is learnable or not learnable continues in Book Four of the *GS*. Here Nietzsche compares learning to hear a figure and melody in music to learning to love. He seems to go back to the idea that it is possible for love to be learned, especially love for oneself. He says:

In the end we are always rewarded for our good will, our patience, our fair-mindedness, and gentleness with what is strange; gradually, it sheds its veil and turns out to be a new and indescribable beauty. That is its *thanks* for our hospitality. Even those who love themselves will have learned it in this way; for there is no other way. Love, too, has to be learned.¹³⁹

There is a sense in which everything outside of oneself is strange and perceived as other. Nietzsche highlights this strangeness of otherness that at first causes trepidation but that a person's beauty may become familiar despite its former unknown quality. It is interesting that Nietzsche ends this passage with the thought that self-love must be learned in this way: the overcoming of beauty's strangeness. The object of love must possess beauty, which continues the argument begun on self-love in *TSZ*. However, there is a kind of blurring between the possession of beauty and the fashioning of beauty. Should one adopt a truthful attitude or an artistic attitude toward the fatalistic dimension of one's existence? Well, one ought to be capable of doing both, depending which facets of one's existence are being attended to. David Owen claims that Nietzsche's idea of self-love is the valuing of the disposition of *amor fati*.¹⁴⁰ By "valuing," he seems to mean that self-love is the "adoption" of the disposition of *amor fati*.

¹³⁹ *GS*, Sec. 334.

¹⁴⁰ Owen, David. "Autonomy, Self-Respect, and Self-Love: Nietzsche on Ethical Agency," in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. Eds. Ken Gemes and Simon May. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 212-220.

Owen is on the right track here, for there is an element of artistic illusion toward those aspects of one's existence that could possibly prevent one from living well and there is also an element of truthfulness that is required to "face up" to the aspects of one's existence that cannot be altered. One caution to Owen's conception of self-love is that seeing parts of one's fate as beautiful may potentially slip into a form of self-deception. One who makes himself a "poet of his life" will likely have the ability to discriminate between those fatalistic qualities which cannot be changed and those fatalistic qualities that can possibly be improved upon.

The theme of self-love is expressed in the section of the *GS* entitled "One thing is needful," yet one will easily misunderstand the main idea if one does not ruminate properly. The passage opens with the line, "To 'give style' to one's character—a great and rare art!" This begins the explanation of how strong and weak natures differ in the aesthetic attitudes they bear toward themselves. The subjective constraint of style will be loved by strong natures who can bear what fate has given them, but the constraint of style will be hated by weak natures who cannot stand the sight of what fate has thrown at them. What is it that is often so misunderstood though? The one thing that is needful is not the giving of style to one's character. Something else must be gained before that. Near the very end of this same section, Nietzsche expresses the salience of the existential need of self-love:

For one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself, whether it be by means of this or that poetry and art; only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims, if only by having to endure his ugly sight. For the sight of what is ugly makes one bad and gloomy.¹⁴¹

One cannot be anyone else other than who he is. One is spit into the world as a being that has not and cannot possibly have freely given the world permission to thrust one into existence. We are

¹⁴¹ *GS*, Sec. 290.

responsible for fostering the kind of affective attitude that we have towards our own existence though. Nietzsche considers self-satisfaction to be the mode of self-orientation that is performed for the sake of the beautiful, while “dissatisfaction” with oneself is a mode of self-orientation which can manifest itself in vengeful actions toward oneself or be externalized into shameful actions committed against others. Nietzsche claims that the relation one ought to have with oneself is that of satisfaction [*Zufriedenheit*]¹⁴²—a relation that he also speaks of in terms of self-love. Where the weak characters “hate” [*hassen*] the constraint of style, it can reasonably be said that the strong characters love the constraint of style. Adopting a loving attitude toward “the style” that is presented to oneself by one’s own inner dialogical nature seems to be nearly identical to self-love: a love of one’s fate to be who one is.

Nietzsche’s theme of self-love continues into *BGE* where self-love presents itself as a mark of distinction of the noble soul. He solidifies the thought that not everyone is capable of nobility of soul. Those who seek it are separate from those who simply possess it. The closeness between faith, reverence and love for oneself is also further explained:

It is not the works [of a noble soul], it is the *faith* that is decisive here, that determines the order of rank—to take up again an ancient religious formula in a new and more profound sense: some fundamental certainty that a noble soul has about itself, something that cannot be sought, nor found, nor perhaps lost. *The noble soul has reverence for itself.*¹⁴²

Through an exploration of what constitutes the seven existential needs and the salient ways in which we as human beings can satisfy these needs, we have gained a new understanding of how an individual can undergo and achieve self-realization. When a self is realized under the norm of beauty, as discussed in chapter two, one does in fact exemplify the will to power. In the next chapter, we will look more closely at the ontological status of the will to power. I have

¹⁴² *BGE*, Sec. 287.

described it as a human achievement that is conditioned both by one's already existing relation to happiness/unhappiness and by one's social and political setting. We will consider the possibility that the will to power is a self-conscious myth that merely expresses Nietzsche's values. Upon replying to this worry, we will look at types of human beings who serve as models that exemplify the will to power, in order to apprehend a more concrete picture of who a fully realized self would be.

Chapter Four

The Status of the Will to Power: Myth or Truth?...The Status of Philosophy: Art or Science?

What is the ontological status of the will to power? What mode of existence does it occupy? Properly understood, the will to power is a specific kind of human achievement—i.e. the realization of a self. Because it is an achieving of self-realization, it is a mistake to conceive of the will to power as a metaphysical phenomenon. It cannot be *reduced* to a metaphysical first principle, nor can it simply be *reduced* to a moral first principle. The reductionist account of the will to power holds that all “quanta of force” are manifestations of a single primary drive—they are reducible to the drive for power.¹⁴³ The reductionist view is sometimes framed to include not just human drives (the weaker reductionist view) but all drives in the universe (the stronger reductionist view) and is read as some kind of metaphysical view of the world. This common misunderstanding is put together from passages usually taken willy-nilly from Nietzsche’s unpublished *Nachlass* such as the following:

And do you know what “the world” is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income;...this, my *Dionysian* world of the eternally self-creating, eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the two-fold voluptuous delight, my “beyond good and evil,” without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels goodwill towards itself—do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest,

¹⁴³ Thomas Hurka is one scholar who holds this view. See his “Nietzsche: Perfectionist,” in *Nietzsche and Morality*. Ed. Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu. New York: Clarendon Press, 2007, pp. 9-31.

most intrepid, most midnightly men?—*This world is the will to power—and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!¹⁴⁴

We should not look to unpublished notes to decipher the meaning of the doctrine of the will to power, especially when Nietzsche clearly expresses his distaste for metaphysical pictures of reality. As an opponent of metaphysicians and anti-naturalists, we might think of Nietzsche as an anti-anti-naturalist. He was concerned with re-integrating man back into nature. He recognized and attempted an upheaval of the errors of ancient Greek metaphysicians such as Parmenides and Plato, the long tradition of Christian metaphysics, and the transcendental (and seemingly metaphysical) notion of the will that held center stage in German philosophy in the century and a half before him. The grandiose and other-worldly metaphysical systems that were conceived by Parmenides, Plato, Aquinas, Leibniz, Schopenhauer or Hegel were too far reaching into that which was “unknowable” and more importantly into that which was “unimportant” (beyond what is human, all too human). In the chapter entitled “Of First and Last Things,” he says:

For one could assert nothing at all of the metaphysical world except that it was a being-other, an inaccessible, incomprehensible being-other; it would be a thing with negative qualities.—Even if the existence of such a world were never so well demonstrated, it is certain that knowledge of it would be the most useless of all knowledge: more useless even than the chemical composition of water must be to the sailor in danger of shipwreck.¹⁴⁵

The weaker reductionist view that all human drives are expressions of the will to power implies that no drive could be opposed to any other drive because there is really only one drive ever at work, the drive for power, even if it wears different masks. If all human drives were reduced to one drive, then it seems that the doctrine would not capture the internally conflicting nature of

¹⁴⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books, 1967, Sec. 1067.

¹⁴⁵ *HAAH*, Vol. I, Sec. 9.

the drives present in human psychology. Such a view would be an oversimplification. An even more pressing problem for the weaker reductionist view is that it presupposes that the will to power is already operative in everything that we do—whether we are expressing a drive for sex, a drive for a sense of belonging in a community, a drive to have as much wealth as possible, a drive to social prestige, a drive to dominate or possess another person, or whatever. If formulated in this manner, everyone would have access to the will to power because everyone would already always be operating under its sway. Such a proposal makes it difficult to explain the magnitude of apathy, sloth and boredom that exist for us as human beings. Such vicious conditions seem to have only become more pervasive in modernity with the exponential rise of industry and technology. How is the absence of a desire to do anything a manifestation of the will to power? Or how is not having the desire to desire anything a manifestation of the will to power? The reduction of the will to power to a fundamental meta-drive underlying all human drives that is already in existence further distances the possibility of the will to power that we are interested in (and that Nietzsche was interested in) from its birth, in and out of our existential needs, and its connection to genuine autonomy and unified selfhood. In addition, the doctrine of the will to power should be understood as applying only to human beings. Although we operate under the assumption that we are moral beings, we need to be careful in what way we can possibly be normatively evaluated. Our existential needs are not moral phenomena, but there will be a sense in which we can morally praise or blame the will to power.¹⁴⁶ It is a human potential that, depending on the degree of success or failure of the achieving of self-realization,

¹⁴⁶ We might also refer to the needs that I will be discussing as “biopsychosocial” needs. I think that referring to them as “existential” captures this multi-dimensional essence of needs. Further, I take “need” to be somewhat of a basic term: the compulsion to fill an emptiness; an inner force of striving toward something.

determines what kind of character one will develop and how that character will exemplify strength or weakness, virtue or vice, and excellence or baseness.

Moving beyond the absolute metaphysical and moral conceptions of the will to power, we must further ruminate on the curious status of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power. The one passage in *BGE* that serves as a potential threat to my account of the will to power is section 36, the only place where Nietzsche actually provides an argument for the existence of the will to power. In a sense the entire aphorism composes "the argument" for what the nature of the will to power might possibly be, but the core of Nietzsche's line of reasoning lies in the last paragraph of *BGE* 36:

Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as *my* proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution to the problem of procreation and nourishment—it is *one* problem—then one would have gained the right to determine *all* efficient force univocally as—*will to power*. The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its "intelligible character"—it would be "will to power" and nothing else.—

As Maudemarie Clark has argued in her writings on the will to power, the problem is that the argument is given in the subjunctive tense and not in the declarative.¹⁴⁷ So she claims that Nietzsche merely makes *the supposition* that all organic functions are rooted in the will to power. If that supposition were true, then we *would have* gained the right to determine all efficient force univocally as the will to power. Then, Nietzsche's conclusion is that the world *would* then be will to power and nothing else (and not that is actually *is*.) Does the argument here tell against interpreting the will to power as a doctrine that is Nietzsche's actual position? Is Nietzsche being ironic? Is he suggesting that the doctrine is a mere expression of something that he values

¹⁴⁷ Clark, Maudemarie. "Nietzsche's Doctrines of the Will to Power," *Nietzsche*. Ed. John Richardson and Brian Leiter. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 145-146.

and not saying something about the actual nature of human life? Clark claims that he is. We must specifically show why Clark's account of the will is incorrect if we are to view the will to power as humanity's potential achieving of self-realization and not a mere expression of Nietzsche's values.

Clark claims that Nietzsche in fact espouses two doctrines of the will to power: an ontological doctrine and a psychological doctrine. According to Clark, the ontological doctrine of the will to power is that the concept is a self-conscious myth giving us a picture or image of reality which is not intended to provide knowledge, but is supposed to play a role in the interpretation of experience and the furtherance of life.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, the psychological doctrine of the will to power is that it is "the most life-affirming drive in the sense that the satisfaction of this drive, a sense of power, of the ability to enforce one's will, is necessary for the affirmation of life, whereas a sense of powerlessness induces depression and a tendency to passive nihilism."¹⁴⁹ Clark claims that the ontological doctrine of the will to power is a product of Nietzsche's viewing philosophy as an art and not as a science, and she draws this thought from his early notebooks. Clark believes that because Nietzsche conceives of philosophy as an art, it cannot be something that is true or false but is the conceptual representation of a myth—a self-conscious myth that creates the world in the image of what Nietzsche happens to value.¹⁵⁰

This conception of the ontological doctrine is misguided. The supposed two doctrines, ontological and psychological, are one and the same. There is no doctrine of the will to power whose ontological status is that of a self-conscious myth. There is only one doctrine of the will

¹⁴⁸ Clark, p. 143.

¹⁴⁹ Clark, p. 148.

¹⁵⁰ Clark, pp. 142-143.

to power that can be defined as the achieving of self-realization, which is psychological in nature and which engages in a dialogical relationship with our existential needs.

Why reject Clark's proposal that the will to power's ontological status is a self-conscious myth? First, the textual evidence for the ideas that Nietzsche considers philosophy to be an art and that he intends the will to power to be a myth come from early notebooks which were not published. This renders the material somewhat dubious as to what degree it represents the core of Nietzsche's thought on the nature of philosophy. The material in his early notebooks is a collection of notes, not polished reflections on the human condition, the nature of philosophy and the will to power. Even though it may not be the best source to solidify Nietzsche's thought; however, it may still be consulted to support the primary material found in the published texts. If we do venture to use the ideas expressed in the early notebooks, we discover that philosophy exists somewhere in the space between art and science—and even that philosophy, while distinct, still has something in common with both. Drawing from the same notebooks that Clark uses, we find textual support for the idea that philosophy exists at a distance from the myth-making of art yet shares something both with it and with the enterprise of science:

The philosopher must *recognize what is necessary*, and the artist must *create* it. The philosopher must empathize with universal suffering most strongly, just as each of the ancient Greek philosophers expresses a need: it is there, in that gap, that he places his system. He builds his world into that gap.¹⁵¹

There are somewhat different activities that the philosopher and the artist perform. The philosopher is moved by his drive for knowledge and by his drive for truth, and the artist is driven by his drive to create, to use illusory representations to depict the world and make beautiful what is not, to make digestible what is indigestible. As a lover of wisdom, on the other

¹⁵¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Writings from the Early Notebooks*. Trans. Ladislaus Löb. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Notebook 19, Sec. [23].

hand, the philosopher must have the courage to face up to the necessity of universal human suffering in order to honestly inquire into this problem of existence.¹⁵² Not just the necessity of it, but the salience and undeniable force that suffering has on us, especially emotional suffering. The philosopher is a figure who is supposed to seek out and potentially reveal what kind of attitude we ought to have toward the reality of our suffering and our mortality. Although the philosopher operates partially under an aesthetic sensibility, he does possess a limitation on his aesthetic activity, one by which the artist is not so constrained. Neither Salvadore Dali's surreal images of his *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus* nor his *Burning Giraffe* are limited by reality, nor are M. C. Escher's mathematically impossible images of his *Relativity* or of his *Waterfall* constrained by what is logical or even what is possible. This however is not the case for the philosopher, as understood by Nietzsche. "*What is necessary*" not only limits the philosophical activity, but it also serves as a condition that makes possible the ultimate goals of living well and realizing a self. Gaining insight into what is necessary requires a higher level of consciousness toward oneself and the world. In the particular case of self-realization, a precondition is that one must consciously recognize that there are a set of existential needs at one's core. It is only with such recognition that it is then possible to satisfy those needs in a manner that will realize a true self. At another point in Notebook 19, Nietzsche says:

How does the philosophical genius relate to art? There is little we can learn from his direct behavior. We must ask: what in his philosophy is art? Work of art? What *remains*

¹⁵² It is interesting that Nietzsche characterizes the philosopher must possess a particular kind of empathy: one for universal suffering. What does Nietzsche mean by the analogous relation between empathy of suffering and the expression of a need by the ancient Greeks? In *D Sec.* 142, Nietzsche claims that the source of empathy is in mankind's timidity: man is the most timid of all creatures on account of his subtle and fragile nature. The fear of something that strange and/or dangerous is "the instructor in empathy." I think that the mention of empathy in the above passage from his notebook accentuates one particular example of "*what is necessary*" and therefore something that must be truthfully recognized by the philosopher.

if his system is destroyed as science? But it must be precisely what remains that *restrains* the drive for knowledge, i.e. the artistic quality. Why is such a restraint necessary? For, scientifically considered, it is an illusion, an untruth, that deceives and only temporarily satisfies the drive for knowledge. The value of philosophy with regard to this restraint lies not in the sphere of knowledge, but in the sphere of life: the *will to existence uses philosophy* for the purpose of a higher form of existence.¹⁵³

Here we should notice that part of the philosophical activity of the philosophical genius is artistic and that part of his activity is scientific. The part that is artistic merely “restrains” the scientific part: that drive which wants to create is only tempered by that drive which wants the truth—or vice versa, we might say that that drive which wants the truth is tempered by that drive which wants to create. The drive to create does not extinguish the drive for truth, nor does the drive to truth exterminate the drive to create. Quoting again from two final passages in Notebook 19, we find a further deepening of the notion of philosophy as both science and art:

There is *no philosophy apart, separate from science: in both, thinking occurs in the same way*. The reason why unprovable philosophizing still has a value, indeed usually a greater value than a scientific proposition, lies in the aesthetic value of such philosophizing, i.e. in its beauty and sublimity. Even if it cannot prove itself as a scientific edifice, it is still present as a *work of art*. But is it not the same in scientific matters?—In other words: it is not the pure *drive for knowledge* that decides, but the *aesthetic drive*: the poorly supported philosophy of Heraclitus has greater artistic value than all the propositions of Aristotle.¹⁵⁴

For instance, Heraclitus wonderfully describes the randomness of the events of the world when he states, “Time is a child moving counters in a game; the royal power is a child’s.”¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, even though we should admire Aristotle for his insight and philosophical rigor, we do not generally find such alluring imagery; rather, we find rational arguments. Further along in the same notebook:

¹⁵³ *WEN*, Notebook 19, Sec. [45].

¹⁵⁴ *WEN*, Notebook 19, Sec. [76].

¹⁵⁵ Heraclitus, DK line number 52.

Philosophical thinking belongs to the same species as scientific thinking, but it relates to *great* things and concerns. But the concept of greatness is variable, part aesthetic, part moral. It *restrains* the drive for knowledge. That is its cultural significance.¹⁵⁶

The structure of thinking in philosophy resembles the structure of thinking in science, and it is neither the pure drive for knowledge nor the pure drive to beatify that constitutes the practice of philosophy. The aesthetic drive may take a certain primacy in decision-making based on what is valuable and what is not, but it is the consideration of the authority of the values themselves that makes the path to ‘hard-to-swallow’ truths laden with artistic imagery. It is the uncertainty and ambiguity of “what is great” that “restrains,” yet does not extinguish, the drive for philosophical knowledge. A more appropriate word for philosophical knowledge might be “wisdom,” which is often conceived of as being a necessary virtue for living well and for the corresponding possibility of realizing a self in a life well-lived. An individual who attains such wisdom would be someone who realizes the interdependence of truth-seeking rationality and beauty-seeking intuition. Nietzsche suggests that an existence that embodies only one or the other would be incomplete:

There are eras in which rational man and intuitive man stand side by side, the one fearful of intuition, the other scornful of abstraction. The latter is just as irrational as the former is inartistic. Both desire to dominate life: the former by knowing how to meet the greatest needs with foresight, prudence and regularity, the latter by being an ‘over-joyous hero’ who does not see those needs and who regards life as real only when it is disguised as make-believe and beauty.¹⁵⁷

Notice that both the irrationality of the intuitive man and the absence of artistic ability of the rational man are deficiencies of a figure that ought to seek to possess the capacities of each. In order to succeed at life, the rational man needs to develop the ability to perceive “the greatest

¹⁵⁶ *WEN*, Notebook 19, Sec. [83].

¹⁵⁷ Nietzsche, Friedrich. “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense (1873),” in *Writings from the Early Notebooks*. Trans. Ladislaus Lob. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 263-264.

needs” as beautiful and form a loving attitude toward such pieces of fate. Similarly, for the intuitive man to flourish, he must honestly recognize “the greatest needs” as real even through the “make-believe” veil that he has strewn over them. This early instance of Nietzsche working through the nature of truth and falsity reaches its more finessed conclusion with the notion of *amor fati* in the *GS*. This essay also prefigures the refinement of Nietzsche’s ideas of the genuine philosopher and the will to power in the middle work of *BGE*.

After drawing primarily from Nietzsche’s early notes, Clark uses *Beyond Good and Evil* as her main point of reference in order to build her argument that the will to power is a self-conscious myth, and she continues to defend her conception of the ontological doctrine by focusing on a misinterpretation of the idea that philosophers “create the world” in their own image. She begins with an analysis of *BGE 9* and contends that Nietzsche is comparing himself to the Stoics in the sense that as the Stoics interpreted nature “according to the Stoa,” similarly Nietzsche himself (has confessed that he) interprets nature “according to Nietzsche.”¹⁵⁸ However, in this section Nietzsche is not merely placing his interpretation of nature side-by-side with the Stoic interpretation of nature and then just saying that philosophers pick and choose however they wish to conceive of the natural world. No, not all interpretations of the world are equally life-affirming. There are better and worse interpretations. He is claiming that the Stoics “see nature the wrong way” because they imposed their morality on nature: claiming virtue as that which is in accordance with nature.¹⁵⁹ Does not Nietzsche impose his morality on nature in the same way? No, he does not. If the will to power is thought of as a psychological phenomenon in a dialogical relationship with our existential needs and if the will to power is

¹⁵⁸ Clark, p. 144.

¹⁵⁹ Diogenes Laertius [I 179a; I 555; III 4] in *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*. Trans. J. von Arnim. Leipzig, 1905-24.

properly thought of as applying only to human beings, then we do not impose any moral ideal (or any morality) on nature. Nietzsche describes nature and then explains our contentious relationship to nature, while still being a part of nature in the first paragraph of *BGE* section 9. He construes nature as it is from the human perspective, as “wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time.”¹⁶⁰ Without human beings involved, nature is not wasteful. It is indifferent, without purpose and without meaning, without our constellation of values ranging from mercy and forgiveness to justice and punishment. It is only when human beings arrive on the scene, that we—natural beings though we are—want to rip and tear ourselves away from nature and transform ourselves into something unnatural. We want to be good, to be beautiful, to be moral, to be one of God’s children, to be free, to be holy. Nietzsche expresses this idea when he asks, “Living—is that not precisely wanting to be other than this nature? Is not living—estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different?”¹⁶¹

Nietzsche is portraying nature as it actually is here in this early passage in *BGE*. But such an interpretation renders the last short paragraph of section 9 to be somewhat perplexing, for it is here that Nietzsche formally introduces the notion that the philosopher “creates the world” in his own image. The section ends with the following:

¹⁶⁰ *BGE*, Sec. 9.

¹⁶¹ Hannah Arendt shares a similar thought as she describes mankind’s awareness of being part of nature (and the necessities that go along with being a part of the natural world) is a condition for the possibility of his freedom: “Man cannot be free if he does not know that he is subject to necessity, because his freedom is always won in his never wholly successful attempts to liberate himself from necessity” in *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 121.

But this is an ancient, eternal story: what formerly happened with the Stoics still happens today, too, as soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself. It always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise. Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the “creation of the world,” to the *causa prima*.¹⁶²

If this last passage is taken as the final conclusion to section 9 and as the final conclusion of Nietzsche’s thoughts on who a philosopher is, then the activity of “creating the world,” which appears to be the essence of what a philosopher does, lends credence to Clarke’s argument that there is an ontological doctrine of the will to power and that that doctrine is a self-conscious myth. But without more clarification, it remains a mysterious activity. How is it possible for someone to create the world, even for a philosopher? I suggest that the introduction of this idea is actually the beginning of a larger argument regarding who and what a philosopher is. The themes that appear in any single work of Nietzsche are presented cyclically, and there is a kind of movement of the argument that unfolds with each return to any one theme. For instance, the question “What is the nature of a genuine philosopher?” is one of the themes that Nietzsche begins to address in section 9 of *BGE* but that he unravels at further points in the body of the work. The two points of further development of the nature of the philosopher occur later in *BGE* in sections 211 and 292. In section 211 Nietzsche makes a strange distinction between “philosophical laborers” and “genuine philosophers” where the former merely press previous positings of values into universal formulas that apply for all (Kant and Hegel being the examples Nietzsche gives) but where the latter create values that are somehow unique to the self which creates them. Nietzsche transfigures the idea of “creating the world” into the idea of “creating values” in his description:

Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: they say, “thus it shall be!” They first determine the Whither and For What of man, and in so doing have at

¹⁶² *BGE*, Sec. 9.

their disposal the preliminary labor of all philosophical laborers, all who have overcome the past. With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their “knowing” is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is—*will to power*.¹⁶³

In this second movement of the development of the notion of a genuine philosopher, what has become the mark of distinction for such a figure? The genuine philosopher now possesses a range of features: an orientation toward the future; a compulsion to find the greatness of man; the capacity to create values; an evaluative stance toward the virtues of his time; and a being whole in manifoldness.¹⁶⁴ While any philosopher, from the ancient Greeks to contemporary figures, does some analysis of already existing values, it seems that the genuine philosopher “creates values” with an “eye to the future” by placing himself in certain values that already exist: the new product being ‘the appropriation of an old value transfigured into a new philosopher.’ The presence of one’s active self within the “created” value gains a new emphasis and is brought to a level of completion near the end of “What is Noble.” The genuine philosopher now exists and is portrayed as the following:

a human being who constantly experiences, sees, hears, suspects, hopes, and dreams extraordinary things; who is struck by his own thoughts as from outside, as from above and below, as by *his* type of experiences and lightning bolts; who is perhaps himself a storm pregnant with new lightnings; a fatal human being around whom there are constant rumblings and growlings, crevices, and uncanny doings. A philosopher—alas, a being that often runs away from itself, often is afraid of itself—but too inquisitive not to “come to” again—always back to himself.¹⁶⁵

In this final movement of the development of the genuine philosopher, Nietzsche adds action and a newfound intimacy with one’s self. Thus the philosopher who has placed himself in his values now puts those values into his “doings”, which brings them into a more realized state from mere

¹⁶³ *BGE*, Sec. 211.

¹⁶⁴ These features are found not only in section 211 but also in sections 212 and 213—these three being the last three sections of “We Scholars” in *BGE*.

¹⁶⁵ *BGE*, Sec. 292.

intentions or desires. This figure has also developed an attitude of honesty and truthfulness toward himself and is always willing to return to his own self—to understand who he is and what possibilities lay before him as to who he may become in his future. So, the first movement’s notion of world-creation has transformed into the second movement’s notion of value-creation which in the third movement is transformed into self-creation.

Is this line of thinking concerning the nature of the genuine philosopher a digression? No, it is not. Clark argued that Nietzsche himself was a philosopher who treated philosophy as art and thus “created the world” in his own image, divorcing philosophy from the drive to truth... or more precisely the drive to truthfulness. We now see that Nietzsche’s complete theme of the nature of the genuine philosopher is complex, and that complex “becoming” can be applied to Nietzsche himself. This interpretation does rest on the assumption that Nietzsche considered himself to be a genuine philosopher, even if he does not explicitly state this outright. We have reason to think that this is the case though. Nietzsche’s most reflective work on himself—on who he is—is *Ecce Homo*. In this piece of writing, Nietzsche provides the meaning of philosophy, stating, “Philosophy, as I have so far understood and lived it, means living voluntarily among ice and high mountains—seeking out everything strange and questionable in existence, everything so far placed under a ban by morality.”¹⁶⁶ He does recognize himself as “living” philosophy by examining that which appears most worthy of investigation, especially that which may at first induce in one the state of *aporia*. Philosophy swings away from the pole of art (with its value of creation) and toward the pole of science (with its value of rational discovery) when Nietzsche once again reaffirms the heart of philosophy: “How much truth does

¹⁶⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is* in the *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: The Modern Library, 2000, Preface, Sec. 3.

a spirit *endure*, how much truth does it *dare*? More and more that became for me the real measure of value.”¹⁶⁷ Nietzsche does in fact capture what the activity of philosophy is: questioning one’s own feelings and thoughts toward oneself, toward others and toward the world and having the will to entertain without completely absorbing the feelings and thoughts of your interlocutor (whether he is alive or born posthumously).

Even though this is the characteristic activity of the genuine philosopher, the possible achieving of self-realization need not be strictly limited to the sphere of philosophy. Multiple external perspectives can take up temporary residency within an individual, each perspective becoming a “drive” or “instinct” that must adapt to the drives that oppose it inside that same individual. Nietzsche contrasts the Christian desideratum of “peace of soul” with his naturalized morality: “Our attitude to the “internal enemy” is no different: here too we have spiritualized hostility; here too we have come to appreciate its value. The price of fruitfulness is to be rich in internal opposition; one remains young only as long as the soul does not stretch itself and desire peace.”¹⁶⁸ Pure untamed hostility that may have been previously felt toward some perspective would seek to crush it out of existence, yet the spiritualization (or sublimation) of that hostility makes possible the creative tension between opposing drives. This theme of incorporating as much truth as possible is given further expression in Nietzsche’s notes:

In contrast to the animals, man has cultivated an abundance of *contrary* drives and impulses within himself: thanks to this synthesis, he is master of the earth.—Moralities are the expression of locally limited orders of rank in his multifarious world of drives, so man should not perish through their contradictions. Thus a drive as master, its opposite

¹⁶⁷ *EH*, Preface, Sec. 3. This is a continuation of the theme of philosophy as experimentation explored in *The Gay Science*. There the incorporation of as much truth as possible also served as the measure of value. See *GS* 110.

¹⁶⁸ *TI*, “Morality as Anti-Nature,” Sec. 3. See also *TSZ*, Prologue, Sec. 5 for Zarathustra’s demand for “chaos in oneself.”

weakened, refined, as the impulse that provides the stimulus for the activity of the chief drive.

The highest man would have the greatest multiplicity of drives, in the relatively greatest strength that can be endured. Indeed, where the plant “man” shows himself strongest one finds instincts that conflict powerfully (e.g., in Shakespeare), but are controlled.¹⁶⁹

So, for example, take an ethical and political question that has increasingly become more urgent over the last five hundred years: Should all citizens of a nation have access to universal healthcare? Such is a question about the nature of distributive justice. The “un-spiritualized” man will simply occupy his own perspective and mistakenly believe that his perspective is true, whatever his position may be. The “highest man” who has undergone spiritualization will retain and consider a multiplicity of perspectives. Such an individual will be a contest of the following opposing perspectives: 1) Unlike our “natural” rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, there is no such thing as a natural right to universal health care; 2) Every citizen should not have access to universal healthcare because such an enterprise would unfairly deprive those people with more wealth and property of their liberty; 3) Every citizen should not have access to universal healthcare because some people do not deserve healthcare; 4) If Jesus Christ said that the sick and the poor are blessed and that we should heal their illness, then they more than anyone else should have access to universal healthcare; 5) Having a social rule that all have access to universal healthcare will maximize happiness, and so there ought to be such a social welfare program; 6) If all free, equal and independent persons would agree to a rule that guaranteed universal healthcare, then all such persons should abide by such a rule that promotes social cooperation; 7) Every human being should have access to universal healthcare in virtue of the dignity that they possess by partaking in the rational autonomy of humanity; and 8) Each individual should have access to a universal healthcare program because such a program would

¹⁶⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books, 1967, Sec. 966.

be created by the virtuous person and would promote human flourishing. The man who has become complacent and found “truth” in just one of these perspectives fails to aim at unified wholeness. The synthetic man who makes an experiment of himself with the incorporation of as much “truth” as possible exemplifies the greatest strength attainable in a measured control over diverse perspectives. Even the refinement of the weaker perspectives contributes to the overall creativity of truth-incorporation.

A Question of Interpretation

Certain instances where Nietzsche expounds upon his notion of the will to power demand a more scrupulous degree of interpretation and analysis. *BGE 22* may seem to be an obstacle to my account of the will to power in that Nietzsche exposes one mode of interpretation of nature as being a democratic interpretation, and then he sets up his own will to power interpretation of nature right alongside the democratic one. The democratic mode of interpretation is one in which the presuppositions of ‘equality amongst all parts of nature’ and ‘equal obedience to law’ are already in place and are unreflectively projected onto the world or some facet of it. We see that both are interpretations and neither matters of fact. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that both interpretations are equally good. Nietzsche presents the problem evocatively yet with subtlety:

Forgive me as an old philologist who cannot desist from the malice of putting his finger on bad modes of interpretation: but “nature’s conformity to law,” of which you physicists talk so proudly, as though—why, it exists only owing to your interpretation and bad “philology.” It is no matter of fact, no “text,” but rather only a naively humanitarian emendation and perversion of meaning, with which you make abundant concessions to the democratic instincts of the modern soul!...and somebody might come along who, with opposite intentions and modes of interpretation, could read out of the same “nature,” and

with regard to the same phenomena, rather the tyrannically inconsiderate and relentless enforcement of claims of power—an interpreter who would picture the unexceptional and unconditional aspects of all “will to power” so vividly that almost every word, even the word “tyranny” itself, would eventually seem unsuitable, or a weakening and attenuating metaphor—being too human—but he might, nevertheless, end by asserting the same about this world as you do, namely, that it has a “necessary” and “calculable” course, *not* because laws obtain in it, but because they are absolutely *lacking*, and every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment. Supposing that this also is only interpretation—and you will be eager enough to make this objection?—well, so much the better.¹⁷⁰

It is not problematic for us, *qua* interpretive human beings, to gain understanding about the reality of the human condition, as long as we realize that everything is interpretation. Just because all of human experience of the world is perspectival does not mean that all perspectives (or interpretations) are equal and valid. There are worse interpretations and there are better interpretations. In *BGE 22*, Nietzsche calls the democratic mode of interpretation a “bad” mode of interpretation. This at least implies that the will to power interpretation is a better mode of interpreting nature, for it considers as many perspectives as possible and attempts to incorporate as much truth as possible. At least, that appears to be part of the project of *BGE*: truth is perspectival and there is more truth where there are more perspectives taken into account regarding any question or inquiry. If we are in the genuinely philosophic mode when attending to how we experience ourselves and how we experience the world, then we will be operating both artistically and scientifically. More precisely, as genuine philosophers we operate in the space in between art and science, a space whose existence we have uncovered.

In *BGE 22* Nietzsche appears to be claiming that the democratic interpretation is bad because it designates too specific a political regime as the essence of things. However, democratic regimes are fairly new in the history of humankind. People have existed for a far

¹⁷⁰ *BGE*, Sec. 22.

longer period of time under monarchies, dynasties, oligarchies, totalitarian regimes and even under no formal government if we trace our evolution back far enough. While we are political animals, a better interpretation is one that gets to our more basic psychological constitution, which interestingly enough is the approach that Nietzsche takes in the very next section (23) of *BGE*.¹⁷¹

Keeping in mind that “man is the great esteemer” and as such our estimations pervade all of our “judgments,” to get hold of “the most objective truth” about the drives and needs of humankind we have to fight against the values under which we are conditioned. Because the heart works against the more truth-incorporating interpretations, an ongoing dialogue must occur between a person and his heart—a dialogue that can be described as between a self and his values. This idea is very much present in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, for Zarathustra is participating in a dialogue with his heart and not with his mind: the heart being that which loves,

¹⁷¹ In his article entitled “Nietzsche: Perfectionist,” Thomas Hurka incorrectly expresses a political interpretation of Nietzsche’s perfectionism, which thus results in Hurka’s attributing a “maximax” view as Nietzsche’s perfectionist dictum: Society ought to maximize the well-being of the best-off individuals. One passage that Hurka utilizes to support his view is *BGE* 258, where Nietzsche says: “The essential characteristic of a good and healthy aristocracy, however, is that it experiences itself *not* as a function (whether of the monarchy or the commonwealth) but as their *meaning* and highest justification—that it therefore accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments.” If that passage is taken in isolation, then, yes, it seems as though Nietzsche is making a political claim. However, the section begins with the notion of psychological “corruption,” but Nietzsche is interested in describing how a corrupt and “potentially anarchical” individual exists: “Corruption as the expression of a threatening anarchy among the instincts and of the fact that the foundation of the affects, which is called ‘life,’ has been shaken: corruption is something totally different depending on the organism in which it appears.” Through metaphor of a political aristocracy, Nietzsche then illustrates what an aristocratic or noble soul looks like. The good and healthy aristocracy spoken is then really a good and healthy noble individual who *qua* a small collection of ordering drives experiences himself as the meaning and highest justification of all weaker affects and instincts. With a good conscience, the noble soul accepts the sacrifice of weaker drives which, for the sake of the few commanding drives, must be reduced and lowered to sublimated drives, which are used as instruments to achieve self-realization.

hates, fears, envies, and undergoes all the more nuanced emotions in between such extremes. A free spirit has the ability to release his heart from old values, carefully investigate each value's worth, and allow his heart to be free, for Zarathustra loves "him who has a free spirit and a free heart: thus his head is only the entrails of his heart, but his heart drives him to go under."¹⁷² We should view the process of "going under" [*Untergang; untergehen*] as the struggle for the free spirit to become one with his free heart, or achieve a fully-realized self. This process may be painful because of the tension that exists within it: old values pushing and pulling against the free heart's endeavor to create new values.

A final point about "the truth" of what Nietzsche says about the will to power in this section: we ought to be interpreting the human condition with a certain measure of honesty—being honest towards the object of inquiry and towards ourselves. We could correctly say that Nietzsche is adopting the stance of an "honest realist" with his investigation into human existence, as opposed to an ascription of "idealism" that might be pinned onto Nietzsche. The last sentence of *BGE* 259 expresses the idea of truth as honesty: "If this should be an innovation as a theory—as a reality it is the *primordial fact* of all history: people ought to be honest with themselves at least that far."¹⁷³ As such, one mark of distinction for a free spirit is an ability to endure and incorporate as much "truth" as possible.¹⁷⁴

Clark's conception of Nietzsche's alleged second doctrine of the will to power, the psychological doctrine, is that "the will to power is the most life-affirming drive in the sense that the satisfaction of this drive, a sense of power, of the ability to enforce one's will, is necessary

¹⁷² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in *The Portable Nietzsche*. Ed. and Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Penguin Books, 1982, Prologue, Sec. 4.

¹⁷³ *BGE*, Sec. 259.

¹⁷⁴ See *BGE*, Sec. 39; *GS*, Sec. 110.

for the affirmation of life, whereas a sense of powerlessness induces depression and a tendency to passive nihilism.”¹⁷⁵ I disagree with Clark that the psychological doctrine of the will to power is the *other* context in which Nietzsche speaks of the will to power (in addition to the ontological doctrine). This is because there is really only one mode of existence for the will to power: as the achieving of self-realization. As I have shown, the ontological status of the doctrine of the will to power is not that of a mere self-conscious myth expressing what Nietzsche values; rather, it is the realization of such a self. However, the view that the will to power is the highest drive among many, the drive that is most conducive to life-affirmation, does not capture the primacy that the drive to power has over the rest of our needs and drives. The way to improve Clark’s view would be to consider the will to power as the goal to which our drives aim—or which is constituted by the satisfaction of our existential needs. The affirmation of one’s own life or the affirmation of life as it is lived from one’s first-personal experience can exist as a norm of development that can guide an individual toward the achieving of self-realization.¹⁷⁶ Accounting for the will to power as the striving to achieve self-realization grounds the reorientation from conceiving of life-affirmation to self-realization, but without completely cancelling out the former. In the end, one experiences the world either as pieces, fragments and limbs or as a fully realized self...but such a traveler can be either fragmentary or unified; he can be either a shadow of a human being or a real human being.

¹⁷⁵ Clark, p. 148.

¹⁷⁶ Christine Swanton’s two norms of development in her Nietzschean virtue ethics are “health” and “life-affirmation.” See her “Nietzschean Virtue Ethics,” in *Virtue Ethics: Old and New*. Ed. Stephen M. Gardiner. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005, pp. 179-192.

Models of Achieving Self-Realization: Saint, Artist and Philosopher

Philosophy exists as an activity of self-creation in the gap between science and art, but it serves as an activity that borrows elements from both. The genuine philosopher serves life, individuated in his own process of becoming, by using an aesthetic mode of interpretation to elucidate what is necessary. The aim of science is truth. The aim of art is beauty. The aim of philosophy is to bring forth a higher form of existence. Does Nietzsche give any concrete examples of those who are genuine philosophers? The providing of a model of the genuine philosopher would significantly improve our understanding of the scaffold of art, science and philosophy that we find in Nietzsche's early notebooks. What lies ahead in this section is an analysis of three such models as they are presented in Nietzsche's early essay, "Schopenhauer as Educator": the saint, the artist and the philosopher.¹⁷⁷ However, the relation between science, art and philosophy does not directly map onto these models who achieve self-realization, for the character types that serve as models of self-realization are "goals" of philosophy which are different than the essence of philosophy itself. These goals are going to be individuated pieces of nature, ones that become their own ends. As Nietzsche says in two notes written shortly after the completion of this essay, "In three forms of existence only does man remain as an individual:

¹⁷⁷ In a letter to the Danish scholar and literary critic Georg Brandes with whom Nietzsche corresponded, he writes, "[*Schopenhauer als Erzieher*] serves me as a signal of recognition: the man to whom it says nothing personal will probably not be further interested in me. It contains the basic scheme according to which I have so far lived; it is a rigorous promise," in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Ed. and Trans. Christopher Middleton. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1969, p. 292. This confession shows the how much this essay represents the relationship between the activity of philosophy and its personal import in Nietzsche's life. Despite his remark in *Ecce Homo* that this essay "speaks only of [him]," I contend that the essay's themes of the relationship between philosophy and life, the purpose of culture and the models of achieving self-realization have broad applicability to human beings (or at least a certain class of higher human beings) more generally. It's possible that Nietzsche himself was too close to his own thoughts to see their potential broader applicability. See *D*, Sec. 438.

as philosopher, saint and artist,” and that “If everybody’s purpose is in somebody else *nobody has a purpose of existence in himself*, and this ‘*existence for one another*’ is the most comic comedy.”¹⁷⁸ These thoughts corroborate the theme in “Schopenhauer as Educator” that the project of self-realization is individualistic in nature but that the selves that are being realized will bear a peculiar relation to humanity as a whole. Thus our exploration of these models will begin with an introductory look at how the genuine philosopher, the artist and the saint are models who come to exemplify the will to power in *BGE*, and then we will segue into a thorough analysis of those models in Nietzsche’s third untimely meditation.

More specific pictures of the will to power occur in *BGE* 51, *BGE* 213 and *BGE* 211 in that they refer to a particular character type as acting out of a higher form of the will to power—respectively, the saint, the artist and the genuine philosopher. The saint is hinted to be some kind of “superior force” who possesses an uncanny “strength of the will,” yet Nietzsche here highlights the “will to power” of those who worship the saint, not the will to power of the saint himself. He intimates that the artist must create of necessity, with a feeling of freedom, of subtlety, of “full power,” of creative placing, of disposing and of forming that reaches its peak, yet here in *BGE* there is still some ambiguity as to *how exactly* such a character type exemplifies the will to power. In *BGE* Nietzsche somewhat explicates the nature of the genuine philosopher, but there are still not concrete examples of figures who have achieved such a level of human existence. In order to clarify what kind of a human being might serve as a model a self-realization, it would be beneficial for us to think more about whether Nietzsche offers (in earlier works) any idea of character-types who serve as models of realized selves. Nietzsche believes that those who best exemplify the will to power (and thus achieve a high measure of self-

¹⁷⁸ *WEN*, Notebook 3, Secs. [63] and [64].

realization) are the goal of culture. In “Schopenhauer as Educator” the purpose of culture is the creation of the genius, and the three models for the highest types of genius for any culture are the artist, the saint and the philosopher.¹⁷⁹

The character-types of the philosopher, the artist and the saint serve as models for the kinds of individuals (and the kinds of activities that such individuals perform) that best illustrate how the highest form of the will to power can be exemplified. The line of thinking begins with the fact that as human beings we are entrenched in nature: we are nothing but mere animals who flounder about in confusion and horror at our animality. As such we see life as a kind of punishment for being animals, the sense of being punished originating in the enormous amount of suffering that we experience and the seemingly pervasive senselessness of our suffering.¹⁸⁰ Nietzsche supposes that because man is the highest representative of nature (the latest and ripest fruit) that nature has “pressed toward,” that nature “intimates” that man is necessary to redeem himself “from the curse of the life of the animal.”¹⁸¹ Isn’t the attribution of such an apparently outright teleological purpose of nature merely to slip back into the kind of metaphysical interpretation of the will to power that we exposed to be an error? Perhaps it is not necessarily the case that nature as such actually “presses and urges” toward “that final and supreme

¹⁷⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. “Schopenhauer as Educator,” in *Untimely Meditations*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, Sec. 3, p. 142 and Sec. 5, p. 160.

¹⁸⁰ This discussion of humankind’s attitude of horror at the senselessness of its suffering serves as a precursor to the Third Essay of the *Genealogy*, which explores various forms of asceticism that have arisen in response to the problem of human suffering. The entire essay is a kind of footnote to the citation from *TSZ*: “Unconcerned, mocking, violent—thus wisdom wants *us*: she is a woman and always loves only a warrior.” Who might possess the wisdom, or at least this one piece of wisdom, that we must create meaning for our suffering? I believe that it is the philosopher, the artist and the saint. Because wisdom “wants *us*,” we ought not to merely strive to promote *other* potential philosophers, artists and saints, but as Nietzsche says here, we ought to strive to procreate these potential figures *within us*.

¹⁸¹ *UM*, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” Sec. 5, p. 157.

becoming-human.” Regarding the metaphysical understanding of human existence, Nietzsche claims that *the supposition* that the bodies of animals contain the guilt-laden souls of men has arisen in more than one part of the earth.¹⁸² It is not that *nature in itself* has a purposiveness that pushes toward some goal. Because as human beings we possess the existential need for a frame of orientation, it is the case that we must make sense out of that which appears senseless—e.g., suffering and meaninglessness itself. So according to Nietzsche, our understanding of ourselves, as part of nature, is the source of the metaphysical significance that is projected onto nature. Does this get Nietzsche off the metaphysical hook? Almost, but not entirely. As the highest representative of nature (or as one who potentially can realize a true self), Nietzsche says that as an individuated representative of nature who begins to make himself a true human being (“nature’s goal”), one must realize that he has to unlearn having goals. In other words, the “goal” of nature is for the ones who have become philosophers, artists and saints to enlighten themselves and recognize that they themselves are the creators of goals. The metaphysical disposition is a step in the process of self-enlightenment aiming at self-realization.

When nature has transfigured herself into the goals of the philosopher, the artist and the saint, such figures are then capable of creating meaningfulness out of life and suffering—e.g. metaphysical, religious, philosophical, etc. The capacity to synthesize both contemplation and action is the mark of a true human being. Accordingly, they do not abide by the dictum, “Know thyself,” but such active successful natures give themselves the commandment, “*Will* a self and thou shall *become* a self.”¹⁸³ As Nietzsche indicates of the contemplatives, such an individual

¹⁸² *UM*, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” Sec. 5, p. 157.

¹⁸³ *D*, Sec. 366.

has the “creative power” to keep creating his life.¹⁸⁴ A merely active life is insufficient, for this character type is like an actor who must follow the script and (in a loose sense) obey the cues of some director. This insufficiency implies that true creativity, especially that power to create oneself, depends upon “contemplative power.” This appears to be a rather enigmatic claim: Creative power depends on contemplative power. Is it impossible to possess this kind of creativity without being contemplative? Well, in order to make a true human being out of oneself, yes, it is impossible. One must be both the director, the screenwriter and the actor of one’s life, in which one has “the ability to look back upon one’s work” and the ability to thoughtfully see and hear immeasurably more than those who simply *do* as mechanical animals. The climactic conclusion of this line of thought presents itself as follows:

Here I have arrived at an answer to the question whether it is possible to pursue the great ideal of the Schopenhauerean man by means of a practical activity. One thing above all is certain: these new duties are not the duties of a solitary; on the contrary, they set one in the midst of a mighty community held together, not by external forms and regulations, but by a fundamental idea. It is the fundamental idea of *culture*, insofar as it sets for each one of us but one task: *to promote the production of the philosopher, the artist and the saint within us and without us and thereby to work at the perfecting of nature.*¹⁸⁵

While it is difficult to ignore the profundity of this conclusion, at least one question presents itself as to how Nietzsche has arrived at this destination. Why is this merely the ideal of “the Schopenhauerean man”? Isn’t the perfecting of nature supposed to be the ideal of all humankind? If we return to the fourth section of “Schopenhauer as Educator,” we see that the argument ending with ‘the perfecting of nature’ as *the* ideal began with the question of who is to set up “the image of man” that is to serve as an exemplar for humanity. Nietzsche answers by

¹⁸⁴ *GS*, Sec. 301.

¹⁸⁵ *UM*, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” Sec. 5.

providing three images, which together form a tripartite progression toward the goal of all culture: the man of Rousseau, the man of Goethe and the man of Schopenhauer.

The image of the man of Rousseau represents pure action and the desire to return to nature. According to Rousseau, humankind is, in some strong sense, good by nature but our natural goodness is distorted by the societal constructs of property, wealth and inequality. In his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, he states that it is certain “that compassion [*pitié*] is a natural sentiment, which, by moderating in each individual the love of oneself, contributes to the mutual preservation of the whole species.”¹⁸⁶ For Rousseau the two basic instincts of humankind are *amour de soi* [self-love] and *pitié* [compassion], but these two drives are corrupted continually throughout human history as we move farther and farther away from whatever natural state of existence we might have formerly occupied. This problem manifests in the political sphere, where one of the primary problems is the identification of the individual will with the general will.¹⁸⁷ The general will can only be justified if it is the embodiment of all individual wills that constitute it; yet, how is it possible for such a “general will” to actually exist, considering that there will always be a minority “will” that does not identify itself with the “general will” (that of the majority or of the government). Given this very brief synopsis of Rousseau’s moral and political thought, why does Nietzsche characterize the first image of modernity as the man of Rousseau? Of this first image, Nietzsche acknowledges how the image of Rousseau educates by emphasizing his influence for political revolt against injustice. In a

¹⁸⁶ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Trans. Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992, p. 38. In his *Émile*, Rousseau’s initial assumption from which he begins his inquiry into the transition from individual to society is this: “Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man.” See his *Émile: or, On Education*. Trans. Allan Bloom. Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2010.

¹⁸⁷ See Books II and IV of Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*.

sense Rousseau echoes Nietzsche's own worries about the individual being consumed and suffocated by the majority ("the herd"). Nietzsche states, "From the first there has proceeded a force which has promoted violent revolutions and continues to do so; for in every socialist earthquake and upheaval it has always been the man of Rousseau who, like Typhon under Etna, is the cause of commotion."¹⁸⁸ Nietzsche understands Rousseau to be a source of inspiration for those who are being oppressed by "arrogant upper classes" or those with "merciless wealth." These revolutionaries, their will being omitted from the general will, would find themselves dissatisfied in the "unnatural" state, and they would wish to return back to "light, sun, forest and mountain." Nietzsche would be somewhat amenable to this attitude of such revolutionaries, yet he cannot fully advocate such a merely impulsive "return to nature" because they have failed to thoughtfully reflect as to what this "nature" actually is.

If one were to find inspiration only in this first image of a perfected will to power, however, then one would be ultimately doomed to failure. Firstly, it is not possible to return to a natural state that was prior to our present socially-conditioned state of existence. Secondly, in such a pursuit one would be operating under the dubious assumption that the natural state of humankind is one of goodness, untarnished by the corrupt aspects of society. There simply is not sufficient evidence to know that humankind is naturally good. Such a claim is colored with a moral prejudice, for we pronounce it from a socialized and moralized standpoint. Most importantly, the deficiency with the first image is that represents action but without honest contemplation of one's own "nature." It is not so much human nature that ought to be the object

¹⁸⁸ *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 4, p. 151.

of contemplation; an individual ought to contemplate who he as an *individual* is if he is to realize the higher self within him.¹⁸⁹

The image of the man of Rousseau symbolizes a worthy yet incomplete attempt at the realization of one's higher self. Keep in mind that self-realization is not an all-or-nothing accomplishment. There can be various gradations of the level to which an individual has realized a self. The man of Rousseau symbolizes a high level of self-realization in that such a person has satisfied the need for devotion by fighting the injustice of a corrupt aristocracy. This figure addresses the needs for rootedness and effectiveness through the mobilization of oppressed segments of a population—spontaneously creating the spark that lights the fire of a revolution. However, the man of Rousseau has “mis-contemplated” his own nature, for he assigns what is “bad” in humanity as having its origin in the artificial constructs of society, property and wealth, and he assigns what is “good” in humanity as originating in human nature itself. This faith in opposites inverts the metaphysical/religious faith in opposites where what is “good” is of some supernatural world and what is “bad” is of this world: the inverted error of an error. We might think that the man of Rousseau is taking a step in the right direction, yet he is still operating under the error of putting his faith in any opposites at all. What results from this error for the man of Rousseau is a feeling of shame for his attempts to transcend animality. This sense of shame directed towards political corruption spurs one into action, but it is an action that does not grow out of a real sense of contemplation. The apparent nature of the man of

¹⁸⁹ Nietzsche's holding genuine action to be a necessary condition for the possibility of self-realization finds expression in a letter from 1882, roughly the same time he wrote “Schopenhauer as Educator.” To Lou Salomé, Nietzsche says in a self-contemptuous tone, “I am inexperienced and unpracticed in all matters of action; and for years I have not had to explain or justify myself to others in anything I have done” (95) in the *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Ed. & Trans. Christopher Middleton. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1969.

Rousseau's contemplative moment exposes itself through an inability to satisfy the existential need for unity. He cannot unify his animality with his wished for transcendent state from such animality, and he cannot unify contemplation and action into a synthetic whole because his "contemplative" attitude suffers from falling into the error of having a faith in opposites. In a sense, the man of Rousseau does experience a healthy form of self-contempt, but he is like an arrow flying through the air that has no target—for he has not given himself his target. So we see that the man of Rousseau achieves a "half-measure" of self-realization, bringing to fruition the moment of action but action without its counterpart of beautiful contemplation.

The image of the man of Goethe represents contemplation divorced from action—the opposite of the man of Rousseau. Nietzsche characterizes Goethe as one who lives through the image of Faust, the central character in his literary magnum opus. Because Faust chooses to sell his soul to Mephistopheles for his assistance in attaining genuine satisfaction with life, there is an important sense in which Faust has renounced his higher self and is no longer capable of genuine agency. He cannot undertake genuine action because there is no real "he" there to act. Only a shadow of a self remains, one that is externally moved and guided, i.e. by Mephistopheles. So there is a two-fold sense in which there is only contemplation without action: Faust, a learned man in science, art and religion, suffers from his overly developed ability to contemplate and his inability for genuine action, unaided by supernatural forces; and Goethe, a learned man in philosophy, science and the arts, suffers from genuine inaction because he has only "acted" through his characters, mere images who themselves are merely semblances of genuine action, which can only emanate from a higher self who fulfills self-imposed duties. Nietzsche expounds this image in the following way:

The man of Goethe is...the contemplative man in the grand style, who can avoid languishing away on earth only by bringing together for his nourishment everything great and memorable that has ever existed or still exists and thus lives, even though his life may be a living from one desire to the next; he is not the man of action: on the contrary, if he does ever become a member of any part of the existing order established by the men of action one can be sure that no good will come of it...and, above all, that no 'order' will be overthrown.¹⁹⁰

The "bringing together" of central problems of the human condition from the landscape of human history is a praiseworthy project, but funneling "everything great and memorable that has ever existed or still exists and thus lives" into a mere character that can only exist "in the world of the theatre" generates the insufficiency of this second image for realizing one's higher self. As Nietzsche indicates, acting under the inspiration of the first image of Rousseau lies too close to the danger of becoming a Catilinst, and acting under the inspiration of the second image of Goethe lies too close to the danger of becoming a philistine. I interpret "Catilinst", for Nietzsche, as one who acts with passion (and perhaps for a just cause) but does so with a sense of recklessness and without an intellectual conscience to guide his actions. I interpret "philistine" as one who lives under a veil of complacency and stagnation, who engages in a kind of counterfeit form of contemplation, who suffers from an illusory form of self-sufficiency and completeness because he fails to realize genuinely creative contemplation into action. It is not necessarily that case that Nietzsche is characterizing Goethe himself as a philistine, but as a symbolic voice registering the less-than-successful and apathetic nature of such a type, for he states, "What is a philistine? An empty gut,/full of fear and hope./May God have mercy!"¹⁹¹

Thus the image of the man of Goethe also achieves only a "half-measure" of self-realization. His strength is his rich contemplation of all that is beautiful and great in humankind,

¹⁹⁰ *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 4, p. 152.

¹⁹¹ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Gedichte*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1966.

but his weakness is his inability to satisfy his need for effectiveness. The man of Goethe stops short in the moment of being a “world-traveler” and cannot transfigure himself into a “world-liberator.” The man of Goethe does satisfy his need for devotion, for he is “a devotee to the gospel of nature with his whole loving heart.”¹⁹² Through proper contemplation, this figure develops a good understanding of the tragic nature of humankind. Nietzsche holds the character of Faust to be an excellent representation of the hunger for life, the discontent and longing associated with such hunger, and the character’s traffic with the demons of his heart. Whatever existential needs the man of Goethe satisfies, they remain incomplete and prohibit a more full degree of self-realization because this figure does not transform his moment of contemplation into a moment of action.¹⁹³

The image of the man of Schopenhauer symbolizes the *synthesis* of action and contemplation. At first blush, this is curious because Schopenhauer was not active in the practical or political sense throughout his entire life. This leads us to believe that Nietzsche must be thinking of a peculiar kind of action that is associated with the Schopenhauerean ideal. In what way does the Schopenhauerean image of man educate us? What does this third image capture that the Rousseauian image and the Goethean image fail to teach? It is the form and not the content of Schopenhauer’s stance toward *his* truths that Nietzsche praises in the third image given to us in modernity. Truthfulness is the primary virtue that is associated with the image of the Schopenhauerean man, but it is a being truthful to oneself even in the face of the suffering that such honesty may cause. Adopting a truthful attitude entails the possible forsaking of loved

¹⁹² *UM*, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” Sec. 4, p. 151.

¹⁹³ See *HAH*, Sec. 228 where Nietzsche describes the traveller with the highest energy as one who absorbs all that he experiences and sees and “bodies it forth” again out of himself in works and actions as soon as he returns home.

ones, of institutions and even of justice, recognizing that being truthful means one is always limited by one's perspective. However, taking on the suffering of being truthful can lead to a transfiguration of oneself if it is brought to full realization in words and deeds [*logoi* and *erga*]. Nietzsche even goes on to say that this "overturning and conversion of [the Schopenhauerean man's] being" is "the real meaning of life to lead up to."¹⁹⁴ Nietzsche goes on to further endorse the virtue of truthfulness as the mark of distinction for the Schopenhauerean man when he says that

...being truthful means: to believe in an existence that can in no way be denied and which is itself true and without falsehood. That is why the truthful man feels that the meaning of his activity is metaphysical, explicable through the laws of another and higher life, and in the profoundest sense affirmative...always offering himself as the first sacrifice to perceived truth and permeated with the awareness of what sufferings must spring from his truthfulness.¹⁹⁵

This conception of being truthful seems very Platonic in that such a one believes in an undeniable existence which is "itself" true; be that as it may, the truthful man does not *know* that the meaning of his activity is metaphysical and profoundly affirmative. The truthful man [*der Wahrhaftige*] *feels* [*empfinden*] that the meaning of his activity is metaphysical because of the profound affirmation of that which must be conceived as valuable in and of itself. We might say that the image of Schopenhauer teaches us to cultivate an honest attitude toward the self-imposed struggle to transcend our bare condition of animality—to bear a truthful stance toward the seemingly insurmountable task of transfiguration. Near the end of Nietzsche's account of the image of the Schopenhauerian man, he makes several allusions to Plato's allegory of the cave, albeit in an altered form. In Plato's allegory the prisoner who escapes the cave of mere shadows is enlightened by the sun, which symbolizes the Good: the principle which makes it possible to

¹⁹⁴ *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 4, p. 152

¹⁹⁵ *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 4, p. 153.

see the pure forms of things clearly. The problem with Plato's allegory, Nietzsche thinks, is that the Good is the only criterion for measuring the value of things and this overlooks the role that the self must play in his own perfection. In Nietzsche's version of the allegory, the "heroic human being" who ascends from the cave of mere shadows is enlightened, not by the sun, but by his own higher self that lies above him.

The philosopher (Schopenhauer), the artist (Goethe) and the saint (Rousseau) should be viewed as three character-types that meld into one image: the image of the genius. As philosopher, one has the capacity to evaluate and destroy old values. As the artist, one has the capacity to create new values, thereby beginning the process of self-enlightenment. As the saint, one recognizes oneself as the particularity (a particular specimen of nature) that stands in a relation to the universality (the wholeness of nature). As such he loses his ego as it exists "unperfected" and becomes the bridge between here and there. Nevertheless, the artist and the saint are in a sense half-perfected models that are stepping stones to the more fully-perfect model of the philosophical genius. Nietzsche says that believing in culture (and being able to realize this belief through action) is nothing else than believing in the perfecting of oneself as a part of humanity:

'I see above me something higher and more human than I am; let everyone help me to attain it, as I will help everyone who knows and suffers as I do: so that at last the man may appear who feels himself perfect and boundless in knowledge and love, perception and power, and who in his completeness is at one with nature, the judge and evaluator of things.'¹⁹⁶

The striving toward one's higher self is shared with "the mighty community" of others who also have the potential for perfection and thus it does not have to be a solitary mode of existence. The cultivation of one's own higher self bears an interdependence with that of other possible higher

¹⁹⁶ *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 6, pp. 162-163.

selves. The philosopher is transfiguring himself from a mere becoming into one who *is* knowledge and love. The artist in oneself transfigures himself from a mere becoming into one who *is* a boundless perception and power. And the saint in oneself transfigures himself from a mere becoming into one who *is* one with nature. Adopting the attitude towards oneself whereby one “feels” oneself to be one’s higher self and allows oneself to emotionally adopt a “happiness of contemplation and action” makes it possible to realize one’s higher self. Thus, the philosopher, the artist and the saint can serve as exemplars who are the goals of nature; yet, they are goals who forget themselves as such because they have embodied the activity of giving birth to new goals.

Schopenhauer as Exemplar of the Will to Power

Does the model of the Schopenhauerean image of man serve as a model of a figure who exemplifies the will to power? If the Schopenhauerean man exemplifies the will to power, then he must undergo the process of achieving a high degree of self-realization. If he is to realize a self, then he must satisfy the cluster of existential needs that constitute the achieving of self-realization. And if a “true human being” is to be created, then those needs must be satisfied for the sake of the beautiful, which serves as the norm of satisfaction for the needs. Remember that the comprehensive set of existential needs that we possess are the following (in random order): the need for a frame of orientation; the need for devotion; the need for unity; the need for rootedness; the need for effectiveness; the need for excitation; and the need for self-love. Upon showing that the image of Schopenhauer satisfies each of these needs, it will be evident that Schopenhauer not only serves as Nietzsche’s educator but also as a self who exemplifies the will to power.

We begin with the existential need whose satisfaction in the appropriate way is the least difficult to undergo, yet by no means is task that is easy to perform—namely, the need for a frame of orientation. Schopenhauer satisfies his need for a frame of orientation through his development of his understanding of the two-fold existence of the world as will and presentation.¹⁹⁷ Schopenhauer’s map of the world lies in its having two modes of existence: the world exists as a presentation to a subject, and the world exists as the will. The will manifests itself in the world with different levels of reality, and humanity as individuated subjective cognizance possesses the most immediate degree of accessibility to the will. In the second volume of *WWP*, Schopenhauer describes this interiority:

Consequently, a path is open to us *from inside* to that proper self and inner essence of things to which we cannot penetrate *from outside*. It is, as it were, a subterranean passage, a secret alliance that, as through treachery, transports us at once into the fortress that could not be taken from outside....In fact our *willing* is the only opportunity we have of at the same time understanding an externally manifesting occurrence in terms of its inner being, hence the only thing known to us *immediately* and not, as with everything else, given merely in presentation.¹⁹⁸

The fundamental difference between Schopenhauer’s will and Kant’s thing-in-itself is that for Kant we can never have knowledge of the thing-in-itself whereas for Schopenhauer each individual has immediate access to the existence of the (noumenal) will through her own first-

¹⁹⁷ The German term *Vorstellung* has a variety of meanings in English. The most common translations are “idea”, “representation” and “presentation.” Along with Richard Aquila, I will use “presentation” to denote that object in the world which “presents itself” to a subject. “Representation” has the added sense of possession and of being internal to the possessor; however, for Schopenhauer, “No object without subject,” *and* “No subject without object.” The translated “idea” also bears a similar sense of possession. See Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Presentation: Volume One*. Trans. Richard E. Aquila. New York: Pearson Longman, 2008. (Future references to this work will be abbreviated as *WWP* and line numbers will be used.)

¹⁹⁸ *WWP*, Vol. II, 219-220.

person experience, even though the will does not emerge entirely naked.¹⁹⁹ So, apprehension of the world begins with an individual's will and with her body, which is the objectification (and individuation) of the will. The manner in which Schopenhauer satisfies his need for a frame of orientation illustrates a kind of elegance and beauty, for he comprehensively interweaves four dimensions of human experience into an organic whole. He begins with an epistemology of how we experience the world through presentations conditioned by the principle of sufficient ground. Each thing as presentation exists within the conditions of time, space and causality—each presentation falling under the *principium individuationis*, or the veil of Maya. Schopenhauer moves from epistemology to metaphysics and reveals the essence of the world to be will. We experience ourselves in a two-fold way: as the exterior body which is presented to us under the Principle of Sufficient Ground, and as the interior will which presents itself to us as our essence. Schopenhauer analogizes the human body with all corporeal bodies in nature, and he claims that even though we are conscious only of other things as presentations, if we were to strip away the “presentation” of any object, then what would remain would be will. According to Schopenhauer, to think that human beings exist differently than everything else in the world would be to fall into theoretical egoism. For the theoretical egoist, objects only exist as presentations, but this would mean that the presentations that we experience would have no objective existence in the world. Schopenhauer admits that there is no proof against this position, but to adopt it as a serious conviction, one would place oneself in a madhouse.²⁰⁰ He suggests that it is not a proof that is needed against solipsism but “a cure.” He undergoes this

¹⁹⁹ According to Schopenhauer, the I is not absolutely simple but consists of that which is cognizant (intellect) and that which is cognized (will). In self-consciousness, even though there is a kind of immediate access to the will, that access is still mediated by the intellect. Thus, the will is not “through and through *intimate* to itself,” but somewhat “remains a riddle to itself.” See 221-224 in Volume II for a discussion of the will's relation to itself in self-consciousness.

²⁰⁰ *WWP*, Vol. I, 125.

curative exposition of the world through an aesthetic and an ethical lens. So to restate, everything in the world differs only in the degree of objectification of the will, but everything is part of the same essence of the world—namely, the will. Schopenhauer moves from the metaphysics of nature to aesthetics, where he broadens his understanding of the higher levels of objectification of will in objects of art. The essence of the world is will, and the will does nothing other than will its own existence through a blind and unending striving. So, to be will is to be desire, and to be desire is to exist in a perpetually painful state of wanting. Thus, viewing the world as will and presentation explains “the twin evils” of suffering and death. However, through pure will-less subjective cognition of art, an individual can experience a temporary reprieve from the pain of willing. Such moments of will-less existence occur in a kind of pure contemplation of Platonic Ideas, which true art presents to us in a seemingly timeless fashion. Thus, art becomes one means of transcending existence as will, if only momentarily. Schopenhauer moves from aesthetics to ethics when he re-focuses his attention on how the will manifests itself through human action. He does not provide any sort of systematic ethical theory, but he does claim that compassion is the singular and fundamental “virtue” of the ethical sphere. Since each human being exists as a manifestation of one and the same will, when one causes another to suffer, one causes himself to suffer and shares the victimization. Similarly, when one suffers by the hand of a perpetrator, the victim shares the guilt of the offense. Attaining the recognition that all human beings, and all of nature, are part of the same whole produces the effect of a kind of “oneness” with objectifications of the will. Ultimately, it is only the full denial of the will in death that allows a permanent and complete unification with the will. Schopenhauer says that in death one becomes nothing and everything—nothing as individuated

presentation *and* everything as will to life.²⁰¹ He concludes the ethical dimension of the world with the acknowledgement of a paradox. What is paradoxical is that the will, objectified as a human being, ultimately wills its own nothingness. Schopenhauer clarifies by saying that redemption from the world consists in one's willing itself into nothingness as presentation, but that same "step" is also a step into a becoming of everything, i.e. the will.

The need for stimulation is satisfied by Schopenhauer through his active engagement with Immanuel Kant, Plato, the Upanishads and the Vedas. Kant was Schopenhauer's hero in that he captured the bifurcated nature of the world as appearance and as thing-in-itself. One of the fundamental philosophical questions for Kant was, "How is human experience possible?" In attempting to address this question, Kant recognized the limitations and conditions that are necessary for the possibility of human experience. Schopenhauer shared this insight into the experiential distance between subject and object and the interdependent relation between each subject and the objects that she experiences. Schopenhauer was stimulated by this insight and developed a more organic and less systematic philosophy which sought to explain the two-fold nature of existence. Schopenhauer's epistemology and metaphysics have strong roots in Kant's epistemology and metaphysics, yet Schopenhauer's thoughts on these two dimensions of the philosophical attitude did significantly deviate from his hero. The unknowability of the thing-in-itself becomes the immediate certainty and knowledge of the will, which is the interiority of an individual's experience of herself. Appearances that also exist as things-in-themselves become presentations that also exist as objectifications of the will. In addition to Kant's model of human experience, Schopenhauer appropriates Plato's conception of Ideas (also known as Forms). His

²⁰¹ Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Essays and Aphorisms*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Penguin Books, 1970, pp. 73-76.

use of Plato's "bifurcation" of the world into Ideas and sensible particulars is present throughout his works, but Plato *qua* stimulator plays a large role in Schopenhauer's conception of art. Again, Plato's model of the nature of art is not strictly mimicked by Schopenhauer but is appropriated in an interesting way. For Schopenhauer, art makes possible the subjective will-less experience of the Ideas, a kind of transcendent experience that breaks through the veil of Maya and outside of time, space and causality, even if only for a transitory few moments. The experience of the sublime and the experience of beauty are only different in the degree to which resistance from presentations disrupts the apprehension of the will, the former being a more tense and rough experience of oneness and the latter being a more full and smooth experience of oneness with the world. The third set of sources of stimulation for Schopenhauer was Buddhism and the Hindu sacred texts of the *Vedas* and the Upanishads. Two Hindu notions that Schopenhauer appropriated were the dreamlike quality of existence as presentation and the sought-for oneness of the individual with the world as will. The world experienced as presentation is similar to that of a dream, one from which we hope to awaken when we ultimately achieve a complete denial of the will. Even before an individual's death, the recognition that others are part of the same will that you yourself are can be a guiding thought one the way toward full denial of the will. The Buddhist notion of Nirvana is virtually the same as Schopenhauer's idea of the denial of the will. In Nirvana the will is silenced and there is only a perfect cognition that birth, old age, sickness and death do not exist—we are shown "that complete stillness of the sea of spirit."²⁰² Schopenhauer believed that he had an understanding of the nature of reality, one that had roots in the oldest of world religions. By tracing certain core tenets of Hinduism and Buddhism through the history of ideas up to his own philosophical

²⁰² *WWP*, 421, 487.

endeavor, he satisfied his need for stimulation and such satisfaction resulted in the fruits of his philosophical labors.

His actual writings shed light on how he satisfied his existential need for effectiveness in the world. Schopenhauer satisfied his existential need for effectiveness in and through his philosophical writings. He wrote his works to an as yet unknown audience, yet he wrote always as if his understanding of humanity's relation to the will would result, not merely in his reader's adoption of his conclusions, but in his reader's mode of existence being purposively affected. The answer to the question, "How should I live?" ought not to be simply contemplated. The "effect" of that question is to be action. Such a hoped for result of one's writings is difficult to envision, for it is not immediate and it may never even come to exist within "the cause's" lifetime. Nevertheless, the satisfaction of Schopenhauer's existential need did in fact realize itself, particularly by Nietzsche whose own effectiveness has had exponential growth, like the subtle shifting of a tectonic plate under the ocean has the effect of tidal waves on lands afar.

How did Schopenhauer satisfy his need for devotion? He was an atheist and did not believe in any god. He never engaged with political issues of his day and did not strongly identify with any national state. We cannot be certain what the object of his devotion actually was, yet even if we cannot know the content to which he devoted himself there is strong evidence that he did partake in the activity of devotion. In the beginning of his magnum opus, he expresses an attitude of conviction:

What is to be communicated through [this book] is a single thought. Nonetheless, despite all efforts, I could find no shorter way to communicate it than this entire book.—I take the thought to be that which has been sought at great length under the name philosophy, and whose discovery has been, precisely for that reason, held by the historically

cultivated to be as impossible as that of the philosophers' stone, even if Pliny has already told them: *Quam multa fieri non posse, priusquam sint facta, judicantur?*²⁰³

This “single thought” is that to which Schopenhauer has devoted himself, and this “single thought” is that which gives meaning and purpose to Schopenhauer’s activity of doing philosophy. When one reads this introductory remark in *The World as Will and Presentation*, one expects Schopenhauer to provide an answer at some point in the following pages. Unfortunately, an explicit answer never surfaces. Even in the last section of *WWP*, Schopenhauer reiterates the claim that his work constitutes “the entire development of that one thought whose communication was my purpose.”²⁰⁴ At first this unanswered question presents itself as a source of frustration, for we would like to know to what Schopenhauer has devoted his very existence (as an individuated presentation). Some have suggested that the single thought is: “The world is will’s self-cognizance,” yet it is not clear that this is specifically what the single thought is.²⁰⁵ The expression of the single thought culminates with the ethical significance of human action in Book IV of *WWP*, and there we discover a kind of interdependence between self-cognizance and action. In his discussion of virtue, Schopenhauer claims that genuine goodness of disposition can only arise “from an immediate and intuitive cognizance,” but that such a disposition can also only find “its true adequate expression...in deeds, in action, in the course of a person’s life.”²⁰⁶ Looking at the quote from Pliny at the beginning of Schopenhauer’s first preface, the idea being expressed is that the possibility of something often cannot and does not enter into one’s understanding of ‘what is possible’ until an action is “done”

²⁰³ *WWP*, Preface, viii. The quote from Pliny is the following: “How much is judged to be impossible, until it is done?”

²⁰⁴ *WWP*, 484.

²⁰⁵ Cartwright, David E. *Schopenhauer: A Biography*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 334. See also Schopenhauer’s *Manuscript Remains*, Vol. I, p. 512.

²⁰⁶ *WWP*, 437.

[*factum* = deed, act, exploit, achievement]. It is reasonable to think Schopenhauer's underlying single thought, the single thought of his magnum opus and the single thought to which he has devoted himself, unfolds through a synthesis of self-cognizance and action. This may only get us part of the way toward knowing what the single thought actually is and thus what his object of devotion actually is, yet perhaps this illustrates that the particular object of devotion is less significant than the activity of devotion itself.

Schopenhauer satisfies his existential need for rootedness in a rather artful manner. At first glance (or even second glance), there does not seem to be any sort of community that Schopenhauer ever rooted himself within. While he did have some friends, Schopenhauer did not experience the kind of sense of belonging that we might generally think of, for his father died when he was young, he had a disastrous relationship with his mother and he had two children that died in early infancy. Thus, he never created a family of his own. So in what way did Schopenhauer "feel at home in the world"? Thinking of the world only as presentation leaves everything in it, including Schopenhauer himself, individuated by the Principle of Sufficient Ground. However, by also conceiving of the world as the will for life in which everything is an objectification of one and the same will, he has effectively rooted himself in the metaphysically superlative community of all possible communities. According to Schopenhauer, his existence as will is what gives him the feeling of rootedness in some whole that is larger than his individuated self. He gives a good characterization of what the will is in the Second Book of *WWP*:

A phenomenon means a presentation and nothing beyond that: every presentation, of whatever sort it may be, every *object*, is a *phenomenon*. But *thing in itself* is solely *will*. As such, it is altogether not a presentation but *toto genere* distinct from it; it is that of which all presentations, all objects, are the phenomenon, the visibility, the

objectivization. It is that which is innermost, the core of every individual thing and likewise of the whole: it makes its appearance in every blindly effectual natural force; it also makes its appearance in the reflectively considered actions of human beings. The great difference between the two concerns only the degree to which it makes its appearance, not the essence of that which is making its appearance.²⁰⁷

So all objects are objectifications/manifestations of the will for life, and human beings possess the highest level of reflectivity for entities whose essence is will. So no matter how much suffering Schopenhauer experiences at any point in his life, he is always “connected in being” to every other individuated object in the world. He thereby annihilates any possibility of isolation throughout his entire life, and even in death he loses all individuation and thereby becomes one with the will. Let us put aside the question whether the will to live is something real or apparent for the moment and consider the way in which Schopenhauer satisfied his need for rootedness. He conceptualized an ontologically monistic world where all objects and subjects only differ in the degree to which the will makes its appearance. So for Schopenhauer there is a kind of metaphysical rootedness that makes other forms of rootedness like friendship, family and political community seem to pale in comparison.

A more difficult existential need to satisfy is that of self-love, especially for Schopenhauer. According to him, egoism and malice are the two anti-moral incentives of human actions, and contrarily compassion is the only incentive of moral worth. Schopenhauer considers egoism to be the desire of one’s own “weal and woe” and that such a desire is boundless.²⁰⁸ He oddly assumes that egoistic and morally worthy actions are mutually exclusive: either one must act in one’s own interest *or* one must act in the interest of another/others. His hero Kant postulated that there are duties to ourselves, but Schopenhauer more stringently conceives of

²⁰⁷ *WWP*, Vol. I, 131.

²⁰⁸ Schopenhauer, Arthur. *On the Basis of Morality*. Trans. E. F. J. Payne. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965, p. 145.

actions of moral worth as only possibly being done for the interests of others. Arguing against the duty of self-love, Schopenhauer holds that self-love is a kind of self-evident given and that morality here “finds its work already done and comes too late.” He makes reference to Christianity and complements it for getting at least one thing right: “The impossibility of violating the duty of self-love is already presupposed by the supreme commandment of Christian morals, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,’ according to which the love that each cherishes for himself is assumed beforehand as the *maximum* and the condition of all other love.”²⁰⁹ His conception of the self-orientation of human beings is that everyone already does love himself for each individual is fundamentally a manifestation of the will to live. The error here is that he inappropriately identifies the will to existence, which can more plausibly be attributed to human nature as such, with self-love; however, developing and maintaining an attitude of love towards oneself is much more an achievement rather than an attitude that can be possessed automatically and without effort. This highly dubious conception of the impossibility of a duty of self-love is continued in his discussion of the ethical dimension of *WWP* where he addresses the possibility of compassion for oneself. Schopenhauer equates crying with compassion for oneself, but he claims that the phenomenon of crying takes “a double detour” from the mere presentation of one’s own suffering to the possibility of another experiencing that same suffering back to a feeling of pity towards oneself. In other words, he claims that crying is caused by another’s suffering. Through imagination we can envision another person’s endurance of some piece of suffering that oneself experiences—that there is a necessarily other-oriented “projection” that we experience when we suffer. He expresses this unconscious psychological process as follows:

²⁰⁹ Schopenhauer, *OBM*, pp. 58-59.

That is, one passes from the pain that is felt, even when it is corporeal, to its mere presentation, and then finds his own state so deserving of compassion that he is firmly and sincerely convinced that, were another person enduring it, he will come to his aid full of compassion and love; only it is oneself that is now the object of one's own sincere compassion.²¹⁰

This explanation of the phenomenon of crying may be more insightful than we realize at first glance. One piece of evidence that he provides to support his claim is the fact that children who suffer a pain usually cry only when someone “commiserates” with them and not over the pain but only over its presentation. For example, think of a child who falls flat on her face when she thinks no one is around but who is being watched from a distance. The child certainly feels pain from smacking her face on the ground, but often does not cry. When adults are present and the child falls flat on her face and feels the ground brush against her flesh, it is only upon the child's recognition of the adults' recognition of her smacking her face that she cries. This does not only take place with the physical suffering of infants. We may wonder how far this supposed necessity of otherness in the phenomenon of crying extends into other kinds of suffering experienced by human beings.

Does this picture of compassion for oneself make it possible that Schopenhauer did successfully satisfy his need for self-love? I think it does, but it is possible that Schopenhauer did not become conscious of the implications of his argument. There does seem to be at least one form of self-love that represents the satisfaction of an existential need. Through our faculty of imagination, we are able to put ourselves in the shoes of others. Here one focuses on one's own experience of suffering and the possibility that another could experience this first-personal suffering. It may be too strong to say that this is a *necessary* condition of all instances of crying. To counter such a claim, we might look for examples of crying where one's suffering is not

²¹⁰ *WWP*, 445.

“replicated in reflection” or “vividly transported” to others. However, finding such an example proves to be rather vexing. Regarding the need for self-love, I think it fair to conclude that Schopenhauer did leave a space (albeit small) for himself to develop a relation of self-love, even though he requires his compassion for himself to be mediated by otherness.

Finally, how does Schopenhauer satisfy his existential need for unity? In what way does he attain the particular kind of inner unity in which there is a harmony arising out of discordant drives and perspectives? We can uncover this unity amidst diversity through the paradoxical conclusion of Schopenhauer’s comprehension of the world as will and presentation. Schopenhauer’s starting point for philosophical investigation was how the human being experiences herself as presentation: both as that to which the world presents itself, and as the one who presents herself to the world—existing both as the theatre and the actor within the theatre. There is a dialectical movement from the individual’s existence as presentation to the individual’s existence primarily as will, and then there is another dialectical step to the individual’s experience of objects of art, which serve as temporary palliatives to existing as the suffering will, and climactically a final movement toward the individual’s existence as will, whose existence is fundamentally that of desire and suffering. Schopenhauer’s conclusion is that ultimate redemption from an existence burdened by desire and suffering is the complete denial of the will. Paradox thus enters the stage: How and why does the will both will itself to live and at the same time will itself to be denied—to nothingness? This is the primary expression of the tension between inner perspectives within Schopenhauer, one of which he is quite conscious. Another way of articulating this paradox is this: Why does the world as will ever begin its “other existence” as presentation in the first place? Schopenhauer might argue that world as presentation has its origin in the world as will’s desire for self-knowledge, yet this will not

suffice. Before the world exists as presentation, there are no desires, for the world as will without objectifications has no desires, no beliefs, no hopes, no mentality or consciousness at all.

Schopenhauer says that it is impossible to remove this one objection to his account:

It is that, once our considerations have finally arrived at the point where, in complete saintliness, what we have before our eyes is denial and abandonment of all willing, and precisely thereby redemption from a world whose entire existence has shown itself to be suffering, precisely this appears to us now as a passage into empty *nothingness*.²¹¹

The tension becomes clearer when we recall the true nature of the world as expressed earlier in his work:

The will that, considered purely in itself, is incognizant and only a blind ceaseless pressing, such as we see also appearing in inorganic and vegetable nature and its laws as well as in the vegetative part of our own life, obtains with the arrival of the world of presentation, developed for its service, cognizance of its willing and of that which it is willing, namely, that it is nothing other than this world, this life, precisely as it stands before it. For this reason we called the phenomenal world its mirror, its objectivization. And since that which the will always wills is life, just because the latter is nothing more than a display of that willing with respect to presentation, it is all the same and only a pleonasm if, instead of simply saying “will,” we say “will for life.”²¹²

The tension between the will’s willing life and the will’s denial of life does not have a crystal clear resolution. A sure-fire solution to this tension is not necessarily what is needed because in order to satisfy the existential need for unity, one needs a unity of opposition between perspectives. A certain kind of harmony does arise from Schopenhauer’s discordant inner perspectives. There are two ways in which this occurs. The first is that from an investigation of his magnum opus we find a reasonable amount of evidence that Schopenhauer himself actually satisfied his need for the complex unity that Nietzsche describes. The satisfaction of this need in tandem with the (non-systematic) satisfaction of the other existential needs made it possible for Schopenhauer to achieve self-realization. He became a real human being: not merely a

²¹¹ *WWP*, 484.

²¹² *WWP*, 324.

disorganized collection of fragments and limbs and dreadful accidents.²¹³ The second way in which this harmony out of discord occurs is in Schopenhauer's consecrating himself to culture.

According to Nietzsche, there are two steps in this process:

Thus only he who has attached his heart to some great man receives thereby the *first consecration to culture*,...that one has a feeling of sympathy for the genius who again and again drags himself up out of our dryness and apathy and the same feeling in anticipation for all those who are still struggling and evolving,...so that the men we live among resemble a field over which is scattered the most precious fragments of sculpture where everything calls to us: come, assist, complete, bring together what belongs together, we have an immeasurable longing to become whole.²¹⁴

And

I now have to describe the effects of the *second* consecration [to culture]...For now we have to make the transition from the inward event to an assessment of the outward event; the eye has to be directed outwards so as to rediscover in the great world of action that desire for culture it recognized in the experiences of the first stage just described...culture demands of him...finally and above all an act, that is to say a struggle on behalf of culture and hostility towards those influences, habits, laws, institutions in which he fails to recognize his goal: which is the production of the genius.²¹⁵

It is not so much that Schopenhauer attached his heart to Plato or to Kant or to the Buddha, but that he attached his heart to the genius that dragged himself up out of his own barrenness and apathy. The tension between the various inner perspectives of Schopenhauer's conception of reality produced a harmony, but a harmony having a concrete effect in the world. Schopenhauer's inward event of genius-production was externalized into an outward event. The product of that outward event was Nietzsche. Through the satisfaction of his existential needs, from the need for unity through the need for a frame orientation, Schopenhauer achieved self-realization and thus exemplified more than just the will to live. He exemplified the will to power.

²¹³ *TSZ*, "On Redemption," p. 250.

²¹⁴ *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 6, p. 163.

²¹⁵ *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 6, p. 163.

Chapter Five

Nietzsche's Account of Friendship as a Mean Condition

Does Nietzsche present an account of friendship? I believe that we can find an account of friendship within Nietzsche's thought, albeit one that presents the status of friendship as a kind of mean condition [*mesotês*] between various types of vices. I characterize the phenomenon of friendship as a mean condition for three reasons. Firstly, friendship understood as a mean condition best articulates its "what-it-is" by reference to what it is not—i.e. certain vices. I use the notion of vices rather broadly to indicate those dispositions that exemplify loss of self, fragmentation of self, psychological sickness, deformity of "soul", life-negation, alienation from self and/or escape from self. These vicious conditions usually are somewhat more easily apprehended than the more elusive virtue of friendship of which we ultimately wish to gain a better understanding. Secondly, friendship should be understood as a mean condition because characterizing it in this way illuminates its built-in relativity. Friendships take many forms and many shapes, from one culture to the next and even within the same culture between sets of individuals. Even authentic friendships, which are the kind we are interested in, appear to have some level of variability. Despite this variability, Nietzsche does have an account in which he presents what the essence of friendship is—an essence that is universally instantiated in genuine friendships. In other words, the characteristic essence of genuine friendship allows for some variation of expression, albeit still within the confines of the human structure of such relationships. Thirdly, the virtue of friendship will have a plurality of corresponding vices where each set surrounds the mean condition of friendship on different continua. Just as other virtues, such as courage, have more than one set of vices with more than one continuum, friendship will also

display this structure. The fact that there is a plurality of continua of vices for friendship (or other virtues) is not a problem for this virtue ethical account of friendship, for Aristotle says that “it is possible to go wrong in many ways..., but there is only one way to get something right (which is why the one is easy and the other is difficult, it being easy to miss the target and difficult to hit it); so for these reasons excess and deficiency belong to vice and the mean condition belongs to virtue.”²¹⁶ Given such a plurality, we can see that there is more than one way to fall out of the harmonious and balanced mean. Such a view recognizes that the emotions and actions of the human psyche are not limited to just one continuum with only two opposing poles. From an inquiry into the tension between the vices that oppose friendship (and that oppose each other), we will discover what this essence of friendship is.

Sameness and Difference

In the attempt to engage in friendship, there is a tension between the drive for sameness and the drive for difference. Accomplishing the virtuous mean of friendship requires one to avoid manifesting either of these drives in their vicious extremes. One who entertains the possibility of another person becoming a friend, or who has already established some degree of friendship with another person, often operates from the drive to find as many similarities as possible with the identity of the friend. One has the hope that the other will see the world the same way that he does. There is the wish that the other will feel the same way about social and political issues. A friend hopes that he shares a similar aesthetic taste with the other: “Are we

²¹⁶ Aristotle. *NE*, 1106b26-34. See also Paula Gottlieb’s comments on the merits of a particular virtue having a plurality of continua of vices in her *The Virtues of Aristotle’s Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 32-33.

moved to tears by the same kinds of films? Do we both feel inspired by the same music?” The drive at hand can easily shift from a desire for mere similarity to a desire for sameness, i.e. “sameness of being.” It is often thought that such a desire only occurs in erotic relationships, but the desire for the “merging of souls” can be present in friendship as well. The difficulty with the satisfaction of such a drive is that in reality this sameness does not exist, despite love’s attempts to annihilate the feeling of *being other* in a relationship.²¹⁷ In recognizing the nonexistence of sameness between self and other, one moves closer toward the mean condition of friendship. In order for the friendship to thrive, the specific wish for sameness needs to be overcome, and each member of the relationship must respect the individuality of the other. This respecting of the other’s individuality is a kind of keeping distance from the other, which might be regarded as a form of respect for his autonomy and self-expression. Such autonomy and self-expression might be contaminated if impressed upon too often or to too high a degree. This idea of respect as keeping distance finds expression in Nietzsche when he compares the contamination of the other’s individuality with the smearing of a good engraving:

If we live together with another person too closely, what happens is similar to when we repeatedly handle a good engraving with our bare hands: one day all we have left is a piece of dirty paper. The soul of a human being too can finally become tattered by being handled continually; and that is how it finally *appears* to us - we never see the beauty of its original design again. - One always loses by too familiar association with friends and women; and sometimes what one loses is the pearl of one’s life.²¹⁸

Just as it is possible for an individual to improve and preserve the good condition of the friend through a sharing of lives, it is also possible for one to wear thin “the beauty of its original design” by intruding on the other’s self-chosen projects—projects that may require a measure of strict solitude. A good example of this kind of tattering is the premature forcing of oneself into

²¹⁷ *D*, Sec. 532.

²¹⁸ *HAAH*, Sec. 428.

the other's most intimate secrets. The other must give a person permission to enter her innermost world of thoughts and feelings, yet the drive to sameness can cause one to easily and hastily overlook the need for such freely given consent.

Another form of resistance to genuine friendship is the presence of the opposing drive for difference. There will likely be a moment in the formation of a friendship where someone realizes that he does not want his friend to be the same person as he is. The drive for complete similarity between friends is opposed by the drive for difference. Although it may appear to be counterintuitive, Nietzsche claims that this drive may do even more good than the opposing drive for sameness: "...it is as though [those who are gentle, reflective and possess a relaxed friendliness] were gazing out of the windows of their castle, which is their fortress and for that reason also their prison—to gaze into what is strange and free, into *what is different*, does them so much good!"²¹⁹ Such is the manner in which one can relate to another but do so through the recognition of difference rather than a recognition of some similarity. Seeing "what is different" in the friend preserves one's own individuality and helps to solidify one's identity in juxtaposition to the identity of the other. Nevertheless, in the construction of a friendship an individual still experiences the inner demand to identify with the other in terms of what they find agreeable. Because the struggle to bring forth one's self into the world has such potency, the tendency to individuate oneself from the other always resurfaces. Nietzsche acknowledges this phenomenon stating, "It is not in how one soul approaches another but in how it distances itself from it that I recognize their affinity and relatedness."²²⁰ We might say that one deficiency of friendship is complete difference between self and other, and we can say that one excess of

²¹⁹ *D*, Sec. 471.

²²⁰ *AOM*, Sec. 251.

friendship is complete sameness. It is not terribly important which is the excess and which the deficiency because each can be viewed as either “excessive” in one way and “deficient” in another. Each vice will be “out of proportion” and prohibit the creation of a friendship as a kind of work of art, whereby the subtraction of anything or the addition of anything would destroy its beauty. What is important is that friendship aims at some mean condition between total sameness and total difference, a condition in which the participants look to what is beautiful.

Nietzsche’s conception of how friendship exists somewhere between sameness and difference is similar to Socrates’ solution to the problem of friends being neither “like to like” nor “opposite to opposite.” Near the end of his discussion of the nature of friendship with Lysis and Menexenus, Socrates introduces the notion of kinship. For one to be akin [*oikeion*] to another is “to feel at home with,” for *oikeion* is related to *oikia*, which means “house,” “household,” or “home.” This feeling at home of two friends is a kind of relationship that is neither one of complete sameness nor one of complete difference, yet partaking somehow of both. Socrates explicates:

“And therefore,” I said, “if someone desires another, boys, or loves him passionately, he would never desire, nor love passionately, nor love [as a friend] unless he happened to be akin in some way to his passionately beloved—either in his soul, or else in some character of his soul, or some of its ways, or some aspect of it.”²²¹

On this understanding, friendship depends on one friend being akin to in some way, or feeling at home with in some way, the other, not entirely but feeling at home with *some* character or aspect of the other’s soul, or *some* of its ways. The desire that a friend experiences for his loved one does not have to be a desire for the whole being of the other. The loved one could have one

²²¹ Bolotin, David. *Plato’s Dialogue on Friendship: An Interpretation of the Lysis, with a New Translation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979, 222a.

particular passion or virtue that he possesses that draws the friend in, even while having an aversion or being indifferent to other aspects of the other's soul.

But might not one object that genuine friendship requires there to be a connection with the other person as a whole? This requirement is too strong, for a couple of reasons. For one, the kind of wholeness that Nietzsche is interested in is a unity within manifoldness, in which a single soul embodies a potentially wide range of perspectives, moralities, values, etc. Friendship need not require one to have a connection with all parts of the other's inner diversity-based unity. Secondly, a connection with the whole person seems to involve a near complete knowledge of the other or a near full identification of one's feelings and attitudes with the affective states of the other. Such knowledge of the other in his wholeness may not be psychologically possible, even in the most intimate of friendships. To strive to achieve this type of connection might also cause one to neglect the values of mystery and unfathomability of the other in friendship. So, the desire for a connection with the whole person is best associated with a kind of excessive condition that fails to hit the target of genuine friendship.

We can see, then, how this picture of friendship as kinship-to-some-aspect-of-soul bears a strong resemblance to Nietzsche's understanding of friendship, for both Plato and Nietzsche comprehend the tension between sameness and difference surrounding friendship and seek a kind of mean condition between extremes in which it can exist. In replacing sameness with a more precise notion of 'being akin,' Nietzsche expresses this ideal of kinship in terms of his connection with certain thinkers who have posthumously augmented his joy of living on this earth, "If I were set the task, I could endeavor to make myself at home in the world with

[Montaigne].²²² Part of the reason that Nietzsche feels this kinship with Montaigne is that he is honest as a writer and a thinker. However, honesty has an opponent: dissimulation, which leads us to another important aspect of the mean condition of friendship. From the sameness-difference tension, then, we must turn to the related honesty-dissimulation tension that surrounds friendship, which seeks to occupy a mean condition between honesty and dissimulation.

Honesty and Dissimulation

The problem of how much of one's self should be disclosed to another looms large in Nietzsche's writings. On the one hand, Nietzsche praises honesty [*Redlichkeit*] as "the youngest virtue" and as a virtue still in the process of becoming. Honesty is an active condition where one is truthful towards the needs and drives that move one's actions and that substantiate one's beliefs. On the other hand, Nietzsche praises dissimulation as a discriminatory ability that the genuine friend should possess. With such praise, Nietzsche suggests that a certain degree of dishonesty should be present in friendship. How can we unravel this apparent contradiction? First, how does Nietzsche characterize honesty, not as a virtue, but as a vice of excess? Honesty is not only honesty with oneself but also an active condition especially directed toward one's friends. Nietzsche begins to follow Ralph Waldo Emerson's account of friendship, for Emerson also holds honesty to be one of the two elements that go into the composition of friendship:

I am arrived at last in the presence of a [friend] so real and equal, that I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought, which men

²²² *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Sec. 2, p. 135.

never put off, and may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another.²²³

Such a virtue finds a place in Nietzsche's "good four" along with courage, magnanimity and politeness.²²⁴ In a letter to Mathilde Maier, Nietzsche expresses the value of a friend whose honesty is double-directed, at self and other: "I can endure only human relationships which are absolutely genuine. I avoid half-friendships and especially partisan associations; I want no adherents. May every man (and woman) be his own adherent only."²²⁵ I find this conception of genuine friendship quite compelling. Nietzsche promotes the idea that only human relationships that are absolutely genuine are actually the *most human* of relationships. This attitude displays integrity and courage—to accept nothing less than whole friendships and to forego those "half-friends" who would be mere followers rather than engage in the relationship through choice. Concerning both the attitude toward wisdom and the attitude toward one's friend, a mere follower is one who only reveres and idolizes the wise and similarly who only reveres and idolizes the friend. On the other hand, one who adheres to himself *lives* his aspiration to wisdom as a philosopher of *life* and puts his reverence toward the friend into his living deeds.²²⁶ It is this double meaning of friendship, 'being a friend to wisdom' and 'being a friend to another', that Nietzsche expresses in his letter to Maier. The thought also echoes the priority of the project of self-realization in that each individual should only follow himself.

However, the drive for honesty finds strong resistance from the drive for dissimulation. If one cares for the feelings of a friend, then a certain level of dissimulation is necessary in order

²²³ Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays: First and Second Series*. New York: First Vintage Books, 1990, "Essay VI: Friendship," p. 117.

²²⁴ *D*, Sec. 556.

²²⁵ *SL*, Letter #81.

²²⁶ *SL*, Letter #81.

to respect the tenderness of his affections. Nietzsche suggests that we often have to practice “a benevolent dissimulation” especially toward those with whom there is a possibility of friendship, for we may have to pretend we do not see through the motives of their actions.²²⁷ This suggestion implies that the motives behind our actions are often not what they appear to be. This does not necessarily mean that our motives are always harmful or malicious, although sometimes they may be. What I think Nietzsche is getting at here is that our “motives” are really our existential needs that are constantly present in the split between our consciousness and our instincts. Our needs are forever pressing towards the realization of a self. This underlying process may appear to be a threat to what is conventionally required for genuine friendship: loving the other for her own sake. However, the goal of self-realization does not undermine such human relationships because the struggle to realize a self does not necessarily threaten the love that is felt toward the friend. The acceptance of the particularity of the friend and the eventual loving attitude that is developed toward the other opens up otherwise closed avenues for self-discovery and self-creation. There seems to be a higher stage of freedom associated with higher levels of self-realization, which also would appear to involve a higher degree of self-consciousness. Nietzsche is not the only thinker to recognize that human relationships exemplifying mutual commitment can increase the autonomy of both. In the development of freedom from abstract to more concrete forms, Hegel found such a commitment in the institution of marriage. Whereas Hegel takes marriage to be one moment in the movement toward absolute Freedom in human society—a moment that makes a higher level of liberation of both parties possible “because in it they attain their substantive self-consciousness,”—Nietzsche sees that

²²⁷ *HAA*, Sec. 293.

friendship is not simply *a* condition, but the *unique* social condition of excellence that makes a higher degree of liberation possible—a liberation to a fully realized self.²²⁸

Zarathustra's recommendation that some degree of illusion is needed alongside honesty is consistent with friendship's status as a mean condition. He poses the question whether some degree of dreamlike illusion is needed in order for one to spark the friend's longing for the overman inside himself: "You do not want to put on anything for your friend? Should it be an honor for your friend that you give yourself to him as you are?"²²⁹ Zarathustra suggests that an individual who makes no secret of himself puts his friend into a rage and that there is some reason for one to fear nakedness. He also advises that one cannot groom oneself too beautifully for one's friend and that a friend must not want to see everything. So we have an image of a friend, but one who partakes in forms of dissimulation: secrecy, illusion and clothing oneself in beauty.

But why is such dishonesty needed when honesty also is needed in friendship? There must be something valuable about the mysteriousness of the friend, a kind of mystery that helps both self and other to be mutually supportive in the realization of selves. When Zarathustra says, "O my friend, man is something that must be overcome," he means that what must be overcome is that being which is not yet a fully realized self. Just a step later, Zarathustra says that if what you love in the friend is "the glance of eternity," then some level of mystery must remain to preserve that higher ideal. Why is it important to possess some degree of unfathomability as a

²²⁸ Hegel, G. W. F. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, Sec. 162. Nietzsche identifies a close relation between an individual's higher self and a kind of "spectral freedom" in *HAH*, Sec. 624. As one more fully exemplifies the will to power, one also increases her degree of freedom. This is corroborated when in *GM*, Second Essay, Sec. 18 Nietzsche calls the will to power the "instinct for freedom."

²²⁹ *TSZ*, "On the Friend," p. 168.

friend? Why should the friend conceal his compassion under a hard shell? How does the concealment of that compassion make it full of “delicacy and sweetness”? Compassion must be somewhat hidden because of the human lust for possession. The drive to possess, especially the possession of others, is an extension of both the existential needs for effectiveness and for active stimulation; however, we might consider it to be potentially harmful to a possible or actual relationship. Particularly with relationships based on erotic love and with friendships, the phenomenon of boredom provides some evidence that a lover or a friend should not entirely reveal himself (all the manifestations of his compassion) too soon. Think of how often and how easily two spouses, having formerly been true lovers, exhaust the full range of what they are capable of and what constitutes their inner life. Two friends can just as easily grow fatigued of each other, if one allows himself to be completely possessed by the other. If a relationship is to not fall prey to boredom, the inner life of the other should be a kind of endless well of bits and pieces of the other’s revelations of compassion. One party in a friendship should discretely disclose himself so that there is always something novel to discover. Also, think of how much fascination a friend or lover can embody when draped with a certain quality of mystery. Only one who has the ability to discriminate when to feign and when to disguise parts of himself will properly occupy this mean condition between honesty and dissimulation. Regarding the nature of possession in erotic love, Nietzsche says, “Our pleasure in ourselves tries to maintain itself by again and again changing something new *into ourselves*; that is what possession means. To become tired of some possession means tiring of ourselves.”²³⁰ The lust to possess someone is the desire to expand one’s self outward to encapsulate the other, but there is a danger in the satisfaction of this desire. Suppose one actually succeeds and comes to possess a lover. The

²³⁰ *GS*, Sec. 14.

complete possession of the other causes one's drive for self-expansion to be stifled. As Nietzsche says, once one tires of the other, he will tire of himself. This process that occurs in erotic relationships also can occur in friendship. The same lust for possession exists with the friend as it does with the lover. Zarathustra's cautions the friend to make a secret of himself, to beautifully groom himself and to conceal his compassion in order to prevent complete possession of the other. To further explicate Zarathustra's idea that man is something that must be overcome, we ought to consider this lust for possession as that part of man which must be overcome. It must be overcome for two reasons: in order to experience friendship and in order to realize selves.

Betrayal of Confidence and Neglect of Praise

Concerning the next set of opposing elements to genuine friendship in Nietzsche's account, one extreme is the vice of betrayal of confidence, and its counterpart vice is something like a failure to praise the strengths of the friendship (and the friend).²³¹ The corresponding mean condition is friendship but that aspect of friendship that is concerned with trustworthiness. Each of these vices stems from humankind's nature as "the great esteemer," particularly the activities of blaming and praising, in which one vice consists of saying too much to the wrong people and the other vice consists of saying too little to the friend (How much to say? To whom to say it?). The betrayal of confidence is excessive in the sense that one discloses to others outside the friendship what is intended to be kept in secrecy inside the friendship. Such a

²³¹ Just as several of Aristotle's virtues and vices are nameless, so are the vices surrounding trustworthiness. We don't have clear and precise names for the conditions, but through description we can get a good idea of what they are.

betrayal is a failure to revere the trust that has been placed in oneself by the friend, and is rooted in the human tendency to blame the base actions and weak qualities of others, especially those intimate ones that are kept secret for everyone except the friend. On a separate continuum, the vice of failing to praise the strengths of the friendship (and the friend) is deficient in the sense that one neglects the excellence aspects of the friendship and the strengths of the other, even if those strengths surpass one's own. One may recognize them, but recognition is not enough. Vocalization of that recognition is an important way to let the friend know that there is a recognition and an appreciation of her merits. So, on one continuum we have an excess of blame and a deficiency of blame (where one fails to manifest the strength of keeping the other's confidence), and on another we have an excess of praise and a deficiency of praise (where one fails to exemplify proper pride regarding the friend (and friendship)). Experiencing enough comfort inside a relationship to freely disclose oneself to the friend seems to be the mark of the genuineness of a friendship. It is easy to reveal what a friend has said to oneself in confidence; however, it takes a significant amount of strength of character to be "a confidant" to the other—to treat what is given in secrecy as a gift from the other. Of a friend's secret, Nietzsche says, "There will be few who, when they are in want of matter for conversation, do not reveal the more secret affairs of their friends."²³² The human desire to engage in gossip comes to mind, for the activity of gossiping is usually associated with a feeling of moral superiority and is an opportunity for gossipers to voice condemnations and judgments upon others. However, the gossipers usually only experience *the feeling* of moral superiority and does not possess any actual superiority of will or character. Such a person often speaks out of flagrant *ressentiment* for the target of ridicule. On the flipside, a genuine friend has the ability to take in the secrets

²³² *HAH*, Sec. 327.

given by the other and can be trusted to treat such secrets as gifts and as little windows into the fortified soul of the other.²³³ So when Nietzsche advises his reader that one should not talk about one's friends, otherwise one will talk away the feeling of friendship, he recognizes the ease with which one is able to violate a friend's trust by placing a new trust in a new acquaintance.²³⁴ However, because the new "trust" is a violation of a previous secrecy, its dishonesty cancels both the old trust and itself out.

Nietzsche's thought that genuine friendship can be exemplified by oneself in an agonistic but cooperative dialectic with the other is significant, especially in the sense of a friend standing as one's enemy. The full quote on "Self-observation" from *HAH* just referenced states:

Man is very well defended against himself, against being reconnoitered and besieged by himself, he is usually able to perceive of himself only his outer walls. The actual fortress is inaccessible, even invisible to him, unless his friends and enemies play the traitor and conduct him in by a secret path.²³⁵

In order to "play the traitor," a friend must have the willingness to be his friend's spiritual enemy. There are many ways in which a friend can assist in solidifying the other's self through intellectual contestation. Some modern salient examples of such enemy-enemy relationships are the Republican-Democrat, the Christian-Atheist, the Vengeful-Merciful, the Objectivist-Relativist (regarding morality), the Capitalist-Socialist and the Absolutist-Perspectivist (regarding Truth). While these are just a few among many ways that two individuals can intellectually and emotionally oppose one another, they are some of the most enduring and salient oppositions. One manner in which a friend can help one to realize a self "by a secret path" is to occupy the position of spiritual enemy—to lure him into a philosophical dialogue by

²³³ *HAH*, Sec. 491.

²³⁴ *HAH*, Sec. 252. See also *HAH*, Sec. 254.

²³⁵ *HAH*, Sec. 491.

willfully being his interlocutor. It is possible that two friends already occupy opposing positions, yet a friend's intentional and willing placement of himself as the other's enemy seems to be a way in which an individual's self can be brought into clearer focus—to observe the self.

Permanence and Change

For Nietzsche, friendship also requires accomplishing a mean between the opposing forces of permanence and change. In friendship there is the drive for the relationship to have a kind of permanence throughout the lives of each friend. Once engaged in a committed relationship with another, the intuition quickly develops that the relationship *must* be life-long, for any sort of break in the relationship might be considered a failure or be viewed as an inability to participate in genuine friendship. Nietzsche warns against the feeling of this kind of bad conscience. He recognizes that some individuals achieve a great measure of self-transformation but that some people are not capable of such a process: “If we greatly transform ourselves, those friends of ours who have not been transformed become ghosts of our past: their voice comes across to us like the voice of a shade—as though we were hearing ourself, only younger, more severe, less mature.”²³⁶ What I take Nietzsche to mean here is that an individual ought not to feel obligated to maintain a friendship if he has achieved a full degree of self-realization but the other has not “matured.” If the other is still a friend to a former self that no longer exists, then one ought not to sacrifice his own process of self-realization. In other words, do not be a friend to a ghost of your past. Sometimes fate forces two friends to be separated from each other for a period of time, yet the two friends refuse to recognize that the other has become a different

²³⁶ *HAAH*, Sec. 242.

person than who he once was. Nietzsche acknowledges this inner defiance of the world of becoming:

When old friends meet again after a long separation it often happens that they feign an interest in things mentioned to which they have in fact grown quite indifferent: and sometimes both of them notice this but dare not lift the veil—from a sad apprehension of what they might see. Thus conversations arise like those in the realm of the dead.²³⁷

However, it does not necessarily have to be because one friend has failed to realize a self while the other has created a self that a friendship should only have a temporary existence; nor must it be the case that they have grown indifferent to their new interests. In a more broad sense, friendship must find its place between its drive for permanence and the reality that each individual changes over time. This sought-for mean condition is reminiscent of the adoption of the attitude of *amor fati*, but in this case it is a love of one's own fate that is expanded to include a love of the fate of the friend. Nietzsche illumines this condition in a section entitled "Star friendship." As we will see, the meaning of a *star friendship* proves elusive unless carefully digested:

We were friends and have become estranged. But this was right, and we do not want to conceal and obscure it from ourselves as if we had reason to feel ashamed. We are two ships each of which has its goal and course; our paths may cross and we may celebrate a feast together, as we did—and then the good ships rested so quietly in one harbor and one sunshine that it may have looked as if they had reached their goal and as if they had one goal. But then the almighty force of our tasks drove us apart again into different seas and sunny zones, and perhaps we shall never see each other again; perhaps we shall meet again but fail to recognize each other: our exposure to different seas and suns has changed us. That we have to become estranged is the law *above* us; by the same token we should also become more venerable for each other—and the memory of our former friendship more sacred. There is probably a tremendous but invisible stellar orbit in which our very different ways and goals may be *included* as small parts of this path; let us rise up to this thought. But our life is too short and our power of vision too small for

²³⁷ *AOM*, Sec. 259.

us to be more than friends in the sense of this sublime possibility.—Let us then *believe* in our star friendship even if we should be compelled to be earth enemies.²³⁸

A lot is going on in this passage. It begins with the possibility of becoming strange [*fremd*] or alien to each other, a possibility from which friends often seek to immunize themselves. From this desire, a more-than-human standard is generated and then when the friends find themselves in their all-too-human existence of change and becoming, it is likely that they will feel ashamed or guilty. To clarify, the desire to be overcome is the desire to look for selfhood in a permanent union with another individual. In seeking the kind of immutable quality sought under such a wish, one assumes that there is an already-existing soul substratum underneath the individual. To make this unwarranted assumption is to negate life as it truly exists, in the Heraclitean thought, as a river that is ever-changing and which, as the same river, cannot be stepped into twice. But according to Nietzsche here, these feelings of guilt and shame should be overcome. These emotions foreshadow what Nietzsche will later refer to as a “bad conscience” in the *Genealogy of Morals*. It seems that Nietzsche is already wrestling with the question of whether and how it is possible for one to be the same person over time, to stand security for one’s own future, as the sovereign individual does.²³⁹ While Nietzsche does think it possible for an individual to realize such a power over oneself and over fate, he insinuates that most human beings do not possess such an ability and that such an expectation should be significantly tempered by natural and social pressures that alter our character and temperament. Nietzsche proposes that each ship has its own goal [*Ziel*] and implies that there is not one single goal for all ships. It would make sense to think of each individual’s goal to be his realized self (a kind of universal form ascribed to the selfhood which is sought), which is unique and different from

²³⁸ *GS*, Sec. 279.

²³⁹ *GM*, Second Essay, Sec. 1-2.

individual to individual (and thus each goal is different insofar as its particular content is concerned). Moments where friends are sharing their lives, especially in the activities of resting together and feasting together, may make it seem as though they share the same goal, but the danger here is losing the self—the realization of which is the ultimate goal. Nietzsche says that it is the almighty force of the friends' tasks [*Aufgabe*] that then must drive them apart. There does seem to be a kind of necessity or fatal aspect of what each individual's "tasks" or "roles" are. If we apply the notion of *amor fati* to this notion of "duties," we might say that each person has a duty to be and accept the life in the world into which fate has thrust him. Each ship is thus cast out and must submit to difference and change. As Heraclitus says, not only can we not step into the same river twice, but because we are temporal beings who are part of a world of becoming, each ship is always a somewhat different ship than it was in its past or that it will be in its future. So when Nietzsche makes the seemingly strange statement, "That we have to become estranged is the law *above* us," he has a two-fold meaning: Because we are necessarily temporal beings of becoming, we are forced to always be (somewhat) alienated (1) from our own past and (2) from possible shared pasts that have intertwined with loved ones. That is "the law [*Gesetz*] *above* us." However, Nietzsche advises his reader that he ought to adopt the attitude of *amor fati* even toward a past that appears fleeting and sometimes almost seems as if it didn't really happen. A friendship in which the friends' fates are at some point forced to travel on different seas and under different suns still ought to inhabit a "venerable" [*ehrwürdig*] and "sacred" [*heiliger*] attitude toward their past friendship. The finite quality of those friendships that are genuine should not diminish their excellent quality.

Individuality and Shared Lives

The last part of the “Star friendship” section leads into the final tension within which friendship must seek out a mean condition—the tension between individuality and the sharing of lives. On the one hand, there exists the human drive to exemplify one’s individuality, to individuate oneself from everyone else.²⁴⁰ On the other hand, there is also a drive to share one’s activities and one’s life with others, especially in friendship. (This drive has its origin in the existential need for rootedness.) In his portrayal of his friendship with Etienne de la Boétie, Montaigne holds that the unison of souls is a fundamental feature of genuine friendship:

In the friendship I speak of, our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again....Everything actually being in common with them—wills, thoughts, judgments, goods, wives, children, honor, and life—and their relationship being that of one soul in two bodies, according to Aristotle’s very apt definition, they can neither lend nor give anything to each other.²⁴¹

It is tempting to attribute such an idealistic quality to genuine friendship. Both Montaigne and Aristotle characterized the friend as “another self” or as the blending of two souls into one. Nietzsche warns us that such a mingling of selves/souls may not be a psychological possibility, however, and that such a desire could be harmful to one’s self. The problem thus raises its head: How can one possibly retain one’s individuality while at the same time blurring the lines of that individuality by sharing one’s activities, self and life with others? Is it paradoxical to say that

²⁴⁰ One might object that the value of individuality is not universal to humanity but only to modernity or only to Western liberal-democratic cultures. I concede that individuality is *more* a value in contemporary society and is *more* a value in the West, but we might wonder whether the drive to individuality has been suppressed because of political institutions that have been in place for generations—for example, in certain Asian nations such as China and North Korea. For my purposes, I will assume that some degree of the drive for individuality exists even in Chinese, Vietnamese and other Asian cultures.

²⁴¹ Montaigne, Michel. *The Complete Works of Montaigne: Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*. Trans. Donald M. Frame. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1948, “28. Of friendship,” pp. 139-141.

both drives can be tended to simultaneously? Through the use of metaphorical imagery in his conclusion of “Star friendship,” Nietzsche illuminates how to resolve this paradox. Nietzsche supposes the existence of an ideal: “a tremendous but invisible stellar orbit” in which each friend’s “very different ways and goals” might possibly all become parts of the one single stellar path. With a hopeful attitude, Nietzsche beckons his reader to lift himself up to such a thought. Insofar as we are able to acknowledge the limitations of our humanity, this very ideal—this “sublime possibility”—may be the limit of how two friends can each preserve their individuality and yet exist together in a star friendship. To further complicate matters though, Nietzsche warns that some authenticity between self and other may have to be sacrificed in order to preserve individuality in friendship. According to him, one feature of a good friendship is that “one party knows how to facilitate the association by adding to it a delicate *tinge* of intimacy while at the same time prudently withholding actual and genuine intimacy and the confounding of I and Thou.”²⁴² Thus it seems that the opposite practice, the possibility of having to be honest, not so much in the brutal sense but perhaps with a certain mixture of gentleness and brutality, is what is sometimes required to preserve one’s individuality. For example, one may find oneself being swept up and being carried along by the strong political beliefs of one’s friend—suppose that the friend believes that Republican Governor of Texas, Rick Perry, should be the next President of the United States—and because of this tightening of grip by the other’s political beliefs, which are perhaps antithetical to one’s own position, one feels one’s individuality slipping away. This is where authenticity and honesty would appear to be required in order to confess to the other that his beliefs are not shared. Another example: suppose that one unexpectedly discovers that one’s friend is a huge fan of Dave Matthews Band and that the

²⁴² *AOM*, Sec. 241.

friend is about to ask one to go see D. M. B. live in concert. Suppose further that this unfortunate discovery horrifies one (and rightly so) because the friend's Dave-Matthews-Band-ness is going to potentially infect oneself. What should be done here to keep one's integrity as an individual who is a separate self from others? Should one be brutally-yet-gently honest in the expression of difference in aesthetic taste? What are we to make of this? The mean condition of friendship results from a dialogic process whereby shared activity enhances each other's individuality and, vice versa, each person's individuality enhances his own capacity to share his life. Such sharing of lives and activities ought to not necessarily be a complete sacrifice of one's individuality though, nor should it be sacrificial of the rootedness that can be obtained in shared experiences. Friendship here is an active condition in which each person is in a kind of equilibrium between opposing extremes. One possible solution to 'how much' and 'in what way' we can find the target between individuality and the sharing of lives is through friendship's nourishing quality. In a parent-child relationship, the egoism/altruism dichotomy is sublimated. The parent nourishes the child emotionally, intellectually and physically for the child's own sake; however, the child's hoped-for flourishing is in a sense constitutive of the parent's flourishing. The significant difference between the nourishment that takes place in the parent-child relationship and the friend-friend relationship is the lack of equality in the former and the presence of equality in the latter. The recognition of the otherness sought for its own sake but still recognized as an otherness that is a constitutive element in one's own process of becoming a self is what makes such sublimation possible. Along with Nietzsche, we assume that each motive is interest-laden—i.e. interested in realizing a self. If it is true that there are no such things as disinterested motives and that all altruistic actions are sublimated egoistic ones, then

attempting to be more intimate than humanly possible will result in failure and self-loathing, potentially destroying the friendship. In his re-centering of human motivation, Nietzsche claims:

Good actions are sublimated evil ones; evil actions are coarsened, brutalized good ones. It is the individual's sole desire for self-enjoyment (together with the fear of losing it) which gratifies itself in every instance, let a man act as he can, that is to say as he must: whether his deeds be those of vanity, revenge, pleasure, utility, malice, cunning, or those of sacrifice, sympathy, knowledge.²⁴³

The underlying motive-force that both pushes an individual and pulls him forward is the drive to enjoy the self *as* a fully realized self. Just as an individual's deed can be one of vanity, malice or cunning in the interest of accomplishing such a realized self, that same individual's deed of sacrifice or sympathy is also motivated by this framework of self-becoming. Specifically in friendship, actions of sacrifice and/or sympathy can be authentically performed for the other, but only insofar as the other's good exists as part of the self's good. So, upon the completion of a sacrificial deed, the self-enjoyment that a friend experiences is the nourishing relation that promotes healthy growth of the other *qua* individual and *qua* part of a self's ultimate flourishing. This way of conceiving selfhood is counterintuitive to the commonsense way of thinking, and therefore, such relationships may sometimes require the slight feigning of intimacy. Keep in mind that such feigning should be interpreted as a kind of practical wisdom that one possesses toward being intimate in the right way, at the right time, to the right extent, etc.

Envy and Schadenfreude

Another opposition of attitudes circling the virtue of friendship is that between envy and *schadenfreude*. I refer to them as affective states, and not vices, because in each experience one

²⁴³ HAH, Sec. 107.

seems to be in the grip of an emotion or feeling, rather than as the occupying an active condition; however, this distinction may not be terribly significant. At a minimum, they are affective states that condition actions that emanate from them. Nietzsche spends a significant amount of time examining the feelings of envy [*der Neid*] and *schadenfreude* (sometimes referred to as “malice” [*die Böswilligkeit*]), and each emotion appears to represent some sort of sickness of soul, especially one that prohibits participation in friendship. What exactly are envy and *schadenfreude*? In terms of pleasure and pain, envy is the experience of being pained by the fortune of others, and *schadenfreude* is the experience of pleasure (or joy/delight) at the misfortune of others. In terms of power, envy is the feeling of inferiority caused by the fortune of others, and *schadenfreude* is the feeling of superiority caused by the misfortune of others. Envy is an affective experience toward which human beings have a strong tendency, yet despite its frequent occurrence it displays a weak and fragmented character. In envy there is a distance between an individual’s desire and that which is coveted that cannot be traversed. There is a sense in which such an emotion just happens to one and as such is out of one’s control; nevertheless, to say that the experience of envy “just happens” would not be entirely correct. What and who one envies will be conditioned by what he takes to be valuable, but through introspection some rational control of such an experience is possible. The fact that we do blame people for being envious of other’s fortune supports such a claim. However, Nietzsche does think that there is some way in which an individual can transform his feelings away from envious orientations, even if it is not done on a fully conscious level. In describing such an instance of nobility, Nietzsche says, “Man involuntarily conducts himself nobly when he has become accustomed to desiring nothing of men and always bestowing gifts upon them.”²⁴⁴ This process

²⁴⁴ *HAAH*, Sec. 497.

of accustoming oneself to want nothing of others but to accustom oneself to instead bestow gifts upon them is one mark of nobility. The discord between envy and friendship is more specifically addressed when Nietzsche remarks that “[a] lack of friends may be put down to envy or presumption. Many owe their friends only to the fortunate circumstances that they have no occasion for envy.”²⁴⁵ This comment both recognizes envy as an obstacle to friendship and as an obstacle whose presence or absence partially depends on circumstances that are out of our control. Sometimes it just happens to be the case that a friend doesn’t have much of which to be envious—an instance of fortune (for the friendship). Other times it is the case that a friend has much good fortune of which to be envious—an instance of misfortune for the friendship. Regarding the individual who has experienced good fortune (especially the friend), Nietzsche says that he should perhaps mask his happiness in order to preserve the friendship:

We must display our unhappiness and from time to time be heard to sigh, be seen to be impatient: for if we let others see how happy and secure in ourselves we are in spite of suffering and deprivation, how malicious and envious we would make them!—We have to take care not to corrupt our fellow men; moreover, they would in the instance referred to impose upon us a heavy impost, and our *public suffering* is in any event also our *private advantage*.²⁴⁶

In order to prevent both envy and malice in a friend, Nietzsche advises that one should disguise one’s happiness and security in oneself with a veil of “public suffering,” for one’s good fortune and self-satisfaction has a strong tendency to cause a feeling of inferiority in the other. That feeling of descent in the other can potentially give rise to pain felt toward one’s good fortune or pleasure at one’s misfortune. Because such emotive attitudes are not fully within our control, such cautionary measures need be taken by one who wishes to preserve (potential or actual) genuine friendships.

²⁴⁵ *HAH*, Sec. 559.

²⁴⁶ *AOM*, Sec. 334.

In addition to these practical methods for preventing the friend from experiencing such friendship-destroying emotions, however, the friend himself is able to control these emotions to a certain degree. Because of the duality (and multiplicity) of the self, there is an inner dialogue that takes place, and it is this dialogue that allows us to adopt higher order affective and rational responses to those feelings that simply take hold of us.

The existence of this intermediate condition of the dialectical process between emotion and emotion, or between intellectual conscience and emotion, is a kind of ethical autonomy akin to deliberative choice [*prohairesis*], but a process of choice which is conditioned by temperament, attitude and the more fine-grained emotions. We ought to conceive of that ethical autonomy that is achievable by us as something less free than the traditional notion of “free will” but as something more “autonomous” than mere causal determinism. Along with Nietzsche, we should recognize that absolutely free will is a fiction but also that strict causal determinism is a misuse of cause and effect.²⁴⁷ Such a stance is pertinent to how we think of an individual’s relationship to his emotions and feelings. Since we do have some measure of control over envy—though not complete freedom—how do we fend it off? *Should* we fend it off if we can? Is envy always a destructive drive? In keeping with his tendency to complicate strict good/bad dichotomies, Nietzsche notes that when envy is generated by a condition of contest, then it can be the spark that ignites the furthering of self-improvement and self-realization. For example, when another’s good fortune serves as a challenge to go beyond her success, then the pain that one feels at her good fortune can possibly be transformed into a drive to self-improvement. So when there is a prevailing outlook on the praise or blameworthiness of some facet of society—e.g. the all-too-easily-abused nature of some piece of technology like television or the Internet—

²⁴⁷ *BGE*, Sec. 21.

then the common opinion which is apparently the best position on the issue may be challenged, forcing one to look more critically at how and whether that piece of technology improves or hinders the possibility of human flourishing. Alternatively, the kind of envy that Nietzsche negatively criticizes is one that causes strife that is purely destructive of the other and the self—a mere expression of cruelty. This more common form of envy, in which one is pained at the fortune of another and which can be expressed in a wish for her demise, is that which stands opposed to friendship.

Schadenfreude also presents itself as an obstacle to genuine friendship, and it has a dual origin: in the demand for equality between one individual and the next, and the demand for equality between virtue and happiness. If an individual experiences the general feeling of “unwellness,” then seeing the harm that befalls another will make that person his equal: it appeases his envy.²⁴⁸ Similarly, if an individual feels perfectly well, then he “gathers up his neighbor’s misfortune in his consciousness as a capital upon which to draw when he himself faces misfortune.”²⁴⁹ According to Nietzsche, *schadenfreude* is what “restores” equality between self and other. Taking pleasure in another’s misfortune expresses the drive to equalize the suffering of another with one’s own suffering. Since some amount of suffering is inevitable for each person, an individual will retain the present suffering of another “as capital” for his own potential future suffering. In characterizing *schadenfreude* as the appeasement of envy—joy in another’s misfortune as compensation for pain at their good fortune—there is a sense in which

²⁴⁸ *WS*, Sec. 27.

²⁴⁹ *WS*, Sec. 27.

envy and *schadenfreude* are two sides of the same coin.²⁵⁰ Because the demand for equality can never be perfectly satisfied in the world and because equality itself is something of an apparition, the striving for such and the associated *schadenfreude* results in a fragmented and sick soul. This demand for equality, or feeling of righteous indignation in the face of inequality, seems to represent a weakness of character that is somewhat different from the deeper weaknesses of character that exemplify envy and *schadenfreude*. So in the broader political sphere, justice demands the equal and fair treatment of citizens. It also demands that acts of injustice are punished where the punishment is proportional to the wrong committed. While these demands of justice may be conditions that make friendships within a community possible, there is a sense in which such demands fall away within the boundaries of genuine friendship. To exemplify righteous indignation toward a friend who has not paid back a debt of some kind, especially a debt that can be overlooked, would express a certain weakness of character. To exemplify righteous indignation toward unequal treatment between two friends would also represent a weak character, for the true friend would recognize that it is a more beautiful thing to do good for friends than to demand that the same amount of good be received from the other. Thus within friendship there is a sense in which justice should not be sought. This is different than situations where a pure justice simply cannot be found. Such kinds of contexts where a demand of justice might represent weakness of character might be the possession of a chronic medical disorder or the death of a loved one due to some catastrophe. In cases like these, the inability to overcome the demand for equality would be such a weakness. On the other hand, there could be contexts

²⁵⁰ See Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* [1386b34-1387a3]. He says that one who is malicious is also envious "for when someone is distressed at the acquisition or possession of something, he necessarily rejoices at its deprivation or destruction."

where the demand for equality (*qua* justice) where some kind of fair practices or fair laws can be instantiated could represent strength of character.

There is also the kind of *schadenfreude* that expresses a drive for equality between vice and unhappiness. The herd operates under the wish that those who are vicious be the victims of misfortune and unhappiness. This demand for equality between vice and unhappiness, and the corresponding demand for equality between virtue and happiness (typically in the afterlife), is also a point of origin for *schadenfreude*.

This brings us to the question: What exactly is the mean condition between envy and *schadenfreude*? At first we supposed that it is friendship, but we must be a bit more precise. The mean condition between the two “sick” emotions is not righteous indignation. Righteous indignation can be defined as the feeling of pain toward the undeserved misfortune of others or the feeling of pain toward the undeserved fortune of others. As such it expresses the desire to reward the virtuous with happiness and the desire to punish the vicious with unhappiness. However, such equality can never be perfectly realized in the world, meaning that righteous indignation is also a pathological attitude. So what kind of attitude, or mean condition, should we strive for—especially regarding friendship? We should not think of the mean condition as one of pain felt toward the undeserved misfortune of others (unless one is reasonably capable of exemplifying justice and can do so without harboring a vengeful attitude on a global scale). Instead we ought to characterize the mean condition as one of pleasure/joy felt towards the fortune of others, and in a sense we should do so *regardless* of whether the other’s good fortune is deserved or undeserved. While there is some sense in which a person can be said to deserve whatever fortune or misfortune comes about in his life, there is an even larger sphere of human

existence in which one's fortune or misfortune is outside of one's control. In other words, we must tear ourselves away from the strict demand for desert and replace it with an attitude of *amor fati*, especially as a precondition for friendship. This is what Nietzsche means when he says of friendship, "Fellow rejoicing, not fellow suffering, makes the friend."²⁵¹ One must develop and possess the capacity to rejoice with a friend over his good fortune. So, the mean condition underlying friendship is pleasure in another's fortune, which is opposed to pain in others' fortune (envy) and pleasure in others' misfortune (*schadenfreude*), and it is a mean condition that is not enslaved to the oppressive demand of equality. Nietzsche summarizes this opposition by contrasting two character types that he calls the retarded man and the anticipatory man:

The unpleasant character who is full of mistrust, consumed with envy whenever competitors or neighbours achieve a success, and violently opposes all opinions not his own, demonstrates that he belongs to an earlier stage of culture and is thus a relic: for the way in which he traffics with men was the apt and right one for conditions obtaining during an age of club-law; he is a *retarded* man.

And conversely,

Another character who readily rejoices with his fellow men, wins friends everywhere, welcomes everything new and developing, takes pleasure in the honours and successes of others and makes no claim to be in the sole possession of the truth but is full of a diffident mistrust—he is an *anticipatory* man striving toward a higher human culture.²⁵²

Through this investigation into the vices that oppose each other and that oppose friendship, we now have the capacity to paint a picture of the complex and elusive nature of friendship. So what is friendship? The virtue of friendship is a mean condition that exists between sameness and difference, honesty and dissimulation, envy and *schadenfreude*, permanence and change and individuality and the sharing of lives. The fragile place that

²⁵¹ *HAH*, Sec. 499.

²⁵² *HAH*, Sec. 614.

friendship occupies between these sets of vices, which might be described as inhuman absolutes, gives us a clue to why it is considered to be a form of excellence. Through this interpretation of Nietzsche's account of friendship, we can now decipher why friendship is the virtue that can best support the exemplification of the will to power.

Potential Objections to Nietzsche's Account of Friendship

Is it possible to say more than what has been said about the essence of genuine friendship? Through an inquiry into the vices, or extremes of excess and deficiency, we have gained a better understanding of how the virtue of friendship exists as a mean condition; yet, is it possible that the very word "friendship" (and its corresponding concept 'friendship') violates friendship's qualities of uniqueness and irreplaceability? At various points in Nietzsche's corpus, he identifies the problem of consciousness as one in which conscious concepts and the language by which we express those concepts only capture "what is common" and "what is communicable." In other words, all our actions, including and especially those in friendship, are "altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual... [b]ut as soon as we translate them into consciousness they no longer seem to be."²⁵³ If language fails to convey the true essence of each particular friendship, then the Nietzschean account of friendship would itself fail to capture the essence of friendship in all its particularity. Does Nietzsche have a reply to this?

I believe that he does, and a rather interesting one at that. Nietzsche would concede that through language we cannot fully secure how an individual experiences the feeling of friendship

²⁵³ *GS*, Sec. 354.

from the inside. Nevertheless, he would admit that we can identify those dispositions that fail to hit the target of friendship's bulls-eye. The extreme dispositions that are in tension with each other and that are in a metaphorical sense "opposite" to friendship are conditions that are pervasive in the human condition. We might not be able to provide an exact description of what a particular experience of friendship is like from the inside, for each instance of friendship is personal, unique and infinitely individual. However, because of friendship's constitutive importance in self-realization and in human flourishing, it seems necessary to be able to provide the best account that we can of such a phenomenon. And doing so by way of a description of the opposing vices appears to respect its importance while acknowledging its resistance to description.

A related objection to Nietzsche's account might be that it does not really address the elusive character of friendship as experienced from the first person perspective itself. In his essay on friendship, Montaigne illumines the paradox between the certainty of friendship and its unknown "what-it-is-ness." In order to clarify what Nietzsche's position is regarding the elusive nature of friendship, it is worth further attention. On the one hand, Montaigne expresses the idea that when he has been in the grip of such a relationship, that he has been certain of the reality of friendship:

It is not in the power of all the arguments in the world to dislodge me from the certainty I have of the intentions and judgments of my friend. Not one of his actions could be presented to me, whatever appearance it might have, that I could not immediately find the motive for it. Our souls pulled together in such unison, the regarded each other with such ardent affection, and with a like affection revealed themselves to each other to the very depths of our hearts, that not only did I know his soul as well as mine, but I should certainly have trusted myself to him more readily than to myself.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Montaigne, Book I, "28. Of friendship," p. 140.

In a “real” friendship, Montaigne claims that one feels certain as to what the friend’s intentions, judgments and motives are—the entire inner contents of his soul. If one has this kind of certainty about the contents of the friend’s soul, then it would seem that one also feels certain of the reality of the friendship. One feels that the “unison of souls” is not a mere appearance but that the relationship has a kind of authenticity that is indubitable. Montaigne elucidates this seeming knowledge of the other quite well, and his attitude of certainty appears to be more than just an intuition. But is such certain knowledge of the “what-it-is” of a particular friendship possible? Earlier in his essay, Montaigne voices his worry about the inexplicable nature of friendship:

If you press me to tell why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed, except by answering: Because it was he, because it was I. Beyond all my understanding, beyond what I can say about this in particular, there was I know not what inexplicable and fateful force that was the mediator of this union. We sought each other before we met because of the reports we heard of each other, which had more effect on our affection than such reports would reasonably have; I think it was by some ordinance from heaven.²⁵⁵

Montaigne poses the curious question that any individual who has thought himself engaged in friendship poses to himself: Why do I love my friend? What are the reasons why I love him? The only answer that he can give is “because it was he” and “because it was I.” At first glance, this answer may seem uninformative, but I believe that such an answer accentuates the inexplicable quality of friendship. One may object to this and argue that it is indeed possible to verbalize the characteristics that a friend possesses and that these are “the reasons” for my love. If then asked, “Would you be a friend to just anyone who possessed such characteristics?” then one might reply: Well, it’s not just my friend’s set of characteristics, but it’s how he uniquely and particularly expresses such a set. Perhaps one could be pressed further and asked, “What is

²⁵⁵ Montaigne, Book I, “28. On friendship,” p. 139.

it about how your friend exemplifies his humor or how he exemplifies his generosity that causes you to love him?" At some point in the line of questioning, it is probable that such a person will take Montaigne's position. If one is pressed to describe the essence of one's friendship, I wager that he will ultimately come up empty-handed for an answer, or at least be forced to resort to: "Because it was him. Because it was I." Because of its unknown, and possibly unknowable, essence, Montaigne proposes the idea that "fate" must have had a role to play in his friendship with Etienne or that their union came into existence "by some ordinance from heaven." Both the appeal to fate and the appeal to the divine are attempts to explain the inexplicable quality of a genuine friendship. In spite of this desire, it may just be the case that the essence of friendship cannot be rationally articulated because it is not a rational phenomenon. So what do we make of this strange tension between certainty and unknowability? It appears that one engaged in genuine friendship is certain that it exists and has an apparently indisputable knowledge of his own motives, judgments and intentions: the stuff that is constitutive of one's own identity. However, the same friend in the same friendship at the same time is incapable of rationally articulating "the why" of the friendship: the cause/reason for its existence is unknown.

Is this paradoxical tension between certainty and inexplicability a problem for Nietzsche's account of friendship? He does not appear to be explicitly aware of it in his writings, but perhaps that is because the paradox is only apparent and not real. Nietzsche would reply that friendship is explicable through a proper understanding of the vices and attitudes of excess and deficiency that oppose friendship and threaten to destroy it. What may forever remain inexplicable is the rational articulation of 'the why' of a particular friendship, but that is okay because friendship, and the love substantiating it, is not a completely or even a mostly rational phenomenon. Nietzsche could also agree that what is certain is 'the that' of a friendship:

it is possible for one to know that one loves the friend but not know why or from whence one's love originates.

A third objection that one might raise against this account of friendship is that it necessarily involves a kind of injustice. If friendship of the kind described essentially involves an injustice, then there is something intrinsically unethical about friendship. Inequality is the particular kind of injustice associated with friendship, for the friend is partial to the loved one and acts accordingly. Is this not a form of injustice against all those who are not one's friends? Nietzsche would have two replies to this worry. First, there may be no way to resolve the ongoing conflict between friendship and justice. The kind of individual who possesses the talent for friendship will likely also have the practical wisdom to know that there is no perfect instantiation of justice in the world: punishments and rewards are never perfectly equal to their corresponding actions. Such a figure capable of friendship might also recognize that there can be no perfect equality even between friends, and as discussed above will be able to rejoice at the other's good fortune, even when it surpasses her own. Secondly, because justice has been traditionally conceived as the hallmark "virtue" of traditional morality, Nietzsche would say that it too is something that must be overcome—especially when the drive for revenge exists under the guise of justice. Thus, his concluding thought on such a worry would be: "Whatever is done from love always occurs beyond good and evil."²⁵⁶

Another objection to Nietzsche's account of the virtue of friendship as a mean condition is the charge of egoism. The project of self-realization (i.e. exemplifying the will to power) and the virtue of friendship are supposed to be mutually supportive; however, there is a sense in

²⁵⁶ *BGE*, Sec. 153.

which the on-going process of becoming a real self has a certain primacy to it. If that is so, then it could be objected that friendship is merely being used as an instrument for the larger goal of self-becoming, and the friend is not loved for her own sake but only insofar as he reflects or serves my own self-directed project. This is a small-scale version of the broader charge that is often raised against the connection between the virtues and human flourishing. So does the striving for one's own human flourishing undermine the other-orientation of (most of) the virtues? Does the overarching project of striving to exemplify the will to power undermine the genuineness of friendship? The objection at hand rests on a misunderstanding of the target of action done from virtue and the relationship between virtue, beauty and flourishing. Since we are claiming that friendship is a particularly complex form of excellence that contributes to human flourishing, let's consider exactly how its practice relates to human flourishing. For an action to be virtuous, an individual must act for the sake of the virtue, but this phrase has two meanings, both of which apply: for the sake of the virtue itself and for the sake of the target of the virtue. So in the case of friendship, when one acts virtuously, one acts for the sake of friendship *and* for the sake of the target of that virtue, namely the friend. One could also say that the target of such a virtue is the friendship itself and not just the friend, for each friend by him or herself is a mere part of a larger whole. In this sense, activities that are shared and performed both for the sake of the friend but also for the sake of the friendship, in which the *telos* is "the we," and neither merely "the other" or "the self." Although given what we have already said about the extremes of sameness/difference and individuality/sharedness, the Nietzschean version of "the we" is one that recognizes and treats both members of that union as separate individuals, keeping each person's individuality intact. Now, through the spiritual nourishment that takes place in friendship, which leads to contemplation and action, each friend's trajectory toward a

more fully realized self is enhanced. One may or may not recognize how the virtue of friendship supports self-realization, but perhaps we are mostly concerned with the cases where one *is conscious* of this fact. As we have pointed out, an action done for the sake of the friend, or for the sake of the friendship, is performed as a mean condition that is a healthy balance between a plurality of continua of vices that are destructive to selfhood. How does friendship become an active condition that is also done “for the sake of the beautiful”? Beauty is both created and discovered in friendship in its unfolding amidst the complex web of vices that exist and into which there is a tendency to get trapped. However, neither beauty nor flourishing is a conscious target of action when acting for the sake of friendship. To compare, think of the virtue of sympathy. The target of sympathy is the putting oneself into the shoes of another—to show another that you understand what they feel, especially a feeling of despair or hopelessness. The hitting of that target is not consciously done for the sake of the beautiful nor for the sake of one’s own flourishing. Nevertheless, the hitting of that target constitutes an action that is done for the sake of the beautiful, and such a performance is also a constitutive element in a life of flourishing. A similar relation to flourishing exists for other virtues as well, each of which is a form of excellence. The courageous individual does not exemplify courage for his own flourishing. He does so because he recognizes the need to overcome some danger that threatens something valuable, yet his courage does play a constitutive role in his flourishing. The courteous individual does not exemplify courtesy for his own flourishing. He does so in order to respect the human dignity in others, yet his courtesy does play a constitutive role in his flourishing. The honest individual exemplifies his virtue in his having the strength to face up to the realities that are of the utmost importance, especially those aspects of the world that have deep ramifications for how one may or may not choose to live. Such honesty toward a friend has

as its target the accurate representation of one's inner spiritual content, not one's own flourishing. Nevertheless, honesty is one constitutive element in an individual's flourishing. So, there is a sense in which genuine friendship can be engaged in and this engagement is for the project of self-realization, but actions done for the sake of friendship (or any other virtue) has its own target that is independent from yet constitutive of the ultimate goal of flourishing. Flourishing, in my case, should be taken to be equivalent to exemplifying the will to power, or achieving a high degree of self-realization.

Crossing the Footbridge between Friendship and Self-Realization

The virtue of friendship and the will to power mutually support each other's exemplification, in which there is a kind of bi-directionality to the relation. Concerning the manner in which friendship supports the exemplification of the will to power, if this virtue does play the role of midwife to the will to power in a particular individual, then it must also enhance the process of achieving self-realization. If this is the case, then friendship is able to assist in the satisfaction of the existential needs and do so for the sake of the beautiful. As I will show, the engagement in genuine friendship does play this role in regard to all seven existential needs: the need for a frame of orientation; the need for devotion; the need for rootedness; the need for unity; the need for effectiveness; the need for excitation/stimulation; and the need for a relation of self-love. Bear in mind that the existential needs are grounded in humanity's contradictory nature where humankind's instincts have diminished to a minimum and humankind's consciousness, reason and imagination have expanded to a maximum—i.e. where man has fallen

out of nature.²⁵⁷ So we are less and less creatures run by instinct and increasingly conscious beings. However, despite the development of consciousness in the human species, we seem to be less and less conscious of our “selves.” But we must be clear what we mean by “conscious of our ‘selves’.” For Nietzsche, consciousness is inextricably tied to our social or herd nature, but I take this to represent two possible modes of consciousness. Consciousness could be called forth by one’s need to communicate either with the herd, in which one will “know” less and less because our words only allow to communicate the most superficial and worst parts of that which wants to be communicated; or consciousness can be employed in one’s need to communicate (socially) within the community of one’s peers or friends. A related distinction that Nietzsche makes is that between knowledge (or consciousness) as reducing the strange to the familiar and knowledge (or consciousness) as understanding or comprehension. The former sense of consciousness is broader in that all knowing is merely a taking what is strange and making it familiar, yet the latter sense of consciousness is not necessarily present when the former is operating. Of those philosophers who have claimed to have found “knowledge,” Nietzsche says:

Even the most cautious among [the men of knowledge] suppose that what is familiar is at least *more easily knowable* than what is strange, and that, for example, sound method demands that we start from the “inner world,” from the “facts of consciousness,” because this world is *more familiar to us*. Errors of errors!²⁵⁸

It is not necessarily the case that something’s being “not-strange” and familiar means that it is therefore known, or has become something of which one is now conscious. Familiarity does not necessarily imply knowability, or a thing’s capacity to be an object of consciousness. Nietzsche’s comments here should be interpreted as regarding knowledge or consciousness of the self. Two Nietzschean character-types quickly come to mind, the blond beast of prey and the

²⁵⁷ Fromm, Erich. *The Sane Society*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955, pp. 23-25.

²⁵⁸ *GS*, Sec. 355.

man of *ressentiment* who is ensnared within his own slave morality. The blond beast represents a figure that embodies pure action but one whose “goodness” is “free from all social constraints” and who lacks the mirror of consciousness generated by the development of the phenomena of responsibility, guilt and bad conscience. As such the blond beast has a kind of pre-cultural existence and cannot experience the inward turn of slave morality. Conversely, the emergence of the bad conscience seems to be a condition for the possibility of one’s intellectual conscience—“a conscience behind your ‘conscience’”—but such a contemplative self-grasping can only be transfigured into self-realization by sublimating the active attitude of the master or overcoming the reactive attitude of the slave. Thus, the model of a synthesis of contemplation and action that we found in Nietzsche’s third untimely meditation remains at-work in the *Genealogy’s* movements of “morality.” Despite consciousness’ late emergence in the human species, we are more conscious of ourselves in that we feel as though we are familiar with ourselves, but we are less and less conscious of our ‘selves’ in that we do not fully comprehend what it means to be a real self.

Remember though that mere self-consciousness is insufficient for the realization of a self. In order to accomplish a full degree of self-realization, it would then require that an individual attain a kind of wisdom about himself. We might give it a new name: self-wisdom. Despite what Nietzsche says about the antithesis between wisdom and action, wisdom, especially about the self, seems to be inherently directed toward the promotion of living well as opposed to knowledge, which can often be inimical to life as it manifests itself in an individual.²⁵⁹ That

²⁵⁹ *UM*, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” pp. 66-67. The distinction here that Nietzsche appears to be making rests on whether or not wisdom is mere knowledge. If wisdom does merely seek to know, then it is hostile to life and a kind of unwisdom. If wisdom

being said, we now must explicate how friendship specifically supports the satisfaction of each of the existential needs.

We begin with the existential need for unity, particularly the kind of inner unity between the varying drives and perspectives that reside within an individual. Unlike the rest of the animals in nature who get along with their perceptions, feelings and instincts, human beings have the additional phenomenon of consciousness. Specifically, we have the capacity to be conscious of our thoughts, feelings and instincts. Self-consciousness is strange because it engenders an inner division between a subject who can be conscious and an object of whom one can be conscious, yet the subject and the object appear to be one and the same entity. Alternatively, we might say that they are parts of the same whole, yet the mere inner split of “the whole” puts its whole-ness into question. When we look at human experience, we discover that the self’s closeness with itself makes self-observation rather difficult. The fact that an individual can ask himself “Who am I?” and the fact that such a question remains open-ended and continuously presents an invitation to be pondered cause us to wonder whether self-consciousness (and self-wisdom) is not something already given but a step in the achieving of self-realization. Aristotle explicates this observation about the hiddenness of oneself from oneself in the *Magna Moralia*:

Since then it is in fact a very difficult thing, as even some of the wise have said, to know oneself, and a very pleasant one (for knowing oneself is pleasant), we will not therefore be able of ourselves to gaze at ourselves. –And that we cannot of ourselves do this to ourselves is clear from the way we blame other people and do not notice ourselves doing the same thing. This happens because of kindly disposition or passion; these things darken correct judgment in many of us.²⁶⁰

seeks to use knowledge for the purpose of realizing a self through action, then it is not antithetical to life.

²⁶⁰ Aristotle. *Magna Moralia*. Trans. Peter Simpson.
<http://aristotelophile.com/Books/Articles/Great%20Ethics.pdf>.

The fact that we blame other people for certain actions and do not at the same time notice ourselves doing the same things is a strong piece of evidence for the Nietzschean idea that we are unknown to ourselves. While we should agree with the first part of Aristotle's claim here, we have good reason to disagree with the idea that knowing oneself is pleasant, at least a good portion of the time for most people, for the uncovering of one's own vices, weaknesses, inadequacies and deficiencies is probably not a pleasant experience. Because of our incapacity to gaze at ourselves, an individual requires some other to mirror that which cannot be gazed upon. The friend is that other who can serve as this rough and imperfect mirror that can best reveal oneself to oneself. ***How does the friend assist in one's satisfaction of his existential need for unity?*** Recall our brief remarks earlier about the friend *qua* enemy and our initial puzzlement over this idea. What does it mean to for one's friend to also be one's best enemy? Why does Nietzsche consider the capacity to wage war as an essential part of having a friend? The openness to different perspectives is the quality that Nietzsche is emphasizing here that is required for friendship to be genuine. Nietzsche says, "If one wants to have a friend one must also want to wage war for him: and to wage war, one must be *capable* of being an enemy," and "In a friend one should still honor the enemy," but he cautions us with the question, "Can you go close to your friend without going over to him?"²⁶¹ This warning reminds us that friendship exists somewhere between a complete identification with the other and a total differing from her. It is in how one distances oneself from his friend that one discovers the connection between them, especially the distance that surfaces in philosophical disagreement between perspectives. So the kind of war that one should want to wage for one's friend is a spiritual war: to wage war

²⁶¹ TSZ, "On the Friend," p. 168.

for one's thoughts and to be a warrior for knowledge.²⁶² When the friend serves as one's best enemy by taking an opposing perspective in intellectual battle, she thereby opens up the possibility of the kind of philosophical dialectic that can help one fortify his own perspective. This appears to be the primary way that friendship can assist in satisfying the existential need for unity, especially the kind of unity amidst diversity of opposing perspectives. This wholeness amongst manifold of perspectives also satisfies the norm of beauty. To conceive of oneself as a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject" is to occupy a shameful condition whereby one violates the perspectival nature of reason, humanity and life. Such arrogance represents an extreme and imaginary form of absolute objectivity that betrays the conditioned nature of a perspective. However, beauty can be achieved through the capacity to harmonize and to master a plurality of perspectives, in which a sense of balance (a mean condition) can be obtained, not to hold each perspective on an equal footing, but to consider each perspective's merits and demerits in order to decipher which are the better interpretive stances and which are the worse. Nietzsche captures this active condition in the third essay of his *GM*:

...to see differently in this way for once, to *want* to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future "objectivity"—the latter understood not as "contemplation without interest" (which is a nonsensical absurdity), but as the ability to *control* one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge.²⁶³

An individual who has achieved such mastery thus has the ability "to dispose" of those perspectives that may be useful as foils for a period of time but that ultimately turn out to be defective, but he also has the ability "to control" the plurality of Pro's and Con's not simply in the service of knowledge but also in the service of life.

²⁶² *TSZ*, "On War and Warriors," p. 159.

²⁶³ *GM*, Third Essay, Sec. 12.

In a similar way, friendship can facilitate how an individual satisfies his need for a frame of orientation. In a genuine friendship a friend has a somewhat intimate understanding of one's current frame of orientation, usually one that has come into being from his socio-cultural upbringing. Because of such an intimate understanding of what the other's frame of orientation is, he has the ability to call into question, and make the other call into question, the status of his frame of orientation. The three primary kinds of status that ought to be revalued are whether a frame of orientation is life-affirming or life-negating, whether a framework is spiritually healthy or sick and whether a framework is occupied for the sake of the beautiful or exemplifies deformity or ugliness. One manner in which to make such an evaluation is for the friend to assist one in holding up his current frame of orientation side-by-side by other frames of orientation that originate in other cultures and possibly in other ages. So, for example, in a genuine friendship the other can "trigger" a Catholic's intellectual conscience and force him to do two things: (1) critically reflect on the tenets of the Catholic doctrine and their historical developments and (2) contrast Catholicism with the plurality of other frames of orientation, such as Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, atheism or ancient Greek paganism. It is not impossible that a person could develop the ability to control her own Pro's and Con's of various perspectives. Nevertheless, an individual only possesses one set of eyes, and even if those eyes are highly perceptive, they may fail to see the reality of certain features of the world. A friend who has hit the mean condition between dissimulation and honesty will be a balanced counterweight to an individual, one that understands when and how to be honest at the right times (e.g., assisting one to recognize the reality of something when the instinct of fear is causing one to be blind to it) and when and how to be deceptive at the right times (e.g., playing devil's advocate for a particular

position that one does not really hold). In genuine friendship, such a dialogue is performed for the sake of the friend.

The friend has the capacity to play a similar role in assisting the other in satisfying his need for devotion. Within the parameters of genuine friendship, an individual will give the other permission to ask the formidable question: “Who or what do you worship?” This question can be the stimulus causing one to reflect on what or who exactly his object of devotion is *and* on whether he should in fact devote himself to such an entity. A good example of a deformed and misshapen mode of need-satisfaction (for devotion) is the pursuit and worship of a corporate entity that sees its army of workers as mere means of labor-power as opposed to human beings. Wal-Mart comes to mind as such a corporate entity. It is probable that there are countless Wal-Mart employees that devote themselves to Wal-Mart as if it were a kind of god of capitalism. In order to be dislodged from such a strong form of devotion, it would take the kind of honest contestation of an individual’s mode of need-satisfaction that only a genuine friend can provide.

Friendship plays a helpful role in the satisfaction of the existential need for rootedness—a role that other relationships fail to play—because of the feeling of kinship essentially experienced between two friends. Such kinship makes possible a feeling of being at home in the world that is absent in many other kinds of human relationships. Because in modernity our capitalistic mode of production treats people less and less as ends in themselves, and more and more as replaceable employees, the employer-employee relationship will almost always result in experiences of alienation within the sphere of business. The presence of choice is also much less existent when it comes to what occupation one currently has and what occupation one might possibly find. The social and economic conditions that radically limit what an individual can

“choose” for himself become extremely pronounced here. A similar kind of absence of choice exists in familial relationships in that grandparents, parents and siblings are part of the dimensions of an individual’s existence which is beyond his control. One might argue that there is a certain “blood rootedness” in family ties that can satisfy an individual’s need for rootedness. When it comes to the relation between family members, it is possible that the other can be a force in the process of achieving self-realization, but when this does occur, it will be in virtue of the family member being a genuine friend and not due to the fact that the two are blood kin. While the existence of a friendship may not be wholly chosen, for two friends may encounter each other totally due to chance, the moment of choice must continually renew itself for the friendship to endure for as long as it can. It is that ongoing revaluation—deliberative choice—present in genuine friendship that allows an individual to transcend nature (e.g. family) and which can pave the way to the satisfaction of other existential needs, especially the need for effectiveness - to which we now turn.

If we remember correctly, the existential need for effectiveness stems from our powerlessness and our experience of ourselves as powerless in the world. There are several ways that friendship helps the satisfaction of this need and hence assists the process of self-realization. The first is the very friendship itself. The friend can serve as a piece of evidence for an individual that he does have a concrete effect on at least one part of the world: i.e. the friend. Through this kind of reminder, an individual can recognize that he has an active effect on who the friend is and on who she is becoming. This reminder can be voiced directly by the friend, or her presence as a being who has been affected can be simply recognized through perception. The second manner in which the friend can assist the process of self-realization is by bringing new avenues for effecting into an individual’s consciousness. A third manner in which efficacy

can be revealed is through the possibility of joint-action performed by friends. The performance of some activities cannot exist without another person who is just as much invested in the activity. Such is the case with games. Without at least one opponent, the game cannot be played. Gaming is a good example of how joint-action displays effectiveness because one must retain one's individuality *qua* player in order to compete well, as is the case with poker, chess, Risk or whatever. Also, the doing of an activity with a friend, where it is both done for the sake of the activity and for the sake of the friend, concretizes its reality. Through the friend's recognition and participation in a shared activity, one's performance, including his desires, intentions and hopes, enhances the realization of both friends' selves. This introduction of new possibilities by the friend is a crucial form of spiritual nourishment that is the essence of genuine friendship, which brings us to how friendship enhances the existential need for stimulation/excitation.

Zarathustra's thoughts in the section "On the Friend" furnish what I take to be the essence of genuine friendship. Interestingly enough, this turns out to be an embodiment of what have been considered to be traditionally feminine qualities. In the previous section of this chapter, the 'what-it-is' of friendship remained somewhat elusive, in that we were able to pin down what excessive and deficient vices were that surround friendship (the 'what-it's-not') but were not quite able to verbalize its core. In Zarathustra, however, Nietzsche is more explicit in his claim that the core of friendship is the activity of nourishment, a kind of nourishing for the sake of the other that is modeled by the mother-child relationship. The mother-child serves as model for the kind of friendship that Nietzsche praises because it demonstrates how one can love the other person for his own sake and also have that love and that particular other be a constitutive element in one's own flourishing. Nietzsche again draws a parallel with Aristotle on

this mother-child model for genuine friendship. In Book IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says, “For people consider a friend to be someone who wishes for and does good things, or things that seem good, for the sake of the other person, or who wants the friend to be and to live, for the friend’s own sake, which is the very thing mothers feel toward their children, and which friends who are in conflict feel.”²⁶⁴ Just as a mother wishes for and does good things for her child, a friend wishes for and does good things both for the friend’s own sake (for him to be and to live) and for one’s own flourishing. In Book VIII Aristotle also stresses the active and other-oriented aspects of friendship by reference to the mother-child model:

But friendship seems to be present in loving more than in being loved. A sign of this is that mothers delight in loving, for some of them give up their own children to be brought up, and feel love just in knowing them, not seeking to be loved in return if both are not possible; it seems to be sufficient for them if they see their children doing well, and they love them even if the children, in their ignorance, give back nothing of what is due to a mother.²⁶⁵

Even though the mother-child model here described does not contain the reciprocation involved with friendship, it does illustrate the kind of nourishing activity that ought to be present in friendship. Nietzsche also emphasizes the activities of loving and nourishing as definitive of what the virtue of friendship is. In order for one to *be* a friend, and not simply *have* friends, one must spiritually nourish the other, where spiritual nourishment involves producing both affective and cognitive growth. Zarathustra asks his reader, “Are you pure air and solitude and bread and medicine for your friend? Some cannot loosen their own chains and can nevertheless redeem their friends.”²⁶⁶ To be *ein Erlöser*—a liberator—of one’s friend is to be capable of liberating or redeeming the friend from some kind of fettered state of being. The fettered state of being from which one wishes to be liberated is that of being merely fragments and limbs and dreadful

²⁶⁴ *NE*, 1166a2-6.

²⁶⁵ *NE*, 1159a27-33.

²⁶⁶ *TSZ*, “On the Friend,” p. 169.

accidents, and the condition toward which one wishes to be redeemed is that of realized selfhood. What is crucial to notice here is that someone may be better suited to help his friend achieve self-realization than he is to achieve it himself. This process of liberating the friend is portrayed as an activity of nourishment, specifically one that brings the other toward a state of spiritual health. One must be “pure air” and “bread” and “medicine” and “solitude” to successfully be a friend to the other, each of those images symbolizing means toward greater health. In saying that a friend must *be* solitude as a means of greater health for his friend, Nietzsche confirms that the kind of solitude he is advocating is a solitude shared by two friends, as opposed to a complete isolation from everyone. Nietzsche praises this type of solitude elsewhere when he warns of the future disappearance of the contemplative life because of the breathless haste of work and industriousness saying, “Soon we may well reach the point where people can no longer give in to the desire for a *vita contemplativa* (that is, taking a walk with ideas and friends) without self-contempt and a bad conscience.”²⁶⁷ Similarly, Nietzsche implicitly distinguishes between the solitude of friends and the unclean quality of associating with society. Near the end of the section “What is Noble” in *BGE* he states

And to remain master of one’s four virtues: of courage, insight, sympathy, and solitude. For solitude is a virtue for us, as a sublime bent and urge for cleanliness which guesses how all contact between man and man—“in society”—involves inevitable uncleanliness. All community makes men—somehow, somewhere, sometime “common.”²⁶⁸

According to Nietzsche, association “in society” involves inevitable uncleanliness, but on the contrary association with the friend with whom one can sympathize, on the contrary, is a form of human association that is “clean.” Such an unspoken implication seems warranted given the inclusion of sympathy as one of the virtues of the noble soul. So, the friend’s role as

²⁶⁷ *GS*, Sec. 329.

²⁶⁸ *BGE*, “What is Noble,” Sec. 284.

philosophical interlocutor aides his friend's process of incorporating as much truth (or as many perspectives) as possible in order to enrich and deepen his spiritual health, which thereby beautifully satisfies his need for active stimuli. For Nietzsche, the norm of beauty is satisfied through an individual's becoming a poet or an artist or being the stimulus to this process for a friend. However, the work of art or the poem that is created does not have any distance between it and its creator. What I think Nietzsche has in mind in stimulating or being stimulated for the sake of the beautiful is for one to become a poet of one's life, or for one to simultaneously be both artist and work of art. More precisely, active stimulation serves as the impetus to begin (or to continue) to recognize and become a creator and not merely be a creature.

Finally, how does the virtue of friendship support the existential need for a relation of self-love? For, on the contrary, it has been argued by some that one is closest to oneself and that the relation that one first has with oneself will be a model for the relations that one bears to others.²⁶⁹ So, for example, if one is a friend to oneself, then one will be capable of being a friend to another and one will treat the other as another self. Conversely, if one feels contempt toward oneself (let us say for being weak-willed or vicious in some way), then one will externalize this self-orientation outward toward others. According to this line of thought, being a friend with oneself, or developing and possessing a relation of self-love, will support and enhance how one's exemplifies the virtue of friendship with another. However, we were interested in how friendship supports the satisfaction of the need for self-love, not vice versa. The key to understanding the relation between friendship and the possible satisfaction of the existential need for self-love lies in the mutual reciprocity of both activities. Nietzsche expresses the idea that learning to love some particular others may strengthen an individual's ability to love himself. In

²⁶⁹ Aristotle. *NE*. 1168b1-13.

other words, engaging in genuine friendship with another, where one spiritually nourishes the other for her own sake, can also serve as a model for how one might become a friend to oneself.

This possibility gains credence especially when we question the Aristotelian assumption that a person is closest to himself. While this may have been more true in the ancient Greek polis, our social and political conditions in modernity have made the chances for finding and creating a sense of self very difficult. While it has had its benefits, the rise of capitalism has created an economic atmosphere where competition and profit take priority over the treatment of workers as human beings. While religious freedom and religious toleration have also have their benefits, those benefits have been overshadowed by the life-negating and self-negating effects of such institutions. And despite the advantages of liberal democracy, such a form of government has embedded the values of equality and individual liberty so far into the core of our being that they cannot be seen as anything other than absolute by nearly all. Thus, the tendency for an individual to have the experience of himself as alien, or as something other than what he is, has become widespread.

Zarathustra's teachings on the friend may lend the best understanding between friendship and the realization of a self. In the First Part of Zarathustra's journey, he makes a transition from the more populated towns such as The Motley Cow, which are filled with neighbors, to the more isolated and secluded forests, where only Zarathustra and his friends/disciples are present. The three themes that permeate the first part of his journey are the will to power's possible production of the overman (or in my language: the realization of a self), the strange manner in which the friend can buttress such self realization and the way that neighbor-love fails by serving as an escape from self rather than a movement toward its creation. In the First Part of

Zarathustra's speeches, these three themes collide in the following sections: "On the Friend," "On the Thousand and One Goals," and "On Love of the Neighbor." In order to understand the contrast between neighbor-love and friendship, and how the former fails and the latter succeeds in being supportive of self-realization, we must analyze these three sections and view them as a kind of whole that represents the general movement of Nietzsche's account of friendship and selfhood.

Distinguishing Erotic Love, Neighbor-Love and Friendship

The remainder of the section "On the Friend" complicates Zarathustra's (and Nietzsche's) feminine account of friendship, for in it Zarathustra suggests that there is an essentially feminine quality to genuine friendship, yet he raises the possibility that woman, as she now exists, is not yet capable of experiencing such friendship. Zarathustra asks us two questions which set up conditions for the possibility of friendship, "Are you a slave? Then you cannot be a friend. Are you a tyrant? Then you cannot have friends."²⁷⁰ At first glance, what this appears to mean is that one cannot be a friend if one is less-than-human, or a mere tool of one's owner, and that one cannot have friends if one is unjust and oppressive, treating others as mere tools. However, the very next line forces us to give much more precise meaning to the slavishness and tyranny that prohibit friendship. Zarathustra says, "All-too-long have a slave and a tyrant been concealed in woman. Therefore woman is not yet capable of friendship: she knows only love."²⁷¹ What could Zarathustra possibly mean in declaring that it is woman who has all-too-long concealed both a slave and a tyrant inside her? The way to unravel this peculiar claim is to

²⁷⁰ *TSZ*, "On the Friend," p. 169.

²⁷¹ *TSZ*, "On the Friend," p. 169.

figure out Nietzsche's interpretation of how woman has historically and socio-culturally been both a slave and a tyrant. Regarding Nietzsche's claim that woman is a slave, woman is slavish in so far as she has been considered the second sex while man has been considered to be the superior sex. Because woman is perceived as the inferior sex, especially by man, social conditions have made her into a mere instrument of man. The slavishness that is concealed in this perception of woman renders her fundamentally unequal and lesser than a whole human being, which would make impossible the kind of equality that is traditionally understood to be necessary for friendship. While such inequality based on sex is clearly a misperception of the reality of woman's ability to engage in genuine human relationships, such an interpretation of woman's subordinate role has not yet been fully overcome. Regarding Nietzsche's claim that woman is a tyrant, woman is tyrannical in the sense that she has been the primary caregiver, nurturer and educator of the child throughout history. Her primacy as ruler of the child can perhaps be seen as oppressive and dominating not in that woman has prohibited man to participate in the upbringing of the child but that because of woman's traditionally given role as primary caregiver and of man's lack of participation in the family, she was allowed to develop a kind of tyrannical role over child-rearing. This result may have been and may still be unrecognized by man. Because he has historically forgone the position of primary care-giver, he has likely weakened his ability to reclaim this position. We might say that woman has ruled the realm of childrearing—with an iron fist! The concealment of this kind of tyrannical stance would engender another kind of inequality where woman is fundamentally superior to man due to his inability to nurture and care and superior to the child due to the child's complete dependence on woman. I take this to be a brief analysis of Nietzsche's beliefs on how "woman" figures into his account of friendship. Regardless of whether Nietzsche's gender role analysis is

completely accurate, we can hopefully gain a better understanding of Nietzsche's feminine dimension of friendship through it. So at this point, we might say that it is in the above senses that woman up till now has concealed both slave and tyrant within her and that this has put her in a rather paradoxical position where there is a two-fold sense of inequality that prevents her from engaging in genuine friendship.

If this description of woman is correct, then would woman be incapable of engaging in friendship with other women who conceal both slave and tyrant? Though Nietzsche suggests otherwise, it would seem that two women who are tyrannical and slavish in the same way would have a kinship to each other that enabled friendship. Those individuals who can understand each other's conditions of oppression or servitude would share the same pain together and likely would desire to nourish each other back to spiritual health.

Zarathustra concludes, however, that the only kind of love that woman knows is erotic love, which necessarily involves an inequality between lover and beloved. This appears to be the kind of love with which Zarathustra is contrasting friendship. Woman's incapacities for friendship—and conversely her ability to only experience erotic love—now include “injustice and blindness against everything that she does not love.” But why blame such injustice and blindness against everyone other than the object of her love? When in the grip of eros, doesn't the lover necessarily place the beloved on a pedestal high above everyone else? Is Zarathustra here negatively criticizing “the assault” and “the lightning” and “the night along light” that are associated with the love of a woman? Zarathustra's tirade of criticisms against woman here constitute a kind of argument claiming that up until this point in the history of humankind, woman has valued erotic love over friendship, and as she centers herself with this love, she is

still operating from the drive to be possessed (or possibly also the drive to possess). Operating within the bounds of mere possession makes it impossible to achieve the higher ideal of friendship, in which self and other are not fettered by “sick selfishness.”²⁷² If we were to attribute a conclusion to Zarathustra’s teaching on friendship, it would be: Because society has made woman into a fundamentally unequal being—sometimes a slave and sometimes a tyrant and always only capable of an unequal love—she is not yet capable of friendship. If this were the final conclusion, then it would seem still possible for man to partake in that which woman cannot do. But Zarathustra continues, declaring, “But tell me, you men, who among you is capable of friendship? Alas, behold your poverty, you men, and the meanness of your souls!”²⁷³ It turns out that neither woman nor man is yet capable of friendship, for man’s soul is empty and has no riches in it to give. One may even claim that Zarathustra is intimating that man is even less capable of friendship than woman is because he is even more fettered by the chains of erotic love and possesses an inner nothingness due to his desire—even more so than woman does.²⁷⁴ So, in that way man is slavish, but in his oppressive stance toward woman he also appears to be tyrannical. We are left to wonder just how possible it is for either man or woman to be capable of friendship since both appear to conceal slave and tyrant, but in different ways.

In her analysis of Nietzsche’s notion of woman as friend, Denise Schaeffer analyzes his notion of friendship as a higher ideal in sections 14 and 61 of the *GS* claiming, “Friendship is presented as higher than the self-destructive proximity of love’s lust for possession, and as

²⁷² *TSZ*, “On the Gift-Giving Virtue,” p. 187.

²⁷³ *TSZ*, “On the Friend,” p. 169.

²⁷⁴ I thank Jennifer Rowland for her helpful thoughts concerning eros, friendship and Nietzsche.

higher than the absolute distance required for complete self-sufficiency.”²⁷⁵ Given Nietzsche’s critique of erotic love, and both man and woman’s up-to-present bondage to it, and his claim that solitude stemming from one’s bad love of oneself turns such solitude into a prison, it is correct to say that friendship is “higher than” both extremes of proximity and distance, especially if we think of its relation as a mean condition between them.

The thought that man’s soul is poverty-stricken and mean does indicate that a particular kind of self-orientation is needed in order to be able to engage in genuine friendship. Zarathustra opposes neighbor-love to friendship, and he argues that neighbor-love involves a kind of selflessness that makes friendship difficult if not impossible to achieve. So he states that “your love of the neighbor is your bad love of yourselves,” which signifies that neighbor-love (also known as universal love) is an escape from self.²⁷⁶ Zarathustra recognizes that the Judeo-Christian imperative of “the *you*” has reigned supreme for centuries and has been pronounced holy; nevertheless, he adopts a hopeful attitude that “the *I*” will replace “the *you*” in some future time. The section “On the Love of the Neighbor” details just how neighbor-love is not conducive to self-realization and how friendship is the best midwife for the birth of a self. Because of the absolute and unconditional quality of neighbor-love, it does not demand the growth and perfection of the self that is constitutive of a will to power. Neighbor-love does not demand that one satisfy one’s existential needs by the norm of beauty, for in neighbor-love there is a continual disintegration of self. So when Zarathustra recommends love of “the farthest,” he

²⁷⁵ Schaeffer, Denise. “Nietzsche’s Woman as Friend: The Paradox of Distance and Proximity,” in *Nature, Woman, and the Art of Politics*. Ed. Eduardo A. Velásquez. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000, p. 319.

²⁷⁶ *TSZ*, “On Love of the Neighbor,” p. 173.

is advocating a love of that highest self which is farthest away and still unrealized. Zarathustra again seduces his reader by challenging him:

Higher than love of the neighbor is love of the farthest and the future; higher yet than love of human beings I esteem the love of things and ghosts. This ghost that runs after you, my brother, is more beautiful than you; why do you not give him your flesh and your bones? But you are afraid and run to your neighbor.²⁷⁷

There is a rough synonymy between “ghost” ≈ “spirit” ≈ “self” ≈ “the farthest” ≈ “the future”, and understanding these entities as meaning approximately the same entity renders a more intelligible reading of this section. Upon the conscious recognition of the spiritual labor that is involved in self-realization and upon becoming conscious of one’s instincts and needs, it is the fear of the work necessary for self-realization and the ease with which one can hide from “the farthest” that impels one to neighbor-love. One might ask about the strange temporal alignment of “ghost” and “the farthest,” for Zarathustra says that this ghost runs *after* you. But isn’t it my current self that runs after this ghost? The most reasonable explanation for this non-linear temporal aspect of self-realization is that such a process is circular in nature. It requires cycles of *Untergang* and *Überwindung* in which it may sometimes seem that the ghost to whom you are striving to give your flesh and bones is behind you, for you have come out of a period of going under and approaching a new overcoming. Another possibility is that this is merely metaphorical language depicting an image of circularity that ought not to be taken too literally. Regardless, the passage supports the idea that a more fully realized self acquires a kind of beauty that opposes the ugliness and deformity of a fragmented self.

In his critique of neighbor-love, Zarathustra cites the inability to endure oneself and the inability to love oneself as impetuses to escape from self. In other words, the failure to endure

²⁷⁷ TSZ, “On Love of the Neighbor,” p. 173.

and love oneself is a failure to satisfy the existential need for self-love. Zarathustra's teachings concerning neighbor-love culminate with the relationship between friendship and the overman:

I teach you not the neighbor, but the friend. The friend should be the festival of the earth to you and an anticipation of the overman. I teach you the friend and his overflowing heart. But one must learn to be a sponge if one wants to be loved by hearts that overflow. I teach you the friend in whom the world stands completed, a bowl of goodness—the creating friend who always has a completed world to give away. And as the world rolled apart for him, it rolls together again in circles for him, as the becoming of the good through evil, as the becoming of purpose out of accident. -----Let the future and the farthest be for you the cause of your today: in your friend you shall love the overman as your cause. -----My brothers, love the neighbor I do not recommend to you: I recommend to you love of the farthest.²⁷⁸

When Zarathustra says that the friend should be an anticipation of the overman, he means that the friend (if genuine) should be and can be a midwife to the realization of a whole self (an overman) that lies within. However, in addition to being a friend one must also be able to absorb (like a sponge) that which the friend has to offer. Notice that what is being offered in a genuine friendship is “a completed world.” Such is a gift that one friend gives to another, and being so it is similar to the gift that wisdom gives to the philosopher *qua* a friend to wisdom, particularly when we remember that world-creation is an incomplete and preliminary stage in self-creation. This idea is confirmed in Zarathustra's clue that one's “cause” [*Ursache*] is both the future and the farthest and the overman, and that through friendship it becomes possible to create purpose out of accident, and to realize a self out of a collection of needs and instincts.

On a final note, it may not be the case that Nietzsche is claiming that neighbor-love has no value whatsoever. It may just be that neighbor-love holds a secondary kind of value to friendship because it cannot assist in the project of self-realization the way that friendship can. The higher status of friendship then does depend on whether selfhood is actually something

²⁷⁸ TSZ, “On Love of the Neighbor,” p. 174.

valuable. Throughout, I have been operating under the assumption that selfhood, the realization of a self, is something that we ought to value. However, given the Nietzschean imperative of reevaluation of all values, it would seem that even selfhood can come under some scrutiny. Whether selfhood and its attainment is something that is objectively valuable may be a question that has no clear answer—certainly not for a Nietzschean who is skeptical about claims regarding the ‘objectivity’ of values. However, just because it is difficult to determine what kind of value selfhood has does not mean that we cannot make an attempt at an answer. Getting ensnared in the falsely dichotomy between objective value and subjective value is not instructive in determining why and how we should value selfhood, for the realization of a self is neither absolutely and objectively valuable nor does its value merely depend on a subject’s whim and fancy. The former option is not the case because nothing is absolutely intrinsically valuable. Nothing has value outside of some perspective which grants it its value; however, the danger here is that the gravity of selfhood seems to disappear. The latter option is not the case because selfhood’s value does not depend solely on whether some individual does in fact happen to desire it. Imagine someone deciding that he no longer cares about becoming a real self and selfhood’s value just vanishing into thin air, just like that. Thus, if selfhood is neither objectively valuable nor subjectively valuable, then where do we stand concerning the question: Why should I care about achieving self-realization? Perhaps we cannot say that a person “should” or “should not” unqualifiedly be motivated to realize a self. It is possible, and more often the case than not, that people are not capable of becoming selves or have no desire to engage in such a process. I believe that we can say that an individual who does become a self expresses a character that is more excellent human being, and insofar as a person exists within the appropriate conditions and has the needed reflective resources, he will be motivated to realize a self. As such, the value of

selfhood remains integrally connected to the human condition that we occupy, and selfhood's value is only as real as its exemplification by certain human beings.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have presented a new interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power. What it means to exemplify a will to power is to realize a self, a process which does not necessarily have a terminus within a single human life. I have argued that the foundation for this view lies in an understanding of human nature as a contradiction between instincts and consciousness. I have explicated the nature of the existential needs that arise from human existence as such. As an advocate of this aspect of Nietzsche's view, I have also argued that beauty is the fundamental norm that can guide how the existential needs are to be satisfied, if a person is to achieve the kind of excellence, or virtue, that Nietzsche praises. By paying attention to Nietzsche's early "untimely" thoughts on selfhood, I have shown that he does provide an interesting progression of models for an individual who has attained a high degree of self-realization: the saint, the artist and the philosopher. Insofar as the philosopher is the model of the synthesis of contemplation and action, I have claimed that Arthur Schopenhauer serves as the penultimate model of one who exemplifies the will to power. Not only did he satisfy the existential needs as they existed within him, but he satisfied them for the sake of the beautiful, operating under the fundamental norm of beauty. I have contended that the particular virtue of friendship is that that virtue which can best support the achieving of self-realization, given its status as simultaneously other-oriented and self-oriented and given its status as a mean condition between different continua of vices. Taking cues from Nietzsche, I have argued that genuine

friendship is a form of excellence that not only supports but also is supported by an exemplification of a will to power.

With an eye toward the future, it is my hope that this Nietzschean account of human flourishing can provide a framework to better understand how a virtue ethical approach to normativity can be applied to contemporary moral problems. I acknowledge that my discussion of beauty is a starting point for further examination of what it means to act “for the sake of the beautiful.” I believe that paying close attention to Nietzsche’s early writing can also be fruitful in better understanding his providing a positive account of what it means to be an excellent human being, particularly regarding expressions of excellence through friendship, honesty, courage and generosity. Finally, I believe that my interpretation of human flourishing, with its primary constitutive elements of selfhood and the will to power, can better handle the elements of luck, chance and fortune that lie outside of our control, yet serve as conditions for the possibility of human flourishing.

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