



This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

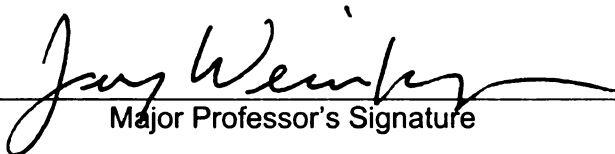
NIETZSCHE'S MORAL-THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AND
DAYBREAK

presented by

ANAS WALID ABU-MUWAIS

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy degree in Political Science


Major Professor's Signature

April 18, 2006

Date

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

NIETZSCHE'S MORAL-THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AND DAYBREAK

VOLUME I

By

Anas Walid Abu-Muwais

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Political Science

2007

ABSTRACT

Nietzsche's Moral-Theological Investigation and Daybreak

By

Anas Walid Abu-Muwais

In the following work I explore Nietzsche's enigmatic utterance of the terrible words "God is dead." I argue Nietzsche's atheism to be ambiguous, for on the one hand, he denies utterly the truth of the Biblical God and claims that God to be refuted, yet on the other hand he claims to worship the God Dionysus and this repeated claim is at the heart of his enigmatic philosophy. I explain this two-fold dimension to Nietzsche's thought and the meaning of this thought for our times. The ultimate foundation of that thought can be thought thusly: The Biblical God versus Dionysus. According to Nietzsche his Dionysian essence, his questioning, philosophic essence, masked as the Biblical God and inherited by him into his flesh and blood as the feelings, evaluations, and affects – in a word, the will to power – of the entire pre-history of mankind and the world, compelled him to question that Biblical God until that God had refuted himself in Nietzsche's own soul, which then revealed Dionysus to be the true god of his essence.

Copyright by
ANAS WALID ABU-MUWAIS
2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

NIETZSCHE'S ENIGMATIC UTTERANCE: "GOD IS DEAD"	1
The Death of God as the Riddle and Destiny of Future Mankind	1
The Death of God as a Fundamental and Inherently Modern Crisis	3
The Meaning of God's "Corpse"	6
Unholy Alliances:	9
The Character of the Utterance as Prophetic	11
Why Philosophy Must Pursue the Question of God	14
Why Understand Nietzsche's Ambiguous "Atheism"	22
The Essential Argument of Nietzsche's Refutation	26
The Plausibility of Nietzsche's Refutation	32
The Problem of Method	34
The Supremacy of Honesty	38
The Plan of the Work	40

CHAPTER TWO

INTERPRETATIONS OF NIETZSCHE'S "ATHEISM"	73
--	----

CHAPTER THREE

NIETZSCHE'S LATER REFLECTIONS ON "DAYBREAK" (1881):	
THE 1886 "PREFACE"	120
The Surfaces, Nihilistic Swamps, Depths, and Grounds of the Work	120
Nietzsche's Confrontation with the Problem of Method	125
Taste, Physiological and Philological: The Selective Principle of	
Being as Will to Power	132

CHAPTER FOUR

NIETZSCHE'S PSYCHOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF MORALITY:	
CONJECTURES, ARGUMENTS, POLEMICS	136
Preliminary Reflections	136
Philosophy, History, and Historical Philosophizing	139
The Morality of Custom as the Foundational Stage of Morality	148
Sacrifice in the Morality of Custom.....	153
Morality as the Development of Cruelty (Revenge).....	154
Pride and Power	159
Madness and Lawgiving: The Individual and the Herd	161
The Origins of Providence	165
The Origin of Pessimism in the <i>Vita Contemplativa</i>	170

Are Historical Arguments Sufficient to Refute God?	174
 CHAPTER FIVE	
PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS INTO PROVIDENCE, FREE-WILL, TELEOLOGY, CHANCE, SELF-KNOWLEDGE, AND THE ORIGIN OF ACTION.....	182
The Hidden Power Politics of the Soul: Nietzsche's Drive-Psychology	187
Digression on the Will to Power as the Origin of All Action in the Universe.....	191
Assassinating the Christian Soul	196
Nietzsche's Denial of Purposes in Nature	197
The Origin of the Illusion of Free-Will	201
Chance and Will	203
The Supremacy of Self-Knowledge	207
 CHAPTER SIX	
NIETZSCHE'S MEDICINAL PROJECT FOR THE FUTURE: FROM MAN TO OVERMAN.....	214
Mankind's Physicians: Past, Present, and Future	217
Crime and Punishment in the Future	226
Nietzsche's Ideal of Divine Cannibalism	228
Breeding the Future Human Race	232
Mankind's Tragic Love for Knowledge	236
Overcoming Nihilism: The Joyous Knowledge	243
Setting the Stage: Philosophy versus Faith	271
 CHAPTER SEVEN	
KNOWING AND LOVING GOOD AND EVIL.....	283
A Tale of Two Egos	284
The Christian-Theological Understanding of Embodiment	286
The Origin of the Christian Understanding in Paul	291
On Love and Lust	295
On the Morality of Pity	306
The Songs of Souls	316
The Psychological Mechanics of a Revelation	323
Christian Spiritual States as Circular Folly	337
The Refutation of the Biblical God through Self-Knowledge	349
The Biblical God and Dionysus	362
The Ultimate Test-Case: Pascal	372
Refuting the Truth of God	379
The Future Atheism of the West: Towards a Daybreak	383

CONCLUSION	
THE PREFATORY CHARACTER OF THE WORK.....	388
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	401

To what extent the thinker loves his enemy.— Never keep back or bury in silence that which can be thought against your thoughts! Give it praise! It is among the foremost requirements of honesty of thought. Every day you must conduct your campaign also against yourself. A victory and a conquered fortress are no longer your concern, your concern is truth—but your defeat is no longer your concern, either!

To get into only those situations in which illusory virtues are of no use, but in which, like the tightrope-walker on his rope, one either falls or stands – or gets off. . .

Chapter I

Introduction

Nietzsche's Enigmatic Utterance: "God is dead"

The Death of God as the Riddle and Destiny of Future Mankind

Almost everyone today, at least in what is customarily called 'the West,' is familiar with at least one utterance of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: "God is dead". Nietzsche certainly intends to shock and offend his readers with this utterance. He also intends with this utterance to accomplish much more than mere repulsion on our part: his aim is to *perplex* us, and thereby to set us on the path of thinking upon the question of God's existence. And we are indeed perplexed: how can the Biblical God whom Nietzsche has in mind, the God of everlasting life, the Living God, be *dead* and still *be* God? For by "God" the religious person names Being, which is the ground and source of all that lives. Indeed, so far as Being and its fundamental character are concerned, Nietzsche is in agreement with the religious, for he says:¹

Being – we have no idea of it apart from the idea of "living." – How can anything dead "be"?

Whatever it is, then, that Nietzsche believes to have died, and which he names "God," cannot be God as the believers in God believe Him to be, but rather, must be God as

¹ *Will to Power*, aphorism 582.

Nietzsche believes him to be. Might Nietzsche have believed that the Biblical God somehow existed, somehow *lived*? Indeed this would be in keeping with his stated principle that “only something that can live can be dead”². Or by “god,” might Nietzsche mean the god Dionysus, the god *he* claims to revere and by which he names the totality of existence in its essence as *will to power*? Or might he somehow be referring both to Dionysus and the Biblical God? — None of this is yet clear. What is clear, however, is that with this enigmatic utterance Nietzsche puts forth *a riddle*, and it is the task of the following work to unravel the logic of this riddle as an act of supreme self-examination. This frightening and enticing riddle – which is at the very core of Nietzsche’s philosophy – may be termed, amongst other possible formulations, the *revaluation of all values*. Nietzsche explains as follows:³

Revaluation of all values: that is my formula for an act of supreme self-examination on the part of humanity, become flesh and genius in me. It is my fate that I have to be the first *decent* human being; that I know myself to stand in opposition to the mendaciousness of millennia. – I was the first to *discover* the truth being the first to experience lies as lies – smelling them out. – My genius is in my nostrils.

We see above that Nietzsche believed it to be his task and destiny to reevaluate all the values hitherto posited by man. To the extent that these have been pessimistic or world-denying values, the revaluation of value constituted for Nietzsche an *overcoming of pessimism* and its *stench*, an over-coming by which he came to a certain elevated perspective:⁴

To explore the whole sphere of the modern soul, to have sat in its every nook – my ambition, my torture, and my happiness.

Really to *overcome* pessimism – a Goethean eye full of love and good will as the result.

² *The Will to Power*, aphorism 581.

³ *Ecce Homo, Why I am a destiny*, section 1.

⁴ *Will to Power*, aphorism 1031; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 56.

Indeed, according to Nietzsche the working out of this riddle constitutes the highest conceivable goal and destiny of modern man, as it was for him, who, by his own self-understanding, *was a destiny*.⁵

You want a formula for such a destiny *become man*? That is to be found in my Zarathustra:

“And whoever wants to be a creator in good and evil, must first be an annihilator and break values. Thus the highest evil belongs to the greatest goodness: but this is – being creative.”

I am by far the most terrible human being that has existed so far; this does not preclude the possibility that I shall be the most beneficial. I know the pleasure in destroying to a degree that accords with my powers to destroy—in both respects I obey my Dionysian nature which does not know how to separate doing No from saying Yes. I am the first immoralist: that makes me the annihilator *par excellence*.

As I shall be laying out in this work, Nietzsche hopes to annihilate mankind’s belief in the Biblical God and the imaginary moral edifice grounded on it, such as our modern morality of pity, our humanistic compassion for all that lives, which Nietzsche would have replaced in the future by an ideal of *divine cannibalism*. It is not hard to see, then, why Nietzsche would refer to himself above as the most fear-inducing or “terrible” human being who has ever yet existed. But as Nietzsche himself says immediately thereafter, he may yet prove to be the most beneficial human being yet. For this is not destruction for destruction’s sake, this is destruction from out of a creative will that is pregnant with future and future values, a will that says No *because* it says Yes! – and not the other way around.

The Death of God as a Fundamental and Inherently Modern Crisis

The utterance “God is dead” names a crisis of historical man, a peculiar crisis of modern man. For Nietzsche, it does not name just any crisis but the greatest crisis ever to

⁵ *Ecce Homo, Why I am a Destiny*, section 1.

confront man. Modern man must live out the cataclysmic future of this crisis, indeed for Nietzsche in a manner both he and modern man *are* this crisis, and though its *solution* is the overman its *resolution* may yet turn out to be “the last man,” the human being of the future who has the most enervating and inhuman of ideals, the most despicable man for whom the world has least value. This is not only possible but likely due to the fact that the ‘death of God’ signals the death of all value, meaning, or worth. “God” has been the idea – the sun, so to speak – around which all Western thinking has orbited, the supreme measure of value in the European horizon of ideas. As the supreme measure of value, the loss of God leaves all scales in tatters amongst the chaos of a certain relativism or nihilism, for the whole system ‘collapses’ (i.e., slowly *devaluates itself*) with the collapse of its center of gravity. Here we might look to *The Will to Power*, aphorisms two and fifty-five (in part):

(2) What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves.* The aim is lacking; “why?” finds no answer.

(55) Extreme positions are not succeeded by moderate ones but by extreme positions of the opposite kind. Thus the belief in the absolute immorality of nature, in aim- and meaninglessness, is the psychologically necessary affect once the belief in God and an essentially moral order becomes untenable. Nihilism appears at that point, not that the displeasure at existence has become greater than before but because one has come to mistrust any “meaning” in suffering, indeed in existence. One interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered *the* interpretation it now seems as if there were no meaning at all in existence, as if everything were in vain.

The ‘death of God’ names the death of the moral God whose beauty, goodness, wisdom and justice was the ultimate *measure* for all that was deemed beautiful, good, knowable and just on earth. Thus, the utterance “God is dead” names a crisis in morality and knowledge, or simply, *life*; that is, a crisis concerning the very possibility of one’s thinking and acting rightly or best for oneself (for what is living but thinking and acting, i.e., willing?). The emergence of this form of relativism – where all is equally true and

false, and what is more, where all is equally meaningful in its encompassment by all-embracing meaninglessness, where all is equally permissible but nothing is in itself desirable – cannot be understood apart, therefore, from the emergence of the distinctly modern form of atheism: atheism with a *good conscience*. Modern atheism has a good conscience because it kills God in the name of morality itself, it kills God in the name of the higher morality of *truthfulness*. Here we can consider *The Will to Power*, aphorism three:

Radical nihilism is the conviction of an absolute untenability of existence when it comes to the highest values one recognizes; plus the realization that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be “divine” or morality incarnate.

This realization is a consequence of the cultivation of “truthfulness” – thus itself a consequence of the faith in morality.

The Biblical God (the “in-itself of things” that was morality incarnate) is killed in the name of the new gods that are “Truth” and “Science,” which are in fact not so much new as they are *shadows* of the old God (i.e., aspects and dim reflections of God’s corpse, mere remnants or relics of the old ideal). For by truthfulness Nietzsche means the will to truth, a *moral* will which, in order to truly exist as moral, would have to be grounded in a moral dimension of Being (i.e., a moral God). Truthfulness seeks the truth *selflessly*, makes sacrifices for truth, and in sum makes one seek “the truth for its own sake” (believing ever so faithfully that the essence of reality has such definitive ‘truths in themselves’ to offer up to them), and *not* for *one’s own* sake, not yet knowing what Nietzsche claims to know, namely, that truth is a creation of man, a creation of man’s will to power – that truth is a *value*, and when held unconditionally, a *moral* value (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 64):

“Knowledge for its own sake” – that is the last snare of morality: with that one becomes completely entangled in it once more.

“Truthfulness” as a moral principle is hostile to life in myriad ways, deriving as it does the value of man’s life from a standard other than and outside of the life of man (but, almost despite itself, one wants to say, it also enhances life in many ways); there is *pessimism* in this principle, and hiding in it is a metaphysical need that chases the shadows of God⁶.

The Meaning of God’s “Corpse”

We see that Nietzsche’s attack on our sensibilities does not end merely in announcing the death of God, for he claims further that God’s “corpse” remains, complete with the nauseating stench of decomposition (perceptible, he would say, to those with “genius in their nostrils”). But does Nietzsche really intend to say that the God has a body such that he could live, die, and decompose? Of course not, for by God Nietzsche means the Judeo-Christian God as the highest *ideal* of western man, the principle of Being in light of which man has comprehended (and thereby oriented himself towards) the being of all that in any way is (including and above all *himself*). As the ultimate or highest ideal, the ideal of the moral God, as aforementioned, has according to Nietzsche acted like a sun around which other stars – other and subordinate ideals, indeed all the higher ideals striven for by western man since the dominance of Christianity – have orbited and thus have derived, in turn, their light, which is to say, their meaning and intelligibility (each of which are subjective or perspectival to man). By God’s “corpse,”

⁶ We might look here above all at the preeminently important aphorism 346 of *The Joyous Science*. In the supramoral, Dionysian philosophy of the future that understands itself in its essence as will to power, however, nihilism in *all* its forms is overcome. There, inasmuch as the new thinking and the new way of living it will bring into being will have reverence for the absolute totality of existence, the will to truth is for *life’s* sake (which is as much as to say, for the *will’s* sake), as a matter of instinct, taste, love, reverence, pregnancy, fate, and artistry (and therefore untruth – *lies*).

then, Nietzsche means to indicate *that which remains after the principle of life has been removed from the body*, and what remains after the principle of life has been removed are the subordinate ideals, the now spineless structure of moral ideals that have dominated the lives of western peoples for approximately two-thousand years and which remain, in a manner, *alive*, at least for some time to come. This is true, most notably, in what Nietzsche diagnoses as our modern *morality of pity* (itself a relic of the Christian virtue of charity), our morality of the *sympathetic affections* which, in seeking to alleviate all suffering from human life, is according to Nietzsche actually a morality of timidity and comfortableness and the product of nihilism, the morality of a perfectly domesticated flock, the morality of an aged and enervated mankind to whom all of Being appears to be equally lifeless, and the more so the more this morality progresses and works out its inner logic in the social-political domain.

With the death of the moral God at the hands of man's truthfulness, however, that same sword of truthfulness will according to Nietzsche eventually vanquish God's shadows, which are the subordinate moral ideals that were grounded in the Godhead (ideals such as pity for all that suffers or the goodness of selflessness). This long, terrible process before western man of dismantling and ultimately destroying his inherited ideals constitutes the slow decomposition of the divine "corpse." At the culmination of this process – and *only* at the culmination – man turns the sword of truthfulness against the last remaining ideal, the last remaining shadow or idol, namely, that of "Truth" or "Science" itself. Paradoxically, Nietzsche aims at piloting mankind through this cataclysmic process of divine murder, for it is only then that mankind, having become hardened and strengthened by the long training in wielding such a sword, can be reborn

as thoroughly *Dionysian*. Alternatively stated, Nietzsche seeks to tighten the bow, to intensify the epic tension between *faith* and *reason* at the heart of Western civilization so that he might shoot for the furthest and highest goal: the overman who is to inherit dominion over the earth.

Inasmuch as all things sick and deteriorating emit the stench of death and decay, the decomposition of God's "corpse" has, according to Nietzsche, a *stench*. But how can ideals have a "bad odor," metaphorically speaking? Ideals, in Nietzsche's thinking, can smell of sickness and decay to the extent that they are *pessimistic ideals*, which is to say, ideals that *deny the value of existence*. We see, then, that the decomposition of God's "corpse" is equivalent to the slow progress of Western nihilism. Yet Nietzsche goes further, claiming that the ideal of the moral God, (including the entire edifice of subordinate moral ideals grounded in that ideal), precisely when through it God lived, precisely when humans believed in it and thereby 'expelled' their will to power through it, was already a pessimistic ideal, indeed the most pessimistic ideal ever conceived by man until that time. For through it, as the argument goes, mankind came to deny the value of the world that actually exists (declaring it sinful and thus deserving to suffer and perish), in favor of a so-called "divine" realm that was conceived of as holy and enduring. Ultimately, the ideal of the moral God "stinks," according to Nietzsche, because of the sickness of the human who posits it, of the human – such as Pascal or Saint Paul – who *needs* to posit it in order to find value in living. Considered in this manner, the belief in the ideal of the moral God was merely a symptom of degenerate (morbidly pessimistic) man.

According to Nietzsche, however, and as we have already received indication of from our previous discussion, out of the shadows of God an ideal even more dangerous, pessimistic, and nauseating in odor than the ideal of the God Himself has emerged, namely, and ironically, the very ideal that is murdering both Him and His morality: the ideal (i.e., idol or false god) that is behind all our modern sciences and their frenzied researches: "Truth." For whereas the lie of the Biblical God still empowered an otherwise weary or sickly mankind, inspiring the great, but now decaying (according to Nietzsche), fortress of Western civilization, "Scientific Truth," which is every bit as much a lie according to Nietzsche, every bit as otherworldly, metaphysical, and fantastical, is destroying and will eventually completely destroy all other metaphysical or otherworldly values in light of which the world hitherto had meaning yet without putting any values that could be inspiring in their place, thereby leading mankind towards the least empowered and thus least valuable type of man yet conceived, a type of man that could rightly be called *a living corpse*: the last man.

Unholy Alliances

Truthfulness, the ideal that increasingly pilots the human destiny, is for Nietzsche one root of the Enlightenment sciences that seek to know and master nature, which sciences are increasingly related to the study of history. The relationship or alliance between truthfulness and historical knowledge, scientific knowledge, and technological ingenuity, is perhaps captured best in a remarkable statement well worth quoting by Francis Bacon. Bacon is of course that philosopher who called upon man in the very name of Providence to produce a natural history of all things, to take up scientific,

“chaste” (and therefore ‘innocent’) or pre-moral Adam-like knowledge and technological mastery of nature so as to attain to his own Sabbath (and this without the pride of the pretence of moral knowledge), thus achieving the Kingdom of Man on earth; we see, then, the other root of the sciences that seek to know and master nature, namely, the desire for power (that said, on Nietzsche’s understanding the ultimate root of truthfulness too – indeed of everything – is a desire for power). Bacon says, and as with Nietzsche, one should listen very closely (*The Great Instauration*, *The Plan of the Work*, the 6th and last part preceding the 7th that is the “conclusion” or “outcome” as the *lived* Sabbath of the distant future):

And finally the sixth part of my work (to which all the others are as servants and attendants) contains and sets out the philosophy which by the legitimate, chaste and rigorous inquiry (which I have earlier prepared and explained) is at length developed and established. But to bring this final part to perfection, and lead it to its conclusion, is a thing both above my strength and beyond my hopes. I have made a beginning that, I hope, is not to be despised; the fortune of mankind will give the outcome, such as men in the present state of things and of minds may perhaps be unable to grasp or measure. For the matter at hand is not just a pleasant speculation, but in truth concerns the affairs and fortunes of mankind and all the power of its works. For man is only the servant and interpreter of Nature and he only does and understands so much as he shall have observed, in fact or in thought, of the course of Nature; more than this he neither knows nor can do. No force whatever can unfasten or break the chain of causes, and Nature is only overcome by obeying her. So it is that those two objects of mankind, *Knowledge* and *Power*, come in fact to the same thing; and the failure of works derives mostly from ignorance of causes.

And all depends on keeping the mind’s eye fixed on things themselves, so that their images are received exactly as they are. For God forbid that we should give out a dream of our imagination for a pattern of the world; but may He rather grant of His grace that we may write a revelation or true vision of the footsteps and imprint of the Creator upon created things.

And yet, even if it were not intended to do so from the outset by Bacon himself (a questionable “if”), in its practical consequences the modern, natural scientific, technological age which seeks the Kingdom of Man is killing or diminishing belief in the Kingdom of God.

The Character of the Utterance as Prophetic

In the West, however, and especially in the United States of America, we find human beings who, so far being the nihilistic men prophesized by Nietzsche in his doom and gloom, still look to the God of the Bible who was the God of their forefathers⁷. Nietzsche was well aware, of course, of the fact that belief in the Biblical God continued to speak to and move the souls of countless human beings in his own time and would continue to do so in the future. But for Nietzsche the future of the Biblical God in world history is finite. At present he is dying and will almost surely die in the future; He will no longer 'speak' to men, no longer 'move' them. Serious men, according to Nietzsche, will someday no longer have to seriously consider the Biblical God as true, no more so than we today must seriously consider the possibility that Ammon or Zeus is true. For some day, according to Nietzsche, "the concepts 'God' and 'sin,' will seem no more important to us than a child's toy and a child's pain seem to an old man –"⁸.

Indeed it must be noted that all Nietzsche's utterances concerning the death of God occur entirely or almost entirely as prophetic utterances. That is to say, they point to an event which has, in a manner, not yet occurred but which is coming in the future and which Nietzsche *foresees*. For now, God is dying but is not yet dead. "Who is killing Him?" we ask. According to the divine or Dionysian madman Nietzsche, who *seeks God*, we are. This is perfectly clear from aphorism one-hundred twenty-five of *The Joyous Science*, which, because of its central importance to an understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy, is well worth quoting in full:

⁷ To say nothing here of the Islamic world, with roots in both the West and the East, and likewise nothing of the East, bearing in mind of course that these designations are terribly crude.

⁸ *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 57; cf. aphorism 94 and 56 of the same.

The madman.— Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!"— As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated?— Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried. "I will tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I! All of us are his murderers! But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? And backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition?—Gods, too, decompose! God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!

How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives,—who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed,—and whoever is born after us, for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto!"—

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners: they, too, were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern to the ground, and it broke into pieces and went out. "I have come too early," he said then; "my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering—it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—and yet they have done it themselves!"— It has been related further that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said always to have replied nothing but: "What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?" —

Modern man, Nietzsche teaches, is killing God through an alliance of *truthfulness* with science, and an alliance of science and utility in technology, and all of this in accordance with underlying changes in metaphysics, politics, and economics (above all, in the marriage between capitalism, science, and technology). The irony involved in the death of the moral God at the hands of truthfulness allows Nietzsche to say that God committed suicide, though perhaps, thanks to technology and democracy (i.e., total rule, according to Nietzsche, of the herd and the herd's valuations), with euthanasia, and likewise that he, or rather, Dionysus, laughed himself to death.—

Yet there is a sense other than the prophetic in which Nietzsche can say that the death of God has indeed already occurred, and as we shall see, for Nietzsche it is this sense that legitimates the prophetic aspect of the utterance. Indeed, Nietzsche says, “God is dead” and not “God is dying”. The death of God has occurred not on the level of world history (present or future) but on the level of the psychological history of certain individual men. These men are those whom Nietzsche calls *untimely* men. The most untimely man, according to Nietzsche, is in a certain respect the most timely of men, for in himself he contains all the essentials of his age, its prehistory, its ideas or valuations, their inner tensions, and thus the inner possibilities of a people’s future. The untimely man lives *through* his age in order to *come out of it*:⁹

“The wanderer” speaks. – If one should like to see our European morality for once as it looks from a distance, and if one would like to measure it against other moralities, past and future, then one has to proceed like a wanderer who wants to know how high the towers in a town are: he *leaves* the town. “Thoughts about moral prejudices,” if they are not meant to be prejudices about prejudices, presuppose a position *outside* morality, some point beyond good and evil to which one has to rise, climb, or fly – and in the present case at least a point beyond *our* good and evil, a freedom from everything “European,” by which I mean the sum of the imperious value judgments that have become part of our flesh and blood. That one *wants* to go precisely out there, up there, may be a minor madness, a peculiar and unreasonable “You must” – for we seekers for knowledge also have our idiosyncrasies of “un-free-will” – the question is whether one really *can* get up there.

The death of God has already occurred in the soul of Nietzsche himself and his internal testimony and announcement of this occurrence is in the last analysis his most decisive argument against the truth of the Biblical God.

And yet we should take careful note of what we are saying. *Nietzsche* is personally testifying to the falsity of the Biblical faith. *Nietzsche* has decided that Jesus did not die for our sins, that death is not the wage of sin, that man is not sinful in his genesis, nor in the precondition of his birth, nor at any moment in his life. But why in the

⁹ *The Joyous Science*, 380; and here it is worth bearing in mind that *Daybreak* bears the subtitle, *Thoughts on Moral Prejudices*; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 56.

world should we believe Nietzsche? “How”, one might sensibly ask, “can Nietzsche’s personal testimony say anything to the personal testimony of countless believers who still hear and respond to the call of the Biblical God? And besides, what is the substance of this personal testimony? That is, on what *grounds* does Nietzsche determine to his own satisfaction that the Biblical God is a lie, that he is merely an “ideal” posited by man that as such owes his existence to the will of man, which, in turn, owes its existence to Being as the will to power (Dionysus)? And moreover, how did truth and knowledge themselves become designated as values and fictions?” The following work aims not only to answer these questions as to Nietzsche’s atheism, but also to examine the plausibility of those answers.

Why Philosophy Must Pursue the Question of God

Now, all of what has been said hitherto clearly involves an assumption, namely, the assumption that Nietzsche took the question of God, the theological question, *seriously*. Much of the existing scholarship on Nietzsche, however, argues that Nietzsche took atheism as his opening premise (which here means prejudice or dogma), that he was constitutionally an atheist for whom the fictional character of the Biblical God was beyond question. Yet worst of all is the apparent legitimating of this “atheistic” posture on the part of many modern intellectuals (“philosophers,” natural scientists, scholars, and personalities). Pursuers of knowledge, they say, or rather *their intellectual indifference and psychological hostility says for them*, are under no obligation to take up the claims of religion and religious people, which are patently nonsensical claims, superstitious and *backwards* claims that no serious person ought to give thought to, except perhaps to expel them. Is the rational human being, they might ask, under a similar obligation to

investigate claims concerning the existence of just anything? Is he obliged to take up and 'refute' every baseless claim made by anyone at any time? This would be unreasonable and therefore impossible: reason ought not to descend to a confrontation with the childishly irrational (thus the *unreal*, the mythical); for there are no answers in such domains because such domains lack reasons based on testable, empirical, and verifiable evidence¹⁰. At this point, then, let us take up these anticipated concerns arguing contrarily that no question is more urgent and important for philosophers or thinkers than the question of God.

Thus we ask: why is the theological question as presented by religious adherents a question worthy of the highest philosophic investigation? Our first argument is stated well by Karl Jaspers, himself one of the preeminent philosophers of the 20th century and an avowed 'atheist' in the conventional sense and 'believer' in a non-conventional sense.

In his *Philosophical Faith and Revelation* (p.8), he says the following:

I do not believe in revelation . . . Why, then, should that faith be taken seriously even by those to whom it is not given? . . . The Crux is that we cannot be indifferent to revelations which men proclaim they had, or to men in whom others believe as revelations, if the weight of what is believed to have been revealed makes it a matter of inescapable existential import to this day.

It is in this sense that we can say that the theological question is not only important but preeminently *urgent*. In religion we are confronted with a claim by others about human life and the world which puts both in the balance with respect to everything fundamental. We need to know whether they are speaking the truth and thus whether we are in fact created and possessed by, and thus essentially subservient to, a divine will that makes demands upon our thoughts and actions: there is simply too much hanging in the balance for one to be indifferent to the widespread and even universal claims of religion, for the

¹⁰ Cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 14.

manner in which one answers the fundamental question as to the existence of God affects the entirety of one's thoughts and actions. Indeed, all moral 'thou shalts' and 'thou shalt nots' take on an entirely different aspect when separated from belief in God. To go further, as claimed by Nietzsche, *no morality*, no set of unconditional 'thou shalts' and 'thou shalt nots' can be binding upon man without their truth being grounded in the authority of a commanding Deity (*Will to Power*, aphorism 253):

Naiveté: as if morality could survive when the *God* who sanctions it is missing! The "beyond" absolutely necessary if faith in morality is to be maintained.

Without a moral God, everything is permitted (and least of all should one allow shame to prohibit them from thinking what is *terrible* about this "everything").

But is it really the case that the truth of religion, even and especially for the professed atheist such as Jaspers, is vouched for *only* by the accounts of others? All non-sociopathic individuals have experienced what has come to be called *conscience*, and we deem it profoundly *inhuman* that one should lack a moral conscience (like a Cyclops or some other monstrosity). By conscience here we mean those mysteriously inward 'thou shalts' and 'thou shalt nots,' and with the bad conscience there is guilt. All normal human beings experience guilt as that affect of foreboding punishment for unatoned injustice (and in its most extreme form, namely, that of the Christian, as the feeling of deserving punishment for the moral decrepitude or worthlessness of our mortal or embodied and hence inherently sinful being). Likewise, all normal human beings have experienced the peculiar pleasure, 'lightness of the heart' or *rapture* that comes from what has come to be called the 'good conscience,' that peculiarly confidence-inspiring or promise-making elation that attends the 'good deed'. For Nietzsche, that is, according to his psychology (which one can confirm only through one's own self-examinations), both

these moods and the conscience itself are experienced as revelatory, inspirational, or miraculous by all normal, morally socialized human beings, however much or little one might bring such a thought to the surface of one's thinking. If you have said, for instance, even if only in the deeper (but still accessible) recesses of one's mind, "but surely murder and things worse still are not *permitted*", according to Nietzsche, you have a god speaking into your ear, however much you may believe yourself an "atheist".

Indeed, for Nietzsche the experience of conscience is not the only experience in which the divine enters suddenly into human life. *Rapture* or *enchantment* (which is involved in the 'good conscience' but which has a greater scope still) is arguably the primary phenomena that Nietzsche looks to when analyzing the intersection of human and divine. For Nietzsche the experience of rapture is deemed miraculous in the sense of the god's infusion of himself into the soul of the enraptured (and even sinfulness is interpreted often enough as the infusion of a malevolent spirit, a demon of some sort). Rapture is itself always experienced in reaction to *the beautiful*, and thus presents itself or rather emerges, for example, in all romantic love, as well as all reaction to the beautiful in art (whether in architecture, music, theatre, or so forth). This is not to deny that ordinary people experience most forms of rapture or revelation in a preeminently *moral* sense; our intent, however, is to disentangle rapture (which is grounded in *beauty*) from conscience (which is grounded in *law* or *justice* and thus involves beauty and rapture only to the extent that we find certain thoughts and actions promoted by the laws to be splendid, such as, for example, sacrifice in war). That said, Nietzsche denies any claim made by a human being to the effect that they themselves have experienced evidence for a personally and morally concerned deity. Be that as it may, what is clear is that the

evidence for the moral God is never something entirely alien for the men of the moral horizon: all human beings find what might be interpreted as internal evidence for the Just God, the rewarding and punishing, preeminently beautiful and good God whom we resist at our own peril and who beckons us into boundless joy.

Against this backdrop of, first, one's own internal testimonies, and second, the testimony of countless believers – indeed of all present mankind – to have *experienced* the divine presence that gives evidence for faith, it certainly *cannot* be said that the claims of the religious are as baseless and as lacking of evidence as claims concerning just any posited absurdity. Moreover, those atheists who deem the question of God to be no question at all must answer – if not to us than to themselves – the question as to what it is that they think they *know* about the character of human being and the world such that they can discount as nonsense (as unreal) the possibility of a providential Deity? And how could one even approach a claim to such knowledge if one had not meditated upon the question as to what knowledge itself *is* (and thus the meaning of “sense” and “reason” presupposed in the judgment “nonsense,” in the equating of the knowable with the real)? Indeed, for Nietzsche atheism of this kind is merely another form of dogmatism, and openness to the possibility of religious truth a form of genuine intellectual freedom. Nietzsche calls the highest exemplars of the new breed of thinkers who in their will to truth reject outright the serious possibility of the Biblical God “free-spirits”. These “free-spirits” are only ambiguously “free” and must be distinguished from the “free, very free spirits” such as Nietzsche, for the inferior free-spirits, amongst other failings, are themselves enslaved to a dogma, namely that of their own unconditional atheism¹¹:

¹¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 105; cf. the end of the *Preface* and aphorism 44 of the same.

The *pia fraus* offends the taste (the “piety”) of the free spirit, who has “the piety of the search for knowledge,” even more than the *impia fraus*. Hence his profound lack of understanding for the church, a characteristic of the type “free spirit” – *his* unfreedom.

As such, the free spirit of this kind still belongs to the ascetic ideal. The “free-spirit” lacks self-knowledge and thus misunderstands himself: he fails to see that his unconditional will to truth is itself deeply moral and thus takes its ultimate bearings from the otherworldly and moral God he dogmatically believes himself to have rejected. The free-spirit of this kind is morally indignant towards the God of the church in the name of his God of “Truth” and “Progress”. From this another reason for the necessity of one’s addressing the theological question emerges: the belief in the Biblical God carries with it its own ‘inner logic’ which continues to live an underground life in the soul even after one has consciously dismissed the idea of the God Himself. Being ‘underground,’ this fact goes entirely unrecognized by the so-called “atheist” himself, and this from having failed to confront the belief in its full enormity.

To elaborate by way of another approach to the problem, we can say that philosophy cannot rest satisfied with *assuming* the falsehood of alternative and rival accounts of the world and human life, for such a philosophy would contain an *unacceptable* faith in its own truth. Yet from the outset one might make the following objection amongst others: if Nietzsche *correctly* assumed the premise of atheism, what difference should this make in terms of our accepting or denying his philosophy as a whole? An adequate response to this question must account for the fact that the ‘religious hypothesis’ possesses this peculiar characteristic: we are *all* born into it and begin from it as our horizon (and even were our parents “atheists,” this would be true in the decisive sense). Thus, those who do not seriously take up the moral-theological question inevitably remain under the spell of its prejudices, and above all its “art of enchantment”

(*Daybreak, Preface*, section 3). In short, fundamentally conventional and pious sentiments and opinions continue to live an *underground* life, an undetected life in the shadows¹².

Still another and sixth argument for the necessity that philosophy honestly take up the possibility of religious truth is as follows. Philosophy attempts to give an account of the being of all beings. This requires it to understand not only trees and planets, but human beings also (and preeminently, for reasons we cannot discuss here). If philosophy or political philosophy is to understand human being it must certainly understand all empirically observable types of human beings. Thus, a philosophy that fails to understand the religious experiences of human beings fails to give a complete account of human being: it fails to comprehend the conditions for the possibility of a given type and a given phenomenon (namely, the experience of the religiously enthused human being, which to a greater or lesser degree – and in one manner or another according to Nietzsche – constitutes every last human being alive and without exception). Those who would maintain that religious sentiments and interpretations reflect nothing other than man's hopeful delusions would have to address the question of revelation as a genuine *question* if their denial of the reverential or moral man's self-understanding is to be more than an unexamined prejudice (i.e., a moral prejudice or dogma and not a rationally inferred and freely acknowledged prejudice or honest hypothesis).

We may also approach the necessity of asking the theological question as follows: philosophy by its own self-understanding claims to seek *wisdom*. Wisdom is knowledge but not simply any knowledge: wisdom is that fundamental knowing that comprehends the whole (including, necessarily, the knower), that is, that comprehends the beings and

¹² Here one should see above all *The Joyous Science*, aphorisms 108-109.

the ultimate reasons for the beings. But is philosophy alone in pursuing such knowledge? Of course not: not only artists but the religious too, claim to seek wisdom of the whole. Moreover, the religious not only claim to seek it but to have *attained* it in some measure. Indeed the problem for philosophy is even deeper, for not only do the faithful claim some wisdom, their most thoughtful proponents claim that that wisdom or at least an essential element of it is *only accessible* through the Divine (and that either by desert or by grace): those to whom the Divine has not given it *cannot* come to it through their “unaided reason”. The heart has reasons, they often say, which the mind cannot comprehend. But the philosopher who claims no revelation or who questions the status of these revelatory experiences in himself relies, in his attempt to understand the world, on nothing other than his unaided faculties, and often enough – since he is in part *questioning* these very promptings – in direct opposition to many of the promptings of his heart:¹³

A proper physio-psychology has to contend with unconscious resistance in the heart of the investigator, it has “the heart” against it.

If the religious are *right* or truthful in their claims, the uninspired philosopher – that is, the philosopher who, at least by his own self-understanding, is or may be uninspired by the moral God – is left in what must appear to him, the lover of wisdom, to be a potentially hopeless predicament: his “unaided mind” may forever crash against the walls of a wisdom he cannot access (consider the position of Karl Jaspers). Be that as it may, the skeptical philosopher cannot simply deny the possibility posed by others of the superiority of the heart’s wisdom to that of the mind. A philosopher’s “ultimate truth” may be equivalent to his most acceptable faith. As Nietzsche says:¹⁴

¹³ *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 23; one might also see *Beyond Good & Evil*, aphorism 87.

¹⁴ *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, aphorism 98 (cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 19, end). Even what is said above does not go far enough, for the philosopher must consider honestly the reasoning of *his own*

What distinguishes us from the pious and the believers is not the quality but the quantity of belief and piety; we are contented with less

Why Understand Nietzsche's Ambiguous "Atheism"

Having argued for the need in general for philosophy to take up the investigation of religion, we may move on to a discussion of a more particular question: why is it important in particular that we understand the reasons for the philosopher *Nietzsche's* atheism? To begin, consider the predicament we are in. We who are not 'great minds' look to those greater than ourselves to aid us in understanding the fundamental questions of life which we deem ourselves incapable of dealing with adequately. We trust that those whom posterity has deemed most profound are those to whom we ought naturally to look to first. Among such profound men we find a certain radical thinker, an "atheist", Friedrich Nietzsche, who offers us his best reflections on the theological question in which we are interested. We are confronted by one of two possibilities: either his reasons for denying the evidence for the Biblical God are good reasons, in which case we wonder who in the world would not want to learn such an argument (affecting as it would one's entire perspective on life and death), or, his reasons, even his best reasons, are bad or at least indecisive reasons, in which case we might want to call into question the entirety of his thought (arguably the thought with the single greatest influence on the thinking, culture, and politics of the Twentieth Century), since Biblical truth denies Nietzsche's 'truth,' and we have not yet established the falsity of Biblical truth. Ultimately, it must be noted and indeed stressed that such matters do not admit of unconditional proofs or refutations: we must make do in the end with arguments of greater and lesser plausibility.

heart as well as the heart in all his reasoning; cf., for example *The Will to Power*, aphorism 387; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 190 and 191.

That is to say, Nietzsche does not claim to know that the Christian interpretation is wrong, he would claim, however, that the lack of persuasive evidence for its truth makes it implausible or “unbelievable”.

To step back, Nietzsche does not deny that people claim to have evidence of the moral God’s existence, especially in their most intimate inner experiences (indeed this is the claim he considers most serious), but he denies that their self-understanding of their own experiences is a plausible one, claiming, moreover, that a claimant of revelation from the moral God could in principle be brought to a new self-understanding and consequently a new experience of themselves, culminating in a denial of the original self-understanding of the prior experiences. These things said, in analyzing Nietzsche’s claim we must hold him to the bar of his own self-professed virtue, namely, honesty (Beyond Good and Evil, aphorism 227):

Honesty, supposing that this is our virtue from which we cannot get away, we free spirits—well, let us work on it with all our malice and love and not weary of “perfecting” ourselves in *our* virtue, the only one left us. May its splendor remain spread out one day like a gilded blue mocking evening light over this aging culture and its musty and gloomy seriousness! And if our honesty should nevertheless grow weary one day and sigh and stretch its limbs and find us too hard, and would like to have things better, easier, tenderer, like an agreeable vice—let us remain *hard*, we last Stoics! And let us dispatch to her assistance whatever we have in us of devilry: our disgust with what is clumsy and approximate, our “*nitimur in vetitum*,” [“We strive for the forbidden,”] our adventurous courage, our seasoned and choosy curiosity, our subtlest, most disguised, most spiritual will to power and overcoming of the world that flies and flutters covetously around all the realms of the future—let us come to the assistance of our “god” with all our “devils”! . . .

Thus, Nietzsche’s reduction of the pious person’s self understanding concerning their own inner experiences from the status of truth to the status of a hypothesis and likely delusion must come with good reasons and as such must come after the phenomenon has been honestly investigated. Those reasons, as we shall see in this work, are perhaps most

thoroughly advanced by Nietzsche in his little known but exceedingly important 1881 work titled *Daybreak*.

I have been arguing for the need to understand the grounds of Nietzsche's "atheism". To the preceding we add or rather return to the following consideration: a correct understanding of Nietzsche's "atheism" is required if we are to understand Nietzsche's mature philosophy and most especially his doctrines of the will to power and eternal return. These doctrines, inseparable from one another, are inseparable from the God Dionysus, of which God Nietzsche openly professes himself a disciple. Given Nietzsche's discipleship to Dionysus, we see that Nietzsche's ever so loudly professed "atheism" is ambiguous. This ambiguity is by design, and reflects the tempting and attempting aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy. In fact, Nietzsche's teaching is centered on the god, which is no mere piece of rhetoric, no esoteric or exoteric piece of nonsense. By Nietzsche's "atheism," then, we must understand "theism" to stand for the Biblical God, for the moral God revealed in the Bible, for the church, dogmatism, ecclesiasticism, and so forth. Atheism does not mean the denial of God for Nietzsche, it means the denial of the Biblical God of 'theology'¹⁵. Indeed the very core of Nietzsche's thought is his affirmation of the God Dionysus: Nietzsche even claims that his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is the product of Dionysian inspiration¹⁶.

For this affirmation of God we can also look to *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism thirty-seven. Having just provided his reasons for affirming the doctrine of the will to power in aphorism thirty-six, Nietzsche says:

¹⁵ Karl Jaspers' philosophy provides an ostensibly similar distinction between the God, whom he rejects, and the Godhead, whom he affirms.

¹⁶ *Ecce Homo, Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, sections 6 and 7; one might also see sections 3 and 4: "the body is inspired; let us keep the "soul" of it –".

“What? Doesn’t this mean, to speak popularly: God is refuted, but the devil is not?”
On the contrary! On the contrary, my friends! And, to the devil – who forces you to
speak popularly?

The impetus for the aphorism’s question (which comes from the free-spirits) is clearly the fact that the doctrine of the will to power seems to them to be an *evil doctrine*: they say *in effect*, “Goodness, morality or truth as an essential principle in beings is *refuted* by the will to power, but evil, immorality or deception as an essential principle in beings – and now the only principle – is *vindicated* by the will to power”. But let us analyze Nietzsche’s response to these “friends”. Nietzsche asks: “And, to the devil – who forces you to speak popularly?” This does not mean that the reference to the devil displays a merely popular (i.e., vulgar, blunt, unexact and unselective) mode of thinking. Rather, the reference to the entire dichotomy of “God and Devil” is here held to reflect vulgarity of thinking, for the Christian “apprehends in ‘God’ the ultimate antithesis of his own ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt before God” and “stretches himself upon the contradiction ‘God’ and ‘Devil’”¹⁷. With this in mind it is clear that by “On the contrary!” Nietzsche means to say: “God is not refuted but rather, *vindicated* as the creative will of life that is the essence of the world, and the devil is refuted in his vulgar understanding as “evil” or “sinful” but vindicated as the ‘wickedness’ or ‘devilry’ of nature, that is, as God’s perpetual power-seeking, immorality and will to destruction. This is as much as to say that the doctrine of the will to power refutes the moral God, the conventionally understood God of the Biblical tradition while affirming Dionysus. But with what right can Nietzsche deny Providence and “baptize” the essence of the world as the God Dionysus when the world has *already* been proclaimed or revealed to be the created possession of the Biblical God?

¹⁷ *Genealogy of Morals*, 2nd Essay, section 22.

In short, the validity of the doctrine of the will to power as a refutation of the Biblical God and a vindication of a non-Biblical God must be mercilessly questioned so as to ascertain whether Nietzsche has dismissed the revelation of the Biblical God illegitimately and, moreover, has perhaps placed a false idol in His place.

We are thus confronted by the following climactic riddle concerning Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole, which, moreover, brings us back to the beginning of our discussion: given that Nietzsche's fully mature philosophy is inundated with the divine as inspirational, rapturous, or revelatory, how are we to understand his rejection of 'theological' claims about such phenomena? The decisive insight lies in the fact that for Nietzsche the Biblical God is not beyond good and evil: as opposed to Dionysus he does not know how to dance and laugh. It is here that we approach the deepest meaning of the riddling utterance "God is dead": Dionysus, the Eternal One, lives and dies through the ephemeral masks of himself by which he lyingly appears to, or rather *in* man, one of which masks was and remains the now grim and ever-darkening mask of the moral God.

The Essential Argument of Nietzsche's Refutation of the Biblical God

Let us re-approach these considerations through the following questions. We ask: why is the omnipotent God of the Bible deemed a mask or historical manifestation of an unknown God that Nietzsche calls Dionysus (the Ancient Greek god of the spectacle or the theatre, the god of wine or intoxication, the god of death and rebirth). Nietzsche himself deems the essence of the world, Being or God, to be *Will* or will to power (which

means as much as will to will), and yet he names his God Dionysus in contradistinction to the Biblical God who is also understood as *Will*. What is decisive here is *not* the formal agreement that God is Will. What is decisive is that Nietzsche claims to have come to the insight concerning the will to power from out of a radical examination of man and his experience of *himself* as the only point of access into the whole¹⁸. Nietzsche cannot avoid – nor would he seek to avoid – a confrontation with the religious interpretation that basis itself on man’s deeply *moral and religious* experience of himself as *its* access point into the whole. Nietzsche and the faithful look at the same ‘evidence’ and infer very different things: where the faithful see the righteous will of God and the “miraculous” effects of God’s grace, Nietzsche sees the *will to power*.

The locus of Nietzsche’s refutation, then, is his analysis of the religious experiences of believers themselves and above all his analysis of his own experiences as just such a believer. (Henceforth in this chapter let us focus on the aspect of Nietzsche’s refutation of the Biblical God on the basis of his self-examination and leave for the body of the work the aspect of his vindicating Dionysus by way of that *very same* examination). Nietzsche clearly evidences the need for such a rigorously *honest* analysis in aphorism three-hundred and nineteen of *The Joyous Science*, simultaneously signaling to the reader that he has conducted this investigation with respect to himself (cf. aphorisms 308 and 335 of the same). There he says:

As interpreters of our experiences. – One sort of honesty has been alien to all founders of religions and their kind: They have never made their experiences a matter of conscience for knowledge. “What did I really experience? What happened in me and around me at that time? Was my reason bright enough? Was my will opposed to all deceptions of the senses and bold in resisting the fantastic?” None of them has asked such questions, nor do any of our dear religious people ask them even now. On the contrary, they thirst after things that *go against reason*, and they do not wish to make it too hard for themselves to satisfy it. So they experience “miracles” and “rebirths”

¹⁸ Here one might see *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 36, 47, and 51.

and hear the voices of little angels! But we, we others who thirst after reason, are determined to scrutinize our experiences as severely as a scientific experiment – hour after hour, day after day. We ourselves wish to be our experiments and guinea pigs.

And what happens – as is already clear from the aphorism above – to the “miracles” and “rebirths” and “little angels” that speak into one’s ears after one has made their conscience, their voice of God in the heart, a subject of scientific examination (which examination examines the *history of our moral judgments*)? Those revelatory phenomenon, like a fruit gone bad and no longer to be savored, are spoiled for us, having been based on the illusion that we had knowledge of good and evil, that God spoke the truth when he and his little angels spoke to us, whether through the conscience or through the manifest and rapturous beauty of the world. Thus the greatest arguments of the religious, the argument from the conscience and the related argument of *proof by power* (i.e., the argument from the supposedly irreducible ecstatic spiritual experience itself), collapses on its own grounds, according to Nietzsche.

All this becomes clearer from aphorism 335 of *The Joyous Science*, which aphorism screams to be read in light of aphorisms 308 and 319 above. Because this aphorism is so clear in making several of the points that have arisen so far in this work it is worth quoting the lengthy aphorism in full. Nietzsche writes:

Long live physics!— How many people know how to observe something? Of the few who do, how many observe themselves? “Everybody is farthest away—from himself”; all who try the reins know this to their chagrin, and the maxim “know thyself!” addressed to human beings by a god, is almost malicious. That the case of self-observation is indeed as desperate as that is attested best of all by the manner in which *almost everybody* talks about the essence of moral actions—this quick, eager, convinced, and garrulous manner with its expression, its smile, and its obliging ardor! One seems to have the wish to say to you: “But my dear friend, precisely this is my specialty. You have directed your question to the one person who is entitled to answer you. As it happens, there is nothing about which I am as wise as about this. To come to the point: when a human being judges ‘*this is right*’ and then infers ‘*therefore it must be done*,’ and then proceeds to *do* what he had thus recognized as right and designated as necessary—then the essence of his action is *moral*.”

But my friend, you are speaking of three actions instead of one. When you judge “this is right,” that is an action, too. Might it not be possible that one could judge in a moral and in an immoral manner? *Why* do you consider this, precisely this, right?

“Because this is what my conscience tells me; and the voice of conscience is never immoral, for it alone determines what is to be moral.”

But why do you *listen* to the voice of your conscience? And what gives you the right to consider such a judgment true and infallible? For this *faith*—is there no conscience for that? Have you never heard of an intellectual conscience? A conscience behind your “conscience”? Your judgment “this is right” has a pre-history in your instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences, and lack of experiences. “*How* did it originate there?” you must ask, and then also: “What is it that impels me to listen to it?” You can listen to its commands like a good soldier who hears his officer’s commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who is afraid of the commander. Or like a dunderhead who obeys because no objection occurs to him. In short, there are a hundred ways in which you can listen to your conscience. But that you take this or that judgment for the voice of conscience—in other words, that you feel something to be right—may be due to the fact that you have never thought much about yourself and simply have accepted blindly that what you had been *told* ever since your childhood was right; or it may be due to the fact that what you call your duty has up to this point brought you sustenance and honors—and you consider it “right” because it appears to you as your own “condition of existence” (and that you have a *right* to existence seems irrefutable to you).

For all that, the *firmness* of your moral judgment could be evidence of your personal abjectness, of impersonality; your “moral strength” might have its source in your stubbornness—or in your inability to envisage new ideals. And, briefly, if you had thought more subtly, observed better, and learned more, you certainly would not go on calling this “duty” of yours and this “conscience” of yours duty and conscience. Your understanding of *the manner in which moral judgments have originated* would spoil these grand words for you, just as other grand words, like “sin” and “salvation of the soul” and “redemption” have been spoiled for you.—And now don’t cite the categorical imperative, my friend! This term tickles my ear and makes me laugh despite your serious presence. It makes me think of the old Kant who had obtained the “thing in itself” by *stealth*—another very ridiculous thing!—and was punished for this when the “categorical imperative” crept stealthily into his heart and led him *astray—back* to “God,” “soul,” “freedom,” and “immortality,” like a fox who loses his way and goes astray back into his cage. Yet it had been *his* strength and cleverness that had *broken open* the cage!

What? You admire the categorical imperative within you? This “firmness” of your so-called moral judgment? This “unconditional” feeling that “here everyone must judge as I do”? Rather admire your *selfishness* at this point. And the blindness, pettiness, and frugality of your selfishness. For it is selfish to experience one’s own judgment as a universal law; and this selfishness is blind, petty, and frugal because it betrays that you have not yet discovered yourself nor created for yourself an ideal of your own—for that could never be somebody else’s and much less that of all, all!

Anyone who still judges “in this case everybody would have to act like this” has not yet taken five steps toward self-knowledge. Otherwise he would know that there neither are nor can be actions that are the same; that every action that has ever been done was done in an altogether unique and irretrievable way, and all regulations about actions relate only to their coarse exterior (even the most inward and subtle regulations of all moralities so far); that these regulations may lead to some semblance of sameness, *but really only to some semblance*; that as one contemplates or looks back upon any action at all, it is and remains impenetrable; that our opinions about “good” and “noble” and “great” can never be *proved true* by our actions because every action is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good certainly belong among the most powerful levers in the involved mechanism of our actions, but that in any particular case the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable.

Let us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and valuations and to the *creation of our own new tables of what is good*, and let us stop brooding about the “moral value of our actions”! Yes, my friends, regarding all the moral chatter of some about others it is time to feel nauseous. Sitting in moral judgment should offend our taste. Let us leave such chatter and such bad taste to those who have nothing else to do but drag the past a few steps further through time

and who never live in the present—which is to say the many, the great majority. We, however, *want to become those who we are*—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves. To that end we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world: we must become *physicists* in order to be able to be *creators* in this sense—while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been based on *ignorance* of physics or were constructed so as to *contradict* it. Therefore: long live physics! And even more so that which *compels* us to turn to physics—our honesty!

Nietzsche's refutation, then, of the Biblical God can perhaps best be described as psychological-historical. But this is not primarily a psychological-history of human beings *over time* (as Nietzsche does in fact do, and above all in his *Genealogy of Morals*), but rather, it is a psychological-historical account of *an individual human being* – and primarily, Nietzsche himself – which is claimed to show the believer himself the origins of his own religious experiences if only he undertake the necessary psycho-historical investigation (the necessary counterpart to a *physics of the soul* and the world). Nietzsche's claim is this: all personally experienced testimonials to the Biblical God, all internally experienced miracles or ecstatic religious states are interpreted morally. More precisely, the very condition for the experience *itself* is the believer's own propensity to interpret themselves and the world in accordance with good and evil. Still more to the point, for Nietzsche the foundation for the very possibility of feeling or experiencing an "inspiration" is the believer's own dogmatic belief that he *knows* what good and evil *are* and is thus *wise* in this matter (even were his *tongue* to deny this, his heart rarely will, and it is the heart above all that Nietzsche asks the believers to examine). Morality itself *inspires* or seems to inspire. Show the believer that he does not know what he believes he knows (no small step, as it will take us some three-hundred pages of text to even begin to traverse it), or rather, show the believer what he has always in a manner 'known' in his heart and mind, and he will no longer interpret his own past experiences as testimonials

to his God. Moreover, no revelatory experiences from the aforesaid God occur in the future. In this manner, the believer comes to reject his or her own past testimonials to the formerly worshiped Deity as having been grounded, more than likely, in self-deception and moral delusions, and chiefly in the arrogant delusion that one knows what good and evil are and can thus *warrant* and even *demand* the attention and care of the Divine¹⁹, in the delusion that one has a *right* or *just claim* to existence, which “right” we grasp at in the face of terrifying death. By seeing through his own absurdity as concerns morality – a process that could take, precisely in the best cases, many years, and which one perhaps never fully completes after having been reared in the moral horizon – and thus retracting his own claim concerning the evidence for God, and by failing to put forth any new claim in the absence of any evidentiary incentive to do so, the slate is *swept clean* as to his former arguments concerning the existence of his God (arguments such as those from the conscience and from the *proof by power*). In this manner, then, Nietzsche can claim that the moral God, though possible (given the essential limitations of human knowing), is lacking evidence for his existence and is therefore to be deemed implausible (and moreover, the origin of the original belief seems to be more plausibly explained by certain human illnesses). It is *this* psycho-historical refutation that Nietzsche is *seriously pointing to* in his climactic statement on the matter in the penultimate aphorism of Book I of *Daybreak* (aphorism 95):

Historical refutation as the definitive refutation. – In former times, one sought to prove that there is no God – today one indicates [*zeigt*, signals, points to] how the belief that there is a God could *arise* and how this belief acquired its weight and

¹⁹ When that care and attention appear not to be forthcoming, and likewise when we are attended to but only harmed, the ‘tragic man’ manifests the deepest form of the pathology of *unrequited love*; consider Shakespeare’s Hamlet, or the person of Alkibiades in his relation to both the gods and the demi-god Socrates – for Alkibiades himself perceives him in the form of a satyr – in Plato’s *Symposium*.

importance: a counter-proof that there is no God thereby becomes superfluous. – When in former times one had refuted the ‘proofs of the existence of God’ put forward, there always remained the doubt whether better proofs might not be adduced than those just refuted: in those days atheists did not know how to make a clean sweep.

The Plausibility of Nietzsche’s Refutation

But from the outset we must ask: what kind of a refutation is this historical refutation? Is it a perfect, absolutely self-evident “proof” of the Biblical God’s non-existence? Of course not, and those who would expect *certainty* from philosophy, be it on this matter or on any other matter whatsoever, ask of philosophy that it provide the humanly impossible. The ‘refutation’ occurs therefore in the realm of the more and less plausible: philosophy can never attain certainty, but it can deem certain opinions more and less grounded. But just how plausible is Nietzsche’s refutation? Nietzsche’s reply would likely be something of the following sort. “I too have experienced guilt and the voice of conscience; I too have experienced rapture and enthusiasm (literally, *to have a god within*) in the face of the Biblical God and all the ideals connected to Him, but when I attained to a perspective beyond good and evil I ceased to experience the former kinds of “revelation” and came to understand my experiences not as infusions of the Holy Spirit but as effusions of my own *will to power*. If you want to verify or refute my position, (for I know well that I am not wise), I ask only that you undergo the experiment of honestly examining yourself and your own moral opinions, which are after all only thoughtless prejudices precisely if held without being examined. . . .”

And yet again we must ask in all seriousness: how plausible is this refutation? It obviously relies on personal testimony, namely Nietzsche’s. Moreover, *even* were we to

grant that the experiences of ordinary believers – including Nietzsche – are premised on their moral confusions, what, then, we might ask, of the extraordinary experiences of Moses and the prophets? Did Nietzsche speak to or otherwise meaningfully confront *them* so as to ascertain through an examination of their opinions and experiences whether or not *their* revelations were dependent upon moral illusions for their occurrence? Nietzsche has dealt with several weak forms of the God's revelatory promptings, we might conclude, but he has not dealt adequately with the very strongest form of revelation, which strongest form he never experienced: the revelation experienced by the prophets (though, to be fair to Nietzsche, he does – perhaps – have access to the words of the revelation *itself*).

Nietzsche would *have* to concede this point, whether the revelation in question be Moses' in the Sinai or Paul's on the road to Damascus or Muhammad's in the cave of *Hira*. However, he would likely shift the level of analysis to the believer's own belief in the prophet's message. He would likely ask: *Why* do you believe this testimonial of a human being you have never seen? Because the reasoning of the message is itself compelling? Because the truth of his message is further testified to (or perhaps solely and sufficiently so) by those deepest, most tender, most heart-lightening experiences of universal and communal oneness, devotional prayer, quiet joy, and good works? If so, then allow me to ask you a few simple questions that I have often asked myself: in your opinion, what is good and what is evil? That is, what is moral or just, immoral or unjust, and why? And how did you come to think this so? On what *grounds* do you hold it for "truth?"

The Problem of Method

We have seen, then, that the decisive consideration for Nietzsche, the decisive piece of *evidence*, is the testimony of his own personal experience, provided we add to this immediately that from this evidence an *inference* is made about the experiences of *others*. But can the philosopher do anything other than this when it comes to judgments concerning the overall human condition? According to Nietzsche himself, every great philosophy so far has been, not the “inspiration” of God from a higher realm to man but rather the *inspiration* of one’s own inner drives, of one’s heart’s desires, and thus as written has constituted “the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir” of the philosopher who advances it²⁰. Nietzsche is more than aware of the need to apply this reflexively to his own thought; indeed, the insight concerning other philosophers is grounded in the insight into his own philosophizing. One cannot look around one’s own corner. That is, one’s thinking cannot proceed outside of the limits of the perspectivity of the thinker²¹. As is reasonable, we have called the legitimacy of this method of inquiry into question as a response to the question of the moral God, asking what it really *proves*. And yet even here we must come to a halt, for we must begin to think upon what we mean when we ask for “proofs”.

All “proofs” proceed from first principles that are themselves posited and cannot be proved. Perhaps the best known illustration of this is the principle of non-contradiction, which is at or rather near to being the foundation of all logical thinking, all

²⁰ *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 5 and 6.

²¹ Some would argue, however, that the limits of a particular being’s perspectivity are related in an essential way to the Unlimited Ground by which the space – thought existentially and metaphysically – is opened that makes possible the occurrence of the limited.

reasoning, and is certainly near the foundation likewise of the scientific method: one cannot prove the principle of non-contradiction, since any proof or argument used to do so would itself have to employ it. It is “self-validating,” one might say, and cannot be proven but on the contrary is at the basis of all proofs; that is to say, all other proofs *proceed from it*. But whereas the principle of non-contradiction is a self-evident *apriori* principle of human cognition everywhere and always wherever there are human beings (the “rational animal”), and thus is universally agreed upon (as to its existence in our thinking, at least, if not to the meaning of that existence), the claim “God exists” or “science is true” appears far more tendentious. Or rather, inasmuch as God is that by which we name Being, the statement “God exists” (or, “Being exists,” or “Existence exists”), expresses what is in fact the very first of all first principles, known primordially always and everywhere and better known in fact than the principles of contradiction, unity, sameness, otherness, and so forth. Indeed, *those* principles are themselves grounded in Being. But of course, when used this way “God” does not necessarily mean the Biblical God or the God of any particular religious tradition; indeed, as “Being” some would say this with the intention of designating nothing more than the “ultimate and mindless source” of the “laws of nature,” or the “ultimate sub-stratum of reality,” or some other such uninspiring definition. Nietzsche, as we shall see, rejects not only the mechanistic or ‘naturalistic’ interpretation of Being but also the Biblical God *and* the principle of non-contradiction (that is, he rejects it as a true measure of Being or Reality, it being to Dionysus’ *taste*, we might say, to paint the world for us thusly), and Heidegger has made manifest the fact that the principles of logic or ratiocination are not applicable to the more fundamental existential elucidation of phenomena. Indeed the great poets

and mystics too have always understood the limitations of logic. We see then that no one yet has dared make him or herself so ridiculous as to deny being, which is to deny existence, though some have dared to confront the claims of logic to have exclusivity in matters of *truth*, which is to necessarily confront it, in one way or another, with an appeal to the Real, to what *is*, to Being. From the Jewish, Christian and Islamic perspective the question thus becomes: is there anything in man – perhaps a knowledge of the heart – that testifies to the character and fact of Existence, or Being, as sentient, loving, watchful, and providential — something as much or more primordially known than all other principles including all the principles of reason or cognition?

But be that as it may, the religious surely put forth the premise of the Biblical God's truth as the first principle of all their arguments, and the natural and social sciences tacitly hold the non-existence of the Biblical God as a premise of their arguments; it is not explicitly denied, to be sure: it is simply left entirely out of the accounting. The religious and the irreligious (above all the atheists among the scientists) will never *prove anything* to one another, since neither accepts the premises from which the other begins their arguments. In sum, from alternative principles various doctrines can be "proven." As a closed and integrated system, Nietzsche knows that Christianity in its entirety is *irrefutable* in terms of any opposing 'argument'. For this we can look to *Expeditions of an Untimely Man*, aphorism five, in *Twilight of the Idols*:

Christianity is a system, a consistently thought out and *complete* view of things. If one breaks out of it a fundamental idea, the belief in God, one thereby breaks the whole thing to pieces: one has nothing of any consequence left in one's hands. . . . Christian morality is a command: its origin is transcendental; it is beyond all criticism, all right to criticize; it possesses truth only if God is truth – it stands or falls with the belief in God.

Moreover, Nietzsche is skeptical, a pessimist of sorts, concerning both the very categories of traditional logic as well as the moral presuppositions of logicians. No one

has pursued this first theme further than Heidegger, who in his *Sein und Zeit* goes back to what is prior still to the formation of all our 'logical categories,' namely, our primordial self-knowledge as *existenz* or Da-sein. Thus the whole of *Being and Time* is, as a phenomenological analysis, in a manner descriptive rather than interpretive, for it refrains from all traditional modes of interpretation of *dasein* while not yet proceeding to its own interpretation. Heidegger attempts nothing more than to allow *dasein* or human being to reveal itself as itself from out of itself and then to give, utter, or speak his findings.

But can Heidegger's method avoid any more than Nietzsche's the need to infer the nature of others' experiences or the being of other human beings from his understanding of his own being? Of course not, nor can any philosopher. Indeed, it was precisely this difficulty and question that Socrates had in mind when he said to Callicles (*Gorgias*, 481c-d): "Callicles, if human beings did not have some feeling [*pathos*; denoting experience, being affected, 'suffering' something; being attuned through passion] that was the same – some having one and others another – but if some one of us suffered some private feeling different from what the others feel, it would not be too easy to point out one's own affection to the other." The implication that it might be easy but not too easy is, of course, ironic: it would be *impossible* in the decisive respect. Could not the believer grant Heidegger everything said in *Being and Time* as a truthful rendering of Heidegger's own experience, his own existence, and yet claim that he lacks the experience of living in the light of grace? That what he has in fact done is describe an existence *alienated* from the Divine? Might the saintly or spiritual human being of the religious ideal be moved to pity Heidegger on this reading?

The Supremacy of Honesty

In the end, an inference from oneself and one's own self-understanding to the being of others is inevitable, and this despite the fact that *certainty* in any absolute sense concerning another's experience of themselves is in the end always impossible and likewise any similar certainty concerning oneself²². But this inference need not be considered baseless: we have our observations of mankind past and present as strong evidence in favor of the legitimacy of one's inferring a fundamentally *human* experience that is knowable by man as man (a statement not at all at odds with the positing of man's historicity). Concerning morality, for example, one finds reasons upon reasons – Nietzsche would argue – to infer that others are as confused and contradictory concerning it as oneself, and this perhaps *the more so precisely the more morally serious one is*.

However, in contradistinction to all ordinary believers we have the prophets themselves (and perhaps the witnesses to the prophets . . .) as evidence in favor of an experience and a knowing that is *unavailable* to man as man but only to rare recipients of divine favor. Yet the following rejoinder is certainly in order: the recipient of this favor who relays a message presumably does so in order that we may understand something of it or profit from it or both. We cannot know the status of a prophet's or messenger's truthfulness or the character of his actual experience, but we can attempt to understand from out of ourselves the truth or falsity of the message as well as its goodness or harmfulness. To go further, it is ultimately *only* on the basis of *one's own truthfulness* that one can sensibly affirm, deny, or suspend judgment concerning the truthfulness of

²² Something known concerning certainty even in a much less strict sense by all anguished and even graceful lovers, who desire in greater or lesser degree to know the other and to be known in turn, by the other, by themselves, or both; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 194.

the message, though not necessarily for that reason the truthfulness of the messenger, whose self-understanding is ultimately a secondary matter. For it seems conceivable that a prophet may be truthful (as, having the intention to be honest) yet speak a lie, untruth, or half-truth, perhaps a poetic or mythical truth and thus an essential truth as opposed to a 'factual' truth (and hence, on one possible understanding, be untruthful or dishonest); related to this, it seems that it might be possible also that a prophet may be honest in character while speaking the truth, yet without understanding the entire truth that he speaks, though perhaps he *must* know its essential truth, though even *that* not entirely, since that would be to know the God entirely. Moreover, not being his own ground, a prophet may even speak the God's words when he himself doubts whether or not he speaks the God's words²³. Indeed, thinking upon the twofold meaning of truthfulness as, firstly, the intent or desire to speak the truth, or honesty (i.e., the longing or striving to attest truly to oneself and of oneself as to one's authentic being), on the one hand, and secondly, having truth or being 'filled' with truth on the other, and their unitary essence in Truth (Being or God), we wonder whether one can be truthful without being truthful, that is, whether one can be honest without speaking truth or pointing men to the clarity of what is silent.

To conclude, then, and to cut the argument off at or before the final peak to which it has been surging, whatever one thinks of the status of Nietzsche's denial of the ever so mysterious Biblical God, this much is clear: Nietzsche's treatment of the Biblical God is not historical in any conventional sense, nor psychological, reductionistic, rationalistic,

²³ Indeed, God in his mysterious providential plan may even give his true words to or rather, speak his true words through, one who does not believe himself specifically chosen for the task of speaking God's truth; such a one would not be considered a prophet in the traditional meaning but might speak God's truth – or at least some aspects of God's truth – to man all the same. Consider Plato in this regard, whom philosophical posterity Christian, Jewish, and Muslim referred to as "the divine Plato".

positivistic, nor in any manner superficial or dogmatic, for he approached the question of God as a *genuine and preeminently personal question*, and he deemed it necessary to *honestly* ascertain the truth or falsity of the claims of the Biblical God's adherents, bringing to this task all the almost extravagant powers of his heart and mind. Yet for all that, of course, his understanding might still be erroneous.

The Plan of the Work

It remains for us in this introductory chapter to say a few words concerning the plan of the work, thereby indicating where we shall be going and what the order of the discussion shall be.

The goal of the work is to demonstrate the deepest grounds of Nietzsche's rejection of the Biblical God and affirmation of the God Dionysus. Inasmuch as we moderns have inherited the horizon of the Biblical God, Nietzsche's vindication of Dionysus is bound to strike us as mysterious, baffling, and perhaps even ironic, whereas his denial of the Biblical God is bound to strike us as serious, radical, and supremely relevant to the times and the human beings who live it. For this reason, the primary focus of this work will be Nietzsche's denial of the Biblical God and only secondarily his vindication of Dionysus. In keeping with this I have chosen to focus primarily on *Daybreak*, which would otherwise seem an odd choice inasmuch as Nietzsche, at the point in his thinking in which he wrote *Daybreak* (1881), had not yet affirmed Dionysus as the essence of the world. In what follows (below) I shall give a further explanation of

this odd procedure and the manner in which the analysis of *Daybreak* will itself lead us to an analysis of Nietzsche's discipleship to Dionysus.

The order of the discussion shall be as follows. I begin with a chapter discussing the relevant literature on Nietzsche's atheism (Chapter II), of which there is, in fact, exceedingly little. As opposed to this dissertation, which treats the question of the Biblical God's existence as a philosophical question of the first order and deems Nietzsche's treatment of that question to be the very core of his thought, we shall see that some take Nietzsche's atheism to be self-evidently rational and thus provide no philosophical argumentation for it, that some believe Nietzsche's atheism to be the product of madness, that some take Nietzsche's atheism to be merely axiomatic and thus too prejudicial to constitute a philosophical investigation, that some believe Nietzsche's atheism to follow from the peculiarities of his childhood and upbringing while some believe it to follow from a hidden or 'closet-Christianity.' Still others, as we shall see, take Nietzsche's atheism to be the product of his historical or genealogical method, and some believe Nietzsche's denial of the Biblical God to be based on his revaluation of values such that Biblical religion and the values it espouses are deemed vices. In fact, it is usually the case (as we shall see in the following chapter) that a given scholar will include several of these explanations in their account of Nietzsche's atheism (for example, R. Motson Thompson takes Nietzsche to be insane, influenced by Christianity, and too prejudicial to be deemed philosophic). I shall be arguing, however, against each one of these positions, displaying Nietzsche's thoughts on the question of the Biblical God in all their seriousness and rigor. Above all, I hope to deepen the argument of those who look to Nietzsche's understanding of man's history as an explanation of Nietzsche's

denial of the Biblical God, showing rather that the ultimate ground of Nietzsche's atheism is his psychological-historical examination of religious persons and above all the psychological-historical examination of himself as someone born into all of the moral-religious opinions and sentiments of his time.

To elaborate upon my contribution to the existing scholarship, those who take Nietzsche's most serious argument for atheism to be his 'historical-argument' concerning mankind as a whole can be divided into two camps, namely, those who approve of the argument and those who do not. Those who would accept Nietzsche's historical argument as persuasive, I would argue, fail to take the question of the Biblical God's existence fully seriously, while those who deem (rightly) that such a method is axiomatic, conjectural, and unpersuasive cannot take Nietzsche fully seriously (at least not on the question of the God) and thereby deprive themselves of the riches of his thoughts on the question. This dissertation, however, argues *both* that the question of God is a philosophical question of the highest import *and* that Nietzsche is a philosopher who deserves our highest attention with respect to this question (and others).

From the literature review I shall move to a discussion of the 1886 *Preface* that Nietzsche added five years after the work's first publication. In keeping with the discussion of the *Preface* itself, I shall discuss both Nietzsche's peculiar style of writing and the fundamental theme and thread of *Daybreak* itself, for Nietzsche himself encapsulates and summarizes the most essential theme of the entire work in the *Preface*: the undermining of mankind's faith in morality in light of his understanding that faith, as faith, is itself *a moral phenomenon*. Indeed, the almost five-hundred aphorisms that constitute the book proper bear witness to this central theme and elaborate upon it,

revealing Nietzsche's argument that our moral prejudices about morality – which inspire (*Preface*, section 3) – have their origins (and for Nietzsche a thing *is* the summation of its origination) in qualities and aspects of ourselves deemed *immoral* by those same prejudices (the realization of which is claimed to bring forth the explosion and elimination of those prejudices in the heart and mind of the investigator, and thereby the cessation of all inspiration; alternatively, our “moral” prejudices about morality are in fact “immoral”; or, and bearing in mind that Nietzsche's thinking claims to explode the entire dichotomy of good and evil, moral and immoral, the origins of faith in morality are the non-moral, chance assembled, natural drives of our physiology; or, to use the language of Nietzsche's fully mature thought, which synthesizes the natural drives through the concept of the single drive of all existence that is the will to power, the origin of our faith in morality is the will to power). The chapter is divided into three sections. The first, *The Surfaces, Nihilistic Swamps, Depths, and Grounds of the Work*, argues that Nietzsche's method of writing is ‘animated’ by his belief that one only reads *oneself* both *into* and *out of* a philosopher's writings, and thus will only understand a profound writing to the extent of their own shallowness or profundity. The second section, *Nietzsche's Confrontation with the Problem of Method*, argues that Nietzsche's method is such that it allows the serious believer, through honest and rigorous self-examination, to deny their own faith *without* resorting to standards outside of faith by which to do so. Essentially, recognition of the immoral origins – the immoral opinions and motivations – of one's morality is said to have the effect of causing a collapse of the belief in that morality and likewise the cessation of all revelatory experiences grounded in it. The third section, *Taste, Physiological and Philological: The Selective Principle of Being as Will to Power*,

argues that Nietzsche's invitation to the reader in the *Preface* that they understand his withdrawal of faith in morality to be itself inspired by a faith in morality (such as is the case with the *free spirits* who are not *free, very free spirits*) is but a mere ruse. In fact, Nietzsche's withdrawal of faith in morality was, already by the time he wrote *Daybreak*, motivated by *taste*, which, when understood in its full metaphysical significance, is inseparable from the principle of Being (i.e., the will to power).

Before discussing Chapters IV-VII, it must be noted that none of those discussions limit themselves to that portion of Book I from which they take their cue. In fact, in each of those chapters I use the aphorisms isolated from Book I as a *springboard* by which to make two related leaps: one into the whole of *Daybreak* (which consists of five books), and one into the texts that comprise the whole of Nietzsche's philosophy. This 'springboard-method,' strange as it may initially seem, is necessitated by the strange character of *Daybreak* itself and above all the seemingly desultory character of the work. Nietzsche himself draws attention to this fact in aphorism 454 of *Daybreak*:

Digression. – A book such as this is not for reading straight through or reading aloud but for dipping into, especially when out walking or on a journey; you must be able to stick your head into it and out of it again and again and discover nothing familiar around you.

Indeed, the five books that comprise *Daybreak* have no titles, and the work as a whole seems to be little other than a collection of disconnected thoughts. And though one might argue that the subtitle of the work, namely, *Thoughts on Moral Prejudices*, gives some indication as to the theme of the work as a whole, we are still left wondering where these thoughts lead and to what end Nietzsche has put them forth. Most readers, then, have typically and understandably been baffled by *Daybreak's* desultory character. To be

sure, it is just this anticipated confusion that causes Nietzsche to say, in the later added *Preface* in which he assumes that one has already read the book aforetime, that the reader shall surely “ask him what he is looking for down there” (*Preface*, 1; i.e., to ask him what in the world constitutes the central theme and ultimate concerns of the book). Thus, by *thinking the problems through with Nietzsche* and by using the aphorisms in Book I as our launching point I hope to integrate Nietzsche’s seemingly unrelated thoughts into the totality of the philosophic investigation contained in *Daybreak*, thereby revealing the unity of Nietzsche’s thought from out of its ‘scattered’ presentation. Likewise, it is from here that I intend to springboard into the entirety of Nietzsche’s thought as expressed in all of his works, for that thought (from the 1873 *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* to the posthumously published *Will to Power*) is *not* the reflection of a schizophrenic temperament but rather a reflection of something that pushes forth, searches, and grows within the domain of the same essential questions (inseparable from one another) into Being and human being, which questions necessitated for Nietzsche an unceasing investigation into the question of God and human religious experiences.

Chapter IV focuses on Book I of *Daybreak*, aphorisms 1-44, and deals with Nietzsche treatment of mankind’s moral-religious history, (the dominant theme of the aphorisms to that point being the *origins* of moral-religious phenomenon). This chapter, then, focuses on *the past*. One aphorism, however, dominates the analysis and constitutes its ‘springboard,’ namely, aphorism nine: *The morality of custom*. The chapter is divided into ten sections.

In the first, *Preliminary Reflections*, I discuss the work's title, subtitle, and opening epigram, arguing that the work is nothing less than a meditation on Being and human being in light of the history of western philosophy as a whole. Above all, I argue that Nietzsche argues that a day-break (a new viewing of being and beings) is possible for individuals and humanity as a whole but only after dismissal of the belief in Being (the sun) as a moral God. In the second, *Philosophy, History, and Historical Philosophizing*, I argue that the first eight aphorisms constitute a kind of set-up to the themes and concerns of the work as a whole. Above all I argue that for Nietzsche the supremacy of history constitutes not only an over-turning of all philosophy since Plato (having overturned or inverted his teaching of the ideas and all his fundamental premises concerning nature and the nature of human reasoning), but also, and more important for our thesis, the key to the refutation of the Biblical God, and this by examining the origins of our belief that we know good and evil (aphorism 2; on which belief all revelatory experiences from a moral deity depend). To digress momentarily from the thread of Chapter IV in order to elucidate the fundamental thesis of the work as a whole, the ultimate origin of this belief and the revelatory experiences grounded in it is claimed by Nietzsche to be the will to power. In *Daybreak*, however, where Nietzsche has not yet developed his full teaching on the will to power as the essence of the world, we do not get a single ultimate origin for the belief in the moral God's truth (though the *lust for power* comes very close even in *Daybreak*) but rather a kind of 'laundry list' of origins, laid out most succinctly in aphorism ninety-three: "vanity, the lust for power, the impatience, the terror," and "the enraptured and fearful delusion of men." These underlying psychological motivations for belief in the moral God must be further understood in light of the constellation of drives

that Nietzsche lays out in his “drive-psychology.” That drive-psychology, and the manner in which it is purified into the teaching of the will to power as the supreme drive from which all other drives are derivative forms, is not laid out until chapter five of the work (*Preliminary Investigations into Providence, Free-Will, Teleology, Chance, Self-Knowledge, and the Origin of Action*).

To return to the thread of chapter IV, in the third section, *The Morality of Custom as the Foundational Stage of Morality*, I lay out Nietzsche’s teaching that morality in its world-historical origin is nothing more nor less than obedience to the traditional way of behaving and evaluating. A distinction is further drawn between custom in general (which is a judgment of past ages) and the *sense for custom* that refers to the *sanctity* of the custom. The sense for custom – and only an act done in accordance with this sense is considered moral on this thinking (if done for utility or advantage, for example, it is considered immoral) – leads to a state whereby all thinking and individuality is stifled under the total authority of morality in giving answers to the highest and weightiest human questions. Yet, that said, Nietzsche argues further that as the actual factual-historical knowledge of the origin of a law (custom, or usage) is lost over time, speculation on morality begins. This speculation constituted the great exercise ground of the intellect and is thus the historical origin of the contemplative life in all its forms (religious, philosophic, artistic, modern-scientific). Nietzsche argues that moral reasoning is of a self-fulfilling character as concerns the validity of its teachings concerning human actions and divine effects (for example, if your prayers are not answered, this is ascribed to some impiety on the part of the one making the prayer, or to the greater wisdom of the god, and so forth), and also as concerns the “conclusions”

reached in doctrines thought from out of unexamined moral premises. In short, moral-reasoning is to genuine reasoning as quack-doctoring is to genuine medical treatment, since in both morality and quackery the matter and form of all the arguments are worthless by the standard of reality: they speak of subject matters that do not exist (for example, as concerns morality, the free-willing, unitary soul), and by way of premises, inferences, deductions, and so forth that are not only fanciful but infused with 'the heart.'

In the next section, *Sacrifice in the Morality of Custom*, I lay out Nietzsche's teaching concerning the aspect of sacrifice in morality and its origin in the total rule of custom for the good or primary sake *of the community* (as opposed to the individual's private advantage). Under the horizon of this morality, Nietzsche argues, the human being first considered most moral is the one who obeys the laws most frequently, and then after some time, the one who obeys the laws even in the most difficult cases.

In the next section, *Morality as the Development of Cruelty (Revenge)*, I follow Nietzsche as he turns to a discussion of two related aspects of morality (namely, cruelty and suffering), and I trace Nietzsche's account of the manner of their changes throughout various stages of human history. At this point in the discussion *power* and the natural human lust for power comes to the forefront of Nietzsche's discussion of morality and its origins in the historically formed soul of historical man. Another point also emerges here to which Nietzsche constantly returns, namely, the attack on individuality that has been at the heart of all morality hitherto. A third point also emerges in Nietzsche's analysis: the drive to distinction and the morality of distinction that follows from it. From here, I follow Nietzsche as he teaches the origin of the morality of distinction to be *refined* cruelty and show the manner in which morality *begins* when suffering (self-inflicted and

inflicted upon one by ‘the world’) is taken to be a consequence of, and purification for, mortally dangerous transgressions against the law. Above all self-inflicted cruelty, which is at the essence of all morality, is now deemed *advantageous*, and even pleasurable to the extent that it gives the feeling of power. And yet already here we see a contradiction fatal to morality on Nietzsche’s understanding, for as he argues in aphorism five-hundred and eight: “That which we do for our own *benefit* ought not to entail for us any moral praise, either from others or from ourself; the same goes for that which we do for our own *pleasure*.” I go on to show Nietzsche’s argument that all the various facets of the original morality of custom are still at work in us moderns (quoting aphorism eighteen, end) and thus likewise the contradiction between our immoral motivations for personal advantage and pleasure and our simultaneous claims to act morally by way of noble sacrifice to the good of others and for the sake of the divine.

In the next section, *Pride and Power*, I show Nietzsche’s argument to be that pride has both moral and non-moral forms, and that the specifically moral element in moral pride is the consciousness of one’s power as judge and executioner. I also show Nietzsche’s intention to pilot mankind towards an expunging of all moral pride in favor of a new pride that calls forth suffering in all its ecstatic pleasure and power-driven intentionality for the sake of *rationality* and the rule of human rationality. Ultimately, this pride too is moral and is exemplified in the *free spirit*, and it is not until chapter Five that we are able to show the transmutation of the free spirit into the *very free spirit* who is beyond all morality including and above all the moral orientation towards truth and reason.

Still staying primarily with aphorism nine and spring-boarding from it into the work as a whole, in the next section, *Madness and Law-Giving: The Individual and the Herd*, we are forced by aphorism nine to discuss the themes of madness and legislation that are raised in it, and more specifically to discuss Nietzsche's argument that the origin of law-giving lies in madness. This madness is brought about by the fact that the genius – and the law-giver is a kind of genius – suffers too greatly from the individuality that puts him at odds with the society in which he lives. In order to put at ease his tortured conscience the genius must justify his new evaluations as having been revealed by the god, and so experiences “revelation.” From here, we are led to Nietzsche's discussion of the *criminality* of the madman-lawgiver who over-throws existing customs and replaces them with his own.

In the next section, *The Origins of Providence*, two key aspects of Nietzsche's argument come to the fore: 1) the supremacy of the community to the individual as concerns divine retributions, and, 2) the animation or anthropomorphization of the world (i.e., man's attribution of *will* or *spirit* to all things in their ignorance of nature and its necessary causation). I lay out the manner in which for Nietzsche the providential world-view causes, at the deepest metaphysical level, “cause and effect” to become equivalent to “crime and punishment” (also, “righteousness and reward”). Of vital importance to Nietzsche's argument is the aspect of morality as a kind of “gold balance” between *two wills* on a scale, the human will as cause, and the divine will (or wills) as effects. (Here we are almost forced to discuss free-will inasmuch as it is necessary in this thinking if punishment and reward are to be at all comprehensible, yet the needed discussion must wait until it can be addressed more directly in Chapter V.) In this section I also outline

Nietzsche's argument as to how it was that the providential world-view constituted the historical origin of pessimism inasmuch as *reality*, the reality knowable by us, became only a deceptive symbol for a moral and metaphysical reality 'behind-it.' From this we are led directly to the next section, *The Origin of Pessimism in the Vita Contemplativa*, since according to Nietzsche pessimistic judgments first originated in the souls of contemplative men on account of their own impotence for action amidst a hostile and threatening world. It is there argued that it is in the nature of pessimism (as being itself a moral judgment upon the worth or value of the world), as it is with all moral and religious judgments that call forth suffering, that it offer the compensation of the exalted state experienced when one participates in the higher world or moral realm that is 'higher truth.'

In the last section of Chapter IV, *Are Historical Arguments Sufficient to Refute God?* – I close by taking an over-view of Nietzsche's historical findings, asking whether they are or can be persuasive. I argue that such historical arguments as Nietzsche provides are grounded in his own profound self-knowledge, and I provide a lengthy quotation from Nietzsche's *Uses and Disadvantageous of History for Life* and various references to show that this is Nietzsche's own understanding of the manner in which history can and ought to be studied so as to attain knowledge. It is in this light that Nietzsche's claim in aphorism eighteen (end) to have found all the immoral and grotesque aspects of the original and ancient morality of custom to be present still in our modern 'post-Christian' or 'shadow-Christian' European moralities becomes all the more radical and persuasive. In essence, the argument is that Nietzsche grounds his teaching concerning morality in human history on the truly fundamental philosophical analysis

into the origin of morality in his own soul, inferring essential truths about the former in light of his findings in the latter.

Chapter V, *Preliminary Investigations into Providence, Free-Will, Teleology, Chance, Self-Knowledge, and the Origin of Action*, explores Nietzsche's reasons for denying free-will and providence, and almost constitutes a digression. I start the section by arguing that despite the fact that *Daybreak* seems to lack the kind of metaphysical and psychological arguments against the doctrine of "free-will" found in abundance in his other works, in fact, *Daybreak* contains in it Nietzsche's most decisive reasons for denying free-will, reasons grounded in the psychological-historical investigations into his soul and its morality.

In another sense, however, by moving from Nietzsche's account of world-history to his grounding treatment of history as manifested in the individual soul, the chapter follows the one preceding by a logic that is manifestly legitimate, for in it I clarify the centrality of the question as to the origin of action in the soul (and that by concentrating on *Daybreak*, Book II, aphorisms 115-130, as Nietzsche concentrates his own discussion of this matter in this series of aphorisms). To this extent this chapter, chapter five, acts as an anticipatory set-up to the discussion in chapter seven, the climactic chapter with respect to Nietzsche's most powerful psychological-historical reasons for denying the Biblical God and the understanding of man as a created being with free-will. Seen from this perspective it is chapter six, dealing as it does with Nietzsche's project for the future of mankind (a project already premised on the conclusion of his 'atheism' as concerns a moral deity), that constitutes the digression.

In the first section of Chapter V, *The Hidden Power Politics of the Soul*:

Nietzsche's Drive-Psychology, I show the psychology Nietzsche advances in *Daybreak* to be based on a teaching concerning the existence of an unknown web of sub-conscious drives that we simplify and distort in language, which deals only with the superlative, surface drives that come to consciousness and which are in fact extreme out-bursts of pent-up, sub-conscious or 'subterranean' drives that lie in wait to feed upon whatever chance circumstance brings its way. These sub-conscious drives in fact pilot all our behavior and "weave the web of our character and destiny" (aphorism 115), and in the proceeding sections the ramifications of these facts for the Christian soul-concept, teleology, free will, and providence are explored in turn. Yet before the required elucidations a digression is called for, since there is no better place than on the heels of a discussion of the drive-psychology advanced in *Daybreak* to discuss the transformation of this psychology into the fully mature and final metaphysical doctrine of the will to power.

Thus, in the next section, *Digression on the Will to Power as the Origin of All Action in the Universe*, looking above all to the preeminently important aphorism thirty-six of *Beyond Good and Evil*, I lay out the logic behind Nietzsche's move from a psychology of competing and cooperating drives to a unified psychological-metaphysical theory of Being as will to power. Nietzsche essentially argues that, 1) human beings cannot conceive of causality apart from their conception of their own will, and even sub-subconscious drives can only be conceived of as still more wills ("wills" being equivalent to "drives," also "appetites," and "desires," a fact noted by Heidegger, who does not fail to chide Nietzsche's relative failure in making these equivalences explicit and clear); 2)

that human beings cannot have in the constitution of their being a concern for a world inaccessible to their being; 3) that human beings *are truly* concerned only with the anthropomorphisized world demanded by their physiological constitution; and, 4) that if we look to ourselves as the only beings we truly have access to so as to understand the character of Being we cannot avoid the conclusion that the essence of the world is will to power.

In the next section, *Assassinating the Christian Soul*, I highlight Nietzsche's argument whereby the *concept* of the "I," "ego," "soul," or "subject" is claimed to be the product of subconscious "egos," and their "wills." In all willing we are not free actors but merely following the current of our destiny as it is piloted by the sub-conscious, uncontrollable, and chance driven workings of our "soul." As a consequence of this argument concerning the formation of conscious thought by sub-conscious realities, the concept of the "I," "ego," "soul," or "subject" is relegated to the status of *fiction*. Inasmuch as this fictional concept of the unified soul is, according to Nietzsche, at the center of Christian theological doctrine and more importantly the morally colored self-understanding of Christians, the demise of this ancient 'soul-doctrine' would appear sufficient to bring with it the demise of Christianity as a whole.

In the next section, *Nietzsche's Denial of Purposes in Nature*, I lay out Nietzsche's argument against teleology. Just as our purposeful actions are based on sub-conscious workings that are governed not by an over-arching purpose but by *chance* discharges, Nietzsche argues that in all the actions of beings in the universe it is not the 'end' attained by the action itself that is the *cause* of the action but rather, the balance of power relations of more essential wills that seek to discharge themselves maximally in

light of whatever circumstance chance brings its way: the end pursued and more or less attained is *accidental*. In sum, the historical origin of purpose and (biological) adaptation in nature is Chance (which is without purpose but wholly necessary). This is the perspective attained to in *Daybreak*. Yet in keeping with my intention to illuminate Nietzsche's mature philosophy as well, I close the section by showing the manner in which the will to power can be understood as the single and essential teleological fact that renders all traditional 'teleological speculation,' in the fields of biology and elsewhere, superfluous.

In the next section, *The Origin of the Illusion of Free-Will*, I show how the powerful belief that our consciously purposeful actions (or, our consciously willed actions) are free is argued by Nietzsche to be based primarily on an ancient transference from the social-political domain where the strong, bold, confident man is the free man while the slave is the un-free man. Essentially, Nietzsche's argument is that from the joyful *feeling* of freedom the *fact* of freedom is falsely inferred. In truth, according to Nietzsche's argument, those states of our soul whereby we feel ourselves joyfully free are every bit as un-free – being the products of chance and the determinations of its necessity – as those states of social-political oppression whereby we feel ourselves 'un-free.'

From the preceding discussion we are led in the next section, *Chance and Will*, to discuss the two ultimate and alternative hypotheses concerning the cause of action in the universe: chance (or nature understood as the given, unplanned necessity of the universe in all its becoming) and will (or soul understood as the agent and locus of conscious choice). I show that for Nietzsche the hypothesis of "will" reaches its culmination in the doctrine of the providential God who rules the universe righteously. Focusing on

aphorism one-hundred and thirty (*Purposes? Will?*), I show the tentative character of Nietzsche's conclusion in favor of chance, and show the reason for that tentativeness to be Nietzsche's awareness that ultimately certain knowledge of the essential character of action (in ourselves and in the universe) is impossible. Indeed, I show that even with the drive-psychology advanced by Nietzsche, the case for free-will has not been refuted at all, but only made more mysterious and baffling.

In order to show the manner in which Nietzsche can attain a high degree of confidence in favoring the hypothesis of natural necessity to divine providence, I move to a discussion in the next section (titled, *The Supremacy of Self-Knowledge*) of the fundamental importance and supremacy of Nietzsche's self-knowledge in the formation of his conclusions. Above all, I show from aphorism one-hundred and thirty that for Nietzsche the decisive insight by which to deny free-will and the providential world-view is that concerning the dependence of "miraculous" experiences (which seem to testify to providence) upon vain and arrogant illusions and above all the illusion that one has knowledge of good and evil. The chapter ends by pointing beyond itself to chapter seven, which promises to provide a fuller and more persuasive account of Nietzsche's decisive arguments concerning the relation between revelatory proofs of faith and the specific illusion of moral knowledge.

The next chapter, Chapter VI, *Nietzsche's Medicinal Project for the Future: From Man to Overman*, deals with mankind's *future* in light of Nietzsche's project or self-appointed task of expunging Christianity from the world so as to facilitate a tremendous rationalization of mankind and the creation of the *overman*. Thus the central theme of the chapter is the overcoming of pessimism in the name of *joyous science*. There, we focus

initially on Book I of *Daybreak*, aphorisms 45-61 (aphorism 45 being the first open statement in the book as to Nietzsche's intentions concerning mankind's future) before the necessity of the argument forces us to certain passages in *The Joyous Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* so as to see Nietzsche's fully mature thoughts on the overcoming of pessimism (or, nihilism).

In the first section, *Mankind's Physicians: Past, Present, and Future*, I quote and elaborate upon the preeminently important aphorism forty-five of *Daybreak: A Tragic Ending for Knowledge*. Indeed, in many ways the entirety of chapter VI might be considered an elucidation upon, and restatement of, aphorism forty-five ("restatement" because ultimately, which is to say, in Nietzsche's fully mature thinking, knowledge attains to a comic solution, as I lay out in detail). The main theme is the slow purification of mankind from the intoxicated feelings and erroneous and pessimistic judgments of its inherited Christianity through greater and greater *rationality*. Ultimately, and again only taking the tiniest step from *Daybreak* to Nietzsche's more mature works, our rationality itself will come to terms with the truth about rationality as such; i.e., with the truth that human reason is a manifestation of the will to power and thus something *creative*. According to Nietzsche, the Christian intoxication with the "higher moral world" has produced in European man a terrible pessimism concerning the real world in which he exists, and it has done this in the name of helping, saving, and improving mankind. In the face of the Christian physicians who have ruined man, Nietzsche proposes new physicians, namely, the philosophers who will promote rationality and healthier taste as opposed to the unhealthy taste that seeks ruinous pleasure in the "higher realm." It is at this point that we are forced to undertake a thematic discussion of *medicine* in *Daybreak*,

distinguishing between Christian quack-doctoring (which is showed to have its origins in a response to fear and impotence, and which increases pessimism and human suffering generally so as better to apply its ecstatic affect-medicine) and the true doctoring of the philosopher (as understood by Nietzsche) who applies suffering so as to strengthen and harden men in the pursuit of higher (life-giving) ideals.

In the next section, *Crime and Punishment in the Future*, we take up those aphorisms in *Daybreak* that deal with crime, law, and punishment in the future. The essential argument here is that in the fullness of their resources, at the public and individual level, future peoples will exercise self-legislation in the knowledge of the conditional and relative character of all “laws,” even being up to the task of prescribing their own punishments. Such punishments, rather than being forms of revenge and “scapegoating” that stem from the inconsistencies and pathologies of the punishers, shall have as their goal only the betterment of the criminal’s conditions. From here we are led by the thread of Nietzsche’s argument to the next section, *Nietzsche’s Ideal of Divine Cannibalism*, and its discussion of cruelty and pity and their proper usages at the societal and individual level. The essential argument with respect to the role of cruelty and pity at the societal level, which is premised on an understanding of the value and indispensability of suffering for all human greatness, is that we must seek an ideal of cannibalism in which we are able to inflict suffering while enduring the pain of our own pity for the sufferer, and this for the sake of life-promoting ideals (or, the heightening of our power, i.e., our being).

From here we reasonably take up a discussion of the social and political conditions that will have to prevail for Nietzsche’s new ideals to take hold, and we do

this in the section titled: *Breeding the Future Human Race*. I lay out Nietzsche's hopes concerning the Jews, showing them to be paramount to any rational expectation of creating a new European aristocracy that will promote, for the first time, a moral ideal ("truth") that liberates the individual from the long tyranny of the community and its herd valuations (i.e., the entirety of all other moral ideals, all of which have been inherited from the primeval ages of man, having undergone transmutations and adaptations over the course of history). Of utmost importance here is the overcoming of the herd-morality consequent upon the herd's thoughtless and overly sentimental ideal of *pity*. Perhaps the most important point made in this particular section is that Nietzsche refers to "blood" and "race" primarily as metaphors for culture and the inherited horizons of valuations governing the souls (or character) of various peoples.

In the next section, *Mankind's Tragic Love for Knowledge*, I stay with Nietzsche's discussion of the future and his hopes to pilot it, laying out his argument to the effect that the pursuit of knowledge, which, as an object of love, is pursued in the hope of happiness and at the risk of death, will only bring more and more pain upon mankind as science steadily destroys the imaginary and otherworldly (metaphysical) ideals by which all human life hitherto has been animated, and without providing any other life-affirming ideals in their place (except the ideal of knowledge itself). In sum, and to quote from the section itself, "the tragedy is this: man, with his increasing truthfulness, will attain to a position in which he is left with a knowledge he cannot endure and a possibility of happiness (namely, that found in comforting illusions) that he can no longer accept." Morality sapped value from the real world and placed it in another, metaphysical world which gave man's life meaning when all was said and done

(if not the highest meaning, as only the doctrine of the will to power gives life its highest possible meaning); science destroys those metaphysical ideals, but how does it fill in the empty space or vacuum of value that is ‘left-over?’ That is the predicament.

The final and complete – one is tempted to say “perfect” – solution to this predicament is approached but not fully attained to in *Daybreak*. Thus, in the next section, *Overcoming Nihilism: The Joyous Knowledge*, I delineate Nietzsche’s thoughts on the human future and our overcoming of pessimism, showing where Nietzsche comes to in *Daybreak* and the manner in which his thinking easily slides into the fully mature teaching of the will to power (essentially inseparable from Eternal Return, Dionysus, God, Being). This necessitates a lengthy revisiting of Nietzsche’s understanding of the essential nature of knowledge, distinguishing that understanding from the Platonic one (as understood by Nietzsche). In essence the argument is that whereas on the former understanding the mind faithfully mirrored the forms of beings, on the new understanding the human mind actively creates the ideas of the beings and does so in accordance with the physiological necessities of their particularly constituted will to power. But not only does this insight into the human provide us with the essential insight into the world as a whole as being in its being will to power (found not in *Daybreak* but in the later writings), it also provides us with the sublime task of molding and furthering the human destiny by which we have inherited not a mere bundle of shameful folly but much more so the greatest accomplishments of mankind’s creative essence (creativity being the essence of Being, God, or Dionysus). Seen in this light, the conclusion to the tragedy of God’s death is the comedy begun by the “rebirth” of Dionysus. I show that in *Daybreak* Nietzsche is at the very brink of this über-Olympian posture.

Upon concluding the discussion of the tragic-comic destiny of man as envisioned and hoped for by Nietzsche, I move on in the next section, *Setting the Stage: Philosophy versus Faith*, to discuss a group of aphorisms (56-61) that speak of the chief obstacle to Nietzsche's medicinal project, namely, the present and inevitable future existence of Christian judgments and feelings. Above all, two problems emerge: 1) Christianity's hostility to reason; and, related, 2) the Christian prescription that calls for the intoxicating affects to have full reign over the soul. In this discussion, I lay out Nietzsche's contrasting visions of the philosopher and the believer (primarily from aphorism fifty-six: *The apostate of the free spirit*), showing that the pivotal issue is that of *honesty*. Nietzsche will accuse believers of being dishonest—*liars*, deceivers of themselves and others who flee their better insights into themselves and the character of their morality and piety. This conclusion acts as the perfect set-up to the last chapter of analysis wherein I lay out Nietzsche's most decisive argument against Christianity, the psychological-historical argument that claims to destroy all Christian "proof by potency" by undermining the very psychic foundation of rapturous Christian religious experiences, that foundation being the delusion of moral knowledge or the arrogant and dishonest belief that one knows what good and evil *are*. This account is outlined in chapter VII.

Chapter VII, *Knowing and Loving Good and Evil*, is divided into thirteen sections, and deals with *Daybreak*, Book I, aphorisms 62-96 (aphorism 62 being the first to deal exclusively with the question of revelatory experiences, and aphorisms 89-96 being the climactic aphorisms of Book I as a whole, which ends with aphorism 96; as we shall see shortly, Leo Strauss points to aphorisms 91 and 95 as indicating Nietzsche's most serious argument – in the entirety of his writings – concerning his denial of the

Biblical God). Whereas Chapter IV deals with the past and Chapter VI with the future, Chapter VII deals with the present; rather, Chapter VII deals with the *ever-present* (so to speak) philosophic problem of religious experiences *as such* as accessed primarily by Nietzsche's examination into his own moral-religious prejudices (and thus above all into Christian moral-religious experiences). This aligns Chapter VII to Chapter V, which also dealt with an "ever-present" philosophical question, namely, the question as to the origin of action (in both the soul and the world as a whole). Essentially, the fully mature Nietzsche says: I looked into my moral opinions and feelings and the myriad faiths that attend them, and I discovered on the basis of this self-knowledge that I am, in every discernable aspect of myself, all about the will to power (as opposed to any selfless love of the morally splendid); but if I in my discernable essence am *will to power*, there is no more reasonable conclusion than that the essence of all things, the 'text' of the world 'in itself' is itself nothing other than will to power.

The first section of Chapter VII, *A Tale of Two Egos*, might just as well have been called *A Tale of Three Egos* inasmuch as it lays out the basic structure of Christian piety as Nietzsche understands it: the lower 'self,' is dominated and cruelly tyrannized by the higher 'self,' and this out of loving devotion to the supreme ego or personality that is the morally conceived Deity. These 'wills' or 'selves' all lie, according to Nietzsche, in a delicate gold balance the weights of which are morality and immorality (or, good and evil). On the one side of the balance stands the Deity who is absolutely good, on the other stands man, part divine in the soul, the 'pure spirit' that is the breathe of God, part beast in the body and lower passions by which he degrades himself to a status lower than the brutes. When dwelling in the higher moral realm of pure spirit, his true home, the

believer experiences joy and ecstasy (the “grace of God,” as they, according to Nietzsche, merely and falsely believe, or better, about ‘half-believe’); when dwelling in carnality he experiences guilt and sinfulness. Although much will be said concerning the pathological personality of the jealous and petty Deity, ultimately, inasmuch as for Nietzsche the Biblical God does not really exist at all, all of Nietzsche’s arguments have as their true and ultimate object of analysis the vain, arrogant, dishonest, cowardly, and affect-driven delusions of the pathological personality that is the “believer.” (This dishonesty of the believer is laid out in a summary way in the section titled: *The refutation of the Biblical God through Self-Knowledge.*)

In the next section, *The Christian-Theological Understanding of Embodiment*, I continue with the theme of the higher spiritual self and the lower bodily self by laying out Nietzsche’s understanding of Christian-theological-ontology. According to Nietzsche’s argument, Christianity seeks to make the necessarily recurring natural sensations (such as lust, or the desire for domination) sources of perpetual torment for the believer (who truly believes the forbidden things to be evil and thereby is truly harmed by their presence in his soul) and this so as to later restore these same passions in a new, sublimated or ‘baptized’ form. Indeed, following Nietzsche’s arguments along this track we are forced to draw the contrast between the philosopher such as Nietzsche who love his enemies (‘inner’ and ‘outer’) in the knowledge that they help draw him into his higher possibilities, and the Christian who hates his enemies or rather, half-hates his enemies and who *needs* to do so in keeping with the pessimistic (concerning the world) yet hopeful (concerning the other-world and the afterlife in it) character of his economical ‘sacrificial devotion’ to the Deity. Self-analysis (or, psychological-historical

examinations), according to Nietzsche, reveals the base nature of this economic relation above all in the character of our so-called “sacrifices” and their duplicity, whether relation to God or to our fellow men.

In the next section, *The Origin of the Christian Understanding in Paul*, I pick up the thread of the previous section and show how on Nietzsche’s understanding the entire duplicitous posture of this theo-ontological orientation has its origin in the thinking of Saint Paul (whom Nietzsche calls, in aphorism 68, the first Christian and the inventor of Christianess). I show how despite the aspect of God’s grace as being something beyond our deserving in any strict reckoning of justice, the temptation to understand Christianity as somehow *beyond good and evil* is unwarranted, for as our very phrasing already indicates, the Christian world-view or ontology presupposes the existence of good and evil, the former being deserving of reward (though *we*, unaided, *cannot* deserve it, being inherently sinful in our nature), the latter being deserving of punishment. I trace Nietzsche’s argument concerning the manner in which Paul changed the understanding of sin from the Jewish understanding of an affront to God’s Holy Law (and thus always a matter of being good or evil in accordance to the Law) to the Christian understanding as an affront to his personal honor. I go on to show Nietzsche’s argument concerning the inherent pathologies involved in the *demand* for reciprocal love, both the Christian God’s demand to be loved in return for his offer of love, and the believer’s demand that God love them in return for their love of him. I close the section by showing how, on Nietzsche’s understanding, Christianity affirms a total equation between “Rome,” “Babylon,” “the world,” “matter,” “the bodily,” and the “natural” (thus carrying pessimism further than any religion prior); a realm which must be contrasted with the

higher moral realm of the pure spirit that is God, and wherein dwell his angels and the blessed souls.

Thus, in the next section, *On Love and Lust*, I pick up the thread of the two realms above stated, showing how on Nietzsche's understanding of the Christian understanding, the bodily is equated with the sinful or lusty, the spiritual with the blessed and loving, the former being selfish and covetous and the latter being selfless and generous. Nietzsche completely denies this understanding, and argues that "love and lust," "good and evil," or the "selfless and selfish," are not opposite values at all. What leads to the conviction of their essential opposition, according to Nietzsche, is the alternate sensations of wretched guilt on the one hand, and ecstatic, miraculous, enthused (or divinely infused) selflessness on the other. According to Nietzsche, honest self-investigation can very easily reveal the true nature of our sacrifices, loves, and so forth to be manifestly selfish (to say nothing of the colossal arrogance, vanity, and self-deception involved in such things). Any believer who can deny this basic and fundamental claim concerning man's perpetual selfishness can feel free, by Nietzsche's own understanding, to consider him wrong, and his philosophy, perhaps, worthless. At any rate, I lay out Nietzsche's argument to the effect that lovers, when loving fellow humans romantically, as well as when loving God (and the two are in fact parallel psychological phenomenon on Nietzsche's understanding; that is to say, the essential character of the love is the same), in fact set up an idolized reflection of themselves in the beloved and prostrate in selfless devotion to this idol, with which they are themselves *pregnant*, willingly enduring almost every kind of torment and suffering in this state of pregnancy, and all this in the hope of being 'united' or 'reborn' as this fully idealized and beautified "self." Throw in a desire

to be loved reciprocally in the same manner, and you quickly have an even more deeply absurd psychological condition. In sum, such lovers simultaneously deem themselves the most detestable and lovable persons in the world.

From the Christian, romantic, artistic, and political ideal of love I move on in the next section, *On the Morality of Pity*, to the ideal of pity, the ultimate moral ideal of our age, according to Nietzsche, however ‘secularized’ such compassion may be in comparison to the Christian virtue of charity of which it is but its shadow. I go on to lay out a vital distinction Nietzsche makes between the Christian and post-Christian ideal of pity as *moral* (or, unegoistic) with the ancient and especially stoic (thus openly and unabashedly egoistic) view of pity as an effeminate and dangerous passion that should not be indulged. The central point of Nietzsche’s analysis of our modern morality of pity, as one might have come to expect, is that in pity the one pitying is pursuing *power* and above all by making a possession of the one pitied, using them as part of an egoistic and rather hideous drama that is concealed from all eyes except for those of the astute psychologist such as Nietzsche. Again, as with the analysis of love, Nietzsche’s arguments are above all *experiential*, and anyone who cares to deny the applicability of his understanding to their own experiences is more than welcome to do so. I close the section with an argument from *The Joyous Science* to the effect that in being pitied we are robbed of our independence and self-respect, as well as the opportunity to grow through suffering, while in pitying others we lose ourselves and the true and highest way of our nature (as will to power) in giving ourselves away to attend to the needs of others.

In the next section, *The Songs of Souls*, the following perfectly reasonable and thematically ‘logical’ question is asked: If love and pity and sacrifice and free-will are so

manifestly empty as concepts that reflect any genuine psychological reality, why in the world do people believe in the truth and rationality of such things with the deepest convictions? The answer lies in the peculiar persuasiveness of the Christian criterion of *proof by power* through which an opinion is proved true by the ecstatic or divine impetus that thinking it imparts on the soul of the one who holds it. In order to show this from Nietzsche's thought, I go through a detailed analysis of *Daybreak*, aphorism two-hundred fifty-five, dissecting Nietzsche's 'musical analogy' to show the relation between our ideas and the morally sublime feelings that attend them like so many mechanical levers. Thus in the next section, *The Psychological Mechanics of a Revelation*, I pick up the thread of the preceding section and lay-out the psychological mechanics of three forms of revelation: that of the religious originator (the prophet and lawgiver) in general, that of Saint Paul in particular, and that of the more ordinary believer in the peculiarly Christian experience of the *moral miracle* and *breakthrough of grace*. The central thesis of the section is that the feeling of exaltation that attends an opinion is taken to be a revelatory confirmation of the opinion's divine source and necessary truth. It should also be noted here that all those who claim to have had revelatory experiences, according to Nietzsche's argument, already believe in the fact, (in one way or another), of divine revelation.

In the next section, *Christian Spiritual States as Circular Folly*, I lay-out Nietzsche's argument as concerns those Christian revelatory experiences that do *not* occur only a single time (or perhaps, only a few times at best, or only to the most favored recipients of grace such as the prophets). In keeping with Nietzsche's desire never to short-change the opponents of his thinking, he takes up the most exalted example of

Christian spiritual life, the saints who live, or at least, endeavor to live, in the perpetual light of God's Love. Only now does Nietzsche's claim that the Christian lives in the span and irresolvable tension of the two realms or 'dimensions' of his being (the spiritual and the bodily) attain to its full force. The saint, according to Nietzsche's argument, in the profundity of his vehement hate for all that is 'worldly,' literally *exhausts himself psychologically* in the endless battle with his 'lower nature' (whether battling such physical drives as the sex drive or battling such egoistic psychological phenomenon as pride) As a consequence of this exhaustion and of the tremendous feeling of power involved in such pious self-tyranny, the Christian comes to a state of *rest* or *release* in which he feels the overwhelming return of health, joy, confidence, and self-satisfaction, much as one feels light-headedly blissful when resting immediately after some vigorous physical exertion. The love with which, fundamentally, he loves himself and the world, he mistakenly and vainly interprets as a breakthrough of *divine love*. Nietzsche's attack on this thinking, as always, lies above all in an attack on the opinion that ascribes moral goodness to selflessness (and vice or evil to 'selfishness').

In the next section, *The Refutation of the Biblical God Through Self-Knowledge*, we are finally able to deal with what I argue to be perhaps the most important aphorisms in the book, aphorisms ninety, ninety-one, ninety-three, and ninety-five (an opinion somewhat confirmed, as previously discussed, by Leo Strauss, who singles out aphorisms ninety-one and ninety-five). I begin with aphorism ninety (*Egoism versus egoism.*), highlighting its most radical dimension: Nietzsche's claim that he could not endure existence if the Biblical God actually existed. Essentially, Nietzsche takes Pascal's wager and chooses life without the Biblical God over life with him. The full reasons for

this strange and initially bewildering posture are elaborated upon (that is, in Nietzsche's riddling manner of 'elaborating' upon things) in the aphorism that follows, aphorism ninety-one, titled *God's honesty*. But before discussing aphorism ninety-one, I discuss aphorism eighty-four in order to show what is really at stake in the aphorism titled, *God's honesty*, namely *our dishonesty* (that is, the dishonesty of all believers). Having done this, I proceed to lay-out Nietzsche's argument to the effect that if God is as believers believe Him to be he *must* reveal his will to us (which will defines good and evil): otherwise, he will be not only immoral (essentially, a liar) but moreover, preeminently *pitiable*. In short, we must have knowledge of good and evil if the Christian schema is to be at all workable, and it is just this knowledge of good and evil, according to Nietzsche, that believers believe they possess on account of the *feelings* they possess with respect to those opinions, feelings inseparable from ecstatic feelings of great *power*. And yet, I there argue that this very claim to know good and evil is the single claim which Nietzsche, like Socrates before him, has been attempting to undermine in *Daybreak* and throughout his writings (cf. above all, *The Joyous Science*, aphorisms 335 and 319), and that he has been performing this psychological undermining through the psychological-historical examination that he attempts to incite in his better readers. According to Nietzsche's argument as I have been at pains to show throughout the work, when the undermining of this arrogant conviction of moral knowledge is complete, that which is built upon that ground, namely, the proofs of power and revelatory experiences that seemed to testify to the truth of the conviction of moral knowledge (a conviction inseparable from the conviction of a *right* to existence, be it one of happy fulfillment or tortuous punishment), collapse into nothingness, impossibility, and distant memory. This

brings us through to the end of the section titled, *The Ultimate Test-Case: Pascal*, for it is the example of Pascal (in aphorism ninety-one and elsewhere) that Nietzsche holds in highest reverence as the greatest exemplar of the fight in the Christian soul between reason and faith. The above findings are repeated again with an analysis of aphorism ninety-three (*What is Truth?*), an aphorism that summarizes in four short sentences the entirety of Nietzsche's refutation and which begs (above all with aphorism ninety-one) to be considered with the equally summary aphorism ninety-five (and again, recall Strauss's appraisal of the role of aphorisms ninety-one and ninety-five; the relevant quotation is supplied in the next chapter).

Yet, between the sections, *The Refutation of the Biblical God Through Self-Knowledge*, *The Ultimate Test-Case: Pascal*, and *Refuting the Truth of God*, there is a section titled, *The Biblical God and Dionysus*. There, I take up the difference between God conceived of as providential and God conceived of as will to power. To do this, I dissect the three traditionally understood elements of the Biblical God's Will, namely, goodness, power, and knowledge, contrasting this with the attributes of Dionysus. So far as "goodness" goes (i.e., moral goodness), Dionysus knows nothing of *selflessness* but only the perfect selfishness of being pregnant with himself in the eternally-striven-for ideal of greater power that he is always and everywhere hungry to actualize. As for Dionysus's knowledge, rather than being a conceptual web-spinner and monster of logic who moves the world in accordance with the eternal forms contained in himself, for Dionysus knowing is at all times a historical-physiological *creating* governed by the will to power that he *is*, and which determines the course of all perception and knowing. Moreover, whereas the Biblical God is thought to choose from amongst the known

possibles of existence, Dionysus does not choose but only follows the course of his own contingent (but *ultimately* ‘spontaneous’) explosions. (On what can Dionysus’s will or action as a whole be contingent? Thus in the end the world or universe – which is in its essence will to power – is as it is – which is the particular occurrence of the will to power that is this particular universe – because it just is that way—because Dionysus just happens to be this; hence, ‘spontaneous’ and the sense of an action with nothing whatsoever ‘pre-planned’ in advance). As for God’s power, here Dionysus is not conceived of as too different from the Biblical god (since here power means *effective force*, which, however, Nietzsche deems measurable, and moreover, is not too far from the conception of force or energy in the modern sciences, though above all we would want to add the idea of a guiding *ideation* as present in all ‘action.’) with the exception of the following point (and recall the point immediately preceeding concerning *choice*): whereas the Biblical God’s creativity and creative powers are infinite, for Nietzsche there is in the ‘womb of Dionysus’ only a finite number of possibilities (a premise which, when combined with the infinity of time, suffices for Nietzsche to establish the necessity of the *eternal recurrence of the same*).

The final section of the work, *The Future Atheism of the West: Towards a Daybreak*, deals with the last aphorism of Book I, aphorism ninety-six, thus bringing our ‘springboard’ analysis of Book I of *Daybreak* to an end. The aphorism, *In hoc signo vinces,*” (*In this sign thou shalt conquer*), discusses Nietzsche’s hopes for the success of his project whereby mankind dismisses all belief in the “ideal” of the Biblical God and the morality grounded, logically or *moral-theologically*, in that “ideal,” (which belief in the God, inasmuch as the belief is grounded, *psychologically*, above all in the revelatory

experiences which we take for proofs of God's truth, is itself further grounded, again, *psychologically*, in moral opinions and their attendant feelings).

The work ends with a conclusion (Chapter VIII) that summarizes the grounds traversed in the dissertation. It is also there that I return in brief to a discussion of Dionysus and the topic of Biblical and Dionysian "religion." The conclusion is titled *The Prefatory Character of the Work* so as to highlight the tentative character of the work's arguments individually and as a whole. At least two facts make the analysis of this dissertation prefatory: first, Nietzsche's thought, I argue, is so profound that I cannot claim to have exhausted it in a mere three-hundred and sixty odd pages (i.e. the size of this dissertation minus this very *precis*, which adds nothing new but only summarizes, anticipates, and aids or elucidates); that said, I do claim to have made my best attempt to convey the essence of his argument against the Biblical God; second, the theological-philosophical question itself is so much more profound and open still than the limitations of any single thinker's thinking or even all thinkers together, that I cannot claim to have done anything more in this dissertation than scratch the surface of anything like a "knowledge" of matters theological-ontological.

Chapter II

Interpretations of Nietzsche's "Atheism"

From the outset it must be noted that we are looking to the literature – of which there is in general a great plethora – *only* in search of its response to our topic, which is the question of Nietzsche's atheism (i.e., the reasons for his atheism). Inasmuch as we are looking to each work from this singular perspective, we shall provide no commentary on whatever is not directly related to our topic. That said, there is very little in the scholarly literature that *is* directly related to our topic: hitherto, Nietzsche's atheism has been acknowledged by all, and when that atheism is discussed it is usually done so in brief. Indeed, one typically finds in the scholarly literature that at some point the evident arguments for Nietzsche's atheism – the historical, the physiological, the political, and so forth – are relayed and this commonly in passing; no scholarly book, chapter, or even subsection of a chapter has yet been devoted to *investigating* the reasons for Nietzsche's atheism as opposed to taking those reasons to be fairly self-evident.

No account of the literature on Nietzsche would be adequate if it did not account for the thoughts of the incomparably enlightened Martin Heidegger. To my knowledge, nowhere in Heidegger's writings do we find any thematic treatment of Nietzsche's grounds for rejecting the Biblical God. Indeed, Heidegger explicates Nietzsche with an eye chiefly upon a particular set of questions which do not explicitly address the question

as to Nietzsche's most profound reasons for *rejecting* the Biblical God, but which aim, rather, at addressing questions as to the meaning of Nietzsche's *vindication* of the God Dionysus. That said, at one point Heidegger describes man's decidedly "moral" relation to the Biblical God in summary terms that Nietzsche, as we shall see in our analysis, would find agreeable. Heidegger's summary goes straight to the heart of the matter: the baseness of moral-virtue in its reduction of man's relation with God to an economic relation that trades a deceptive love and deceptive sacrifices for goods or 'rewards.' In discussing Nietzsche's third communication of the doctrine of eternal return, Heidegger is led to discuss the meaning of Nietzsche's utterance that "God is dead". Heidegger is emphatic in saying that Nietzsche puts forth the question of God as a *question*, saying (Martin Heidegger's *Nietzsche*, translated by David Farrel Krell, Volume II, p. 65-66):

... At all events, here we have a *question*! So, then, God is not dead? Yes and no! Yes, he is dead. But which God? The God of "morality," the Christian God is dead – the "Father" in whom we seek sanctuary, the "Personality" with whom we negotiate and bare our hearts, the "Judge" with whom we adjudicate, the "Paymaster" from whom we receive our virtues' reward, that God with whom we "do business." Yet where is the mother who will take pay for loving her child?²⁴ The God who is viewed in terms of morality, this God alone is meant when Nietzsche says "God is dead." He died because human beings murdered him. They murdered him when they reckoned his divine grandeur in terms of their petty needs for recompense, when they cut him down to their own size ...

Thus Nietzsche's atheism is something altogether his own. Nietzsche must be liberated from the dubious society of those supercilious atheists who deny God when they fail to find him in their reagent glass, those who replace the renounced God with their "God" of "Progress." We dare not confuse Nietzsche with such "god-less" ones, who cannot really even be "god-less" because they have never struggled to find a god, and never can. Yet if Nietzsche is no atheist in the usual sense, we dare not falsify him as a "sentimental," "romantic," halfway-Christian "God seeker." We dare not turn the word and concept *atheism* into a term of thrust and counterthrust in Christianity's duel, as though whatever did not conform to the Christian God were *ipso facto* "at bottom" atheism. The Christian God can all the less be for Nietzsche the standard of godlessness if God himself, in the designated sense, is "dead." ...

²⁴ Cf. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, II, *On the Virtuous*, where Nietzsche would rather explain to the 'dubiously virtuous' their own 'virtue' in terms of their *true* virtues – loving and creative virtues which they do not consciously know of and which they in fact love deeply as a mother loves her child – rather than in terms of the weaknesses, errors, and comforting illusions which they conceal from themselves and their God, loving their so-called 'virtues' as a form of currency while fleeing from the question as to the truth of their being.

We go next to *another* great reader of Nietzsche, Leo Strauss. Some may some day disbelieve this comparison, and not without grounds, and this in Heidegger's favor: this is almost certainly the case with respect to Strauss' work on Nietzsche. But to indicate, and this perhaps still without doing him justice, that Leo Strauss was a brilliant reader of Nietzsche would likely take a work of no less size than the one on which we are embarked. The *problem* is Strauss' *own* esotericism, which esotericism is particularly riddling in his one thematic piece on Nietzsche in the whole of his vast corpus, his short, *Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil"* (nestled in the center and strikingly at odds with the chronological movement of the chapters in his *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*). Despite or because of its length, Strauss demonstrates the sure and graceful footing of a penetrating reading to a beautiful degree. This is also the judgment of one highly accomplished scholar, Laurence Lampert, who devoted an entire book (*Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, 1996) to Strauss' sixteen page work. There, Lampert comments (Introduction, p.1): "Leo Strauss was one of those few special readers. Acute, daring, skeptical, a reader schooled like few since Lessing in the history of philosophic rhetoric, Strauss was a reader prepared to slow down, 'to read deeply, to look cautiously fore and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers' (*Daybreak* Preface 5), a reader with a free mind." And yet, these things said, in his short piece on Nietzsche Strauss says only the following by way of explicit

reference to the grounds of Nietzsche's "atheism", and this in the context of discussing aphorism 53 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, which should be quoted first:

Why atheism today?—"The father" in God has been thoroughly refuted; likewise "the judge," "the rewarder." Also his "free will": he does not hear—and if he heard he still would not know how to help. Worst of all: he seems incapable of clear communication: is he unclear?—This is what I found to be causes for the decline of European theism, on the basis of a great many conversations, asking and listening; it seems to me that the religious instinct is indeed in the process of growing powerfully—but the theistic satisfaction it refuses with deep suspicion.

Concerning this aphorism Strauss writes (p. 179):

In speaking of how or why it lost its power, Nietzsche speaks here less of the reasons that swayed him than of the reasons advanced by some of his contemporaries, presumably his most competent contemporaries. Not a few of his better readers will justifiably think that those reasons verge on the frivolous. In particular it is not quite clear whether those reasons are directed against natural (rational) or revealed theology. Nevertheless the most powerful anti-theistic argument which Nietzsche sketches is directed against the possibility of a clear and unambiguous revelation, i.e. of God's speaking" to man (cf. *Dawn of Morning* aph. 91 and 95).

The title of aphorism 91 of *Daybreak* or *Dawn of Morning* (I prefer the sudden and seizing lighting and encircling that is heard in *Daybreak*) is "God's honesty", and the title of aphorism 95, "The historical refutation as the definitive refutation." The latter speaks of a historical refutation in which a person who initially argues proofs for God's existence is brought by his opponent to retract entirely his own claim to believe in God's existence. Aphorism ninety-one concerns a seemingly frivolous, insulting or anger-provoking and mockingly impious thought experiment in which Nietzsche argues – like a man with "a scientific head", though hardly evident in aphorism ninety-one, "placed on the body of an ape, a subtle exceptional understanding on a vulgar soul" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 26) – that the Christian God, unable to communicate his will to us, pitiable as he is, seems ready to almost choke and suffocate to death in his suffering for the sins that we are unable to absolve ourselves from, and ends with a discussion of how Pascal sensed that if God did not communicate his will to us through unambiguous

revelation he would be immoral and thus untrue, which terrible and tormenting awareness made Pascal all the more enthusiastic in claiming to have received revelation. Now, exactly what this Platonic political philosopher might have had in mind when he linked, in this one little sentence in the whole of his published works, the issue of God's honesty to a historical refutation that Nietzsche considered definitive, and all this to the question of God's ability or inability to communicate his will by revelation of good and evil, one can only guess, *since he gave us so little to work with by way of any explicit commentary*. Perhaps, however, Strauss' intent is that we go to Nietzsche and think for ourselves, in all the rigor and self-seriousness that this necessarily entails, what the reasons for Nietzsche's "atheism" might be; indeed, unriddling Strauss' riddling essay may well presuppose such a venture. For these reasons, any attempt at an interpretation of the Sphinx-like Strauss on the question of Nietzsche's atheism is entirely inappropriate here. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that we cannot even look to Lampert for aid here, since he does not provide the needed explanation, but rather, gives us only the following comment as pertains to this section of Strauss' work (*Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, p.50):

"Although 'it is not quite clear' whether the reasons Nietzsche gives are directed against a natural (rational) theology or revealed theology, it is completely clear that the most powerful argument is against revelation, against the very possibility of revelation. There might be a place therefore, for a kind of natural or rational theology after the current atheism has run its course, for our atheism is the completely reasonable response to the long sway of revealed religion. That wretched communicator now stands completely exposed, found wanting by our refined moral and intellectual standards, as one of the aphorisms in *Dawn of Morning* (91) cited by Strauss shows: "A god who is all-knowing and all-powerful and who does not even make sure that his creatures understand his intention – could that be a god of goodness?"

Having raised the issue of Laurence Lampert's work on Strauss and Nietzsche, it may be well to ask here what that work contributes to the problem of this dissertation, namely, the grounds of Nietzsche's ambiguous atheism or 'pious impiety'. Perhaps the key thesis of Lampert's work concerns Nietzsche's demand that philosophy rule over

religion. Indeed, Lampert considers Nietzsche to have understood religion as the “great alternative to philosophy” in the task of providing the grounds of human thought and action (*Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, p.25). But how did Nietzsche decide in favor of philosophy such that it must rule its great rival religion, which is relegated to the status of a handmaiden? On this, Lampert provides no argumentation, neither on his own behalf nor on behalf of Nietzsche.

Lampert appears to deem it self-evident that a fully rational life will exclude religion which, as opposed to reason, must be considered superstition. But what does “rational” mean for Nietzsche, since this is hardly self-evident? Unfortunately, Lampert’s works do not provide any epistemological or ontological argumentation by which to understand more fully the meaning of “reason” in Nietzsche’s thought. Be that as it may, Lampert understands Nietzsche’s philosophizing to be a manifestation of “probity” and the “intellectual conscience” and thus an extension of enlightenment rationalism now “radicalized by a new bravery that scorns any comforts like God” (*Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, p.5). But how does this rationalism and its peculiar courage establish the untruth of the Biblical God? Again, we are not told.

Indeed, the matter comes to the forefront in Lampert’s thought whenever he discusses the rule of philosophy over religion. Concerning the eventual rule of religion by philosophy foreseen by Nietzsche, Lampert writes: “Or, in slightly different language, the will to power doctrine finds a way to align the good with the true; it frees the true from an all-too-human standard of the good and begins the long process of teaching humanity to find the true good” (*ibid.* p.48). This comment is not without irony: those ‘all-too-human standards’ are in fact those standards hitherto considered *divine* and

provided by revelation. But on what philosophical grounds does Nietzsche conclude that these divine standards are in fact false and all-too-human? Again, Lampert's Nietzsche provides no adequate response to this. Moreover, if we are to hold Lampert's work on Nietzsche to the highest standards we must ask: what does Lampert understand by such words as "the good" and "the true" and "will to power" in Nietzsche? Again, the necessary epistemological and ontological considerations required so as to understand these terms in Nietzsche are not provided by Lampert. The entire matter is encapsulated nicely in the following excerpt from Lampert's work, *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, which excerpt constitutes the first paragraph of the section titled, "How Philosophy Rules Religion". Lampert writes:

"Strauss begins his account of Nietzsche's chapter 'Das Religiöse Wesen' [*The Religious Essence*] by stating why it is not entitled 'Das Wesen der Religion. [*The Essence of Religion*]' This odd procedure is in fact perfectly reasonable: without saying so, Strauss is again contrasting Nietzsche and Plato. The search for the essence of a thing, its idea, is obsolete, replaced by the Nietzschean search, a form of inquiry which Strauss immediately describes: the history or genealogy of a thing. The essence or idea of religion, that unattainable grail of an obsolete Platonism, 'is not or should not be of any concern to us.' It has already been established that the world of concern to us is the whole world, the totality of things as will to power; that world does not include the essences or ideas of things."

Again we must ask: How has it been established that the essences do not exist? Above all we must ask this inasmuch as *the essences are thought to reside in the eternal knowledge of God* (whether as the Biblical God or as Divine Mind)? Ultimately, the shift in Nietzsche's thought from the traditional inquiry into essences to the new inquiry into natural history (the genealogical method) can only be understood in light of Nietzsche's denial of both Plato's and the Bible's God in favor of the god *Dionysus*. But on these matters Lampert does not provide guidance. To the extent, then, that Lampert's thesis contains some truth (namely, that for Nietzsche philosophy must rule religion as the ultimate ground of human thought and action), one might conceive of this dissertation

as respectfully supplementing (i.e., supplying or providing for a deficiency in) Lampert's work. Yet before moving on to discuss the rest of the relevant scholarly literature, it would perhaps be good to discuss another of Lampert's works, *Nietzsche's Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil*, since it is there that he discusses part three of *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The religious essence* (or, *The religious being*). So let us see whether Lampert's analysis there is essentially different from that discussed above, or whether it too is in need of supplementation.

To begin with the beginning, in the very opening paragraph of the works introduction, titled, *Nietzsche's Task*, Lampert encapsulates his entire thesis or posture concerning philosophy's relationship to religion (page 1):

What was Nietzsche's task? It was the task of *philosophy*: gaining a comprehensive perspective on the world and the human disposition toward the world, a perspective that could claim to be true. The older language can still be used if it is rebaptized with Nietzschean meanings: philosophy as the love of wisdom aims to overcome irrational interpretations with rational ones, interpretations guided by the mind, by spirited intellect Nietzscheanly conceived. As a direct consequence of achieving that comprehensive perspective – for his two chief books, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, show that he achieved it – an additional task fell to Nietzsche, the task of *political philosophy*: making a place for that perspective in the lived world of human culture or doing justice to all things in the human disposition toward them. But given the sway of the irrational, making a place for the more rational in the midst of the irrational requires strategic finesse; it is a task for an artful writer who knows his audience and knows how to appeal to them.

As we shall soon see, when Lampert says “love of wisdom” with respect to Nietzsche he means to indicate the role of the “heart” in the aspect of “love,” and the role of reason or the “mind” in the aspect of “wisdom.” In short, he intends to indicate the heart's thrust as piloted or given direction by the dictates of the mind. Yet for Nietzsche this dichotomy is ultimately superficial: the mind is nothing autonomous but driven by the desires and affects, and the heart is not “mindless” but itself something perceptive, something which “reasons.” In short, both “heart” and “mind” are will to power (and even “will to power,” inasmuch as it attempts to name the unnamable, ultimately requires quotation marks).

Yet a more careful reading of Lampert's opening paragraph might seem to refute my analysis above, since he seems to indicate this very thing through the phrase "spirited intellect". But already a problem is exposed: this is *not* Nietzsche's vocabulary, Nietzsche's vocabulary is *will to power*; this would seem to be a more Platonic vocabulary²⁵. But ignoring this, as we shall see, inasmuch as Lampert's analysis – like those of so many who take Nietzsche's claim to be the first great anti-metaphysician to mean that his doctrines of the will to power and eternal return must not be understood as metaphysical doctrines (i.e., doctrines that deal with Being as Being and beings as beings) – lacks a metaphysical interpretation of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power²⁶, his analysis is continually plagued by the confines of the "old language" (p.1) that conceives of a desirous and emotional "heart" and an autonomously logical "mind." Indeed, we need look no further than page two in order to see the breakdown of the unity implied by "spirited intellect" and the reversion to the old dichotomy, since he there makes clear that on his interpretation philosophy establishes the will to power as a "perspective" while the heart establishes the eternal return as a "disposition," and that the summation of the Nietzschean posture is the heart's assent to, and willingness to be guided by, the dictates of the mind. For he there says (page 2):

²⁵ Inasmuch as Nietzsche uses the word "geist" – literally, "spirit" – to refer to what is commonly translated as mind or intellect (and Strauss everywhere translates the *geist* as "mind" whenever quoting or discussing Nietzsche), "spirited intellect" surely does not mean "mindful mind" or "spirited spirit" but rather, given the fact that as an adjective, "spirited" is being used to describe the subject that is "intellect" (even *if* it is describing its essence so as to attempt to articulate the dual nature of a singular essence), and given Lampert's continual insistence of an intimacy between Plato's and Nietzsche's thought, it almost surely means "thumotic intellect," and in such a way as to take Plato's *thumos* to be equivalent to Nietzsche's "heart".

²⁶ Contrary to Heidegger, who understood Nietzsche as denying and inverting all metaphysics since Plato yet in a way that remained, *fundamentally*, (i.e., in its taking of *subjectness* for the ground of the analysis by which to understand beings in their being) within the horizon of that metaphysical thinking itself.

For Nietzsche's view is both ontological and axiological; comprehending fact and value²⁷, it includes a perspective on the way of all beings – to be is to be will to power – and a disposition toward that way – an unbounded Yes and Amen to everything that was and is. . . . Both books [*Beyond Good and Evil* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*] aim to show that philosophy is possible and desirable, that there are plausible grounds for the mind's assent to a particular interpretation of the whole of things and plausible grounds for the heart's embrace of that interpretation as a teaching to live by.

Looking again to the opening paragraph quoted above (and bearing in mind the ultimate inconsistency and unworkable character of Lampert's use of the phrase "spirited intellect") and following Lampert's clues we can quickly infer that on his understanding the fundamental division of philosophy is that between theoretical and practical philosophy, that theoretical philosophy is equivalent to reason or philosophy simply and that practical philosophy is equivalent to political philosophy, which is further equated with the creation of "a world in its [philosophy's] own image" (p. 100), which is equated with the *legislation of religion* or the giving of noble lies that "simplify and falsify" rational truths (page 123; cf. page 130). It is because of the centrality of this distinction that Lampert opens this opening chapter with a section titled, *Philosophy*, followed, secondly, with a section titled, *Political Philosophy* (and here, the ordering intimates a relation of supremacy): philosophy looks to the will to power as the ultimate explanatory principle by which to understand all things, political philosophy looks to the eternal return as the ideal comportment by which to aim-at-by-approximation through "public" or conventional truths that artfully simplify and falsify the truth of the will to power (cf. p.131, top, of *Nietzsche's Task*).

²⁷ The reference to "ontological and axiological," if I am correct in taking them as synonyms for "fact and value," is perplexing to me, since Lampert provides no elucidation as to the possible meaning of ontology upon the destruction and dismissal of metaphysics, and since "axiological" seems a strange and inappropriate word by which to designate the loving Yes-saying of the heart that he goes on to elaborate.— But, as concerns the use of "axiological," Lampert is almost surely referring to the "logic of love" he later mentions on page 121, or the "logic of mind and heart" on p. 90 (itself probably a twist on the "erotic necessity" he mentions in contrast to "physical or cosmic" necessity on p.119), in which case, again, "logic" still seems to me a very perplexing and inappropriate word to choose.

To see this very quickly and clearly we can look firstly to a quote provided in the section titled, *The Heart and Mind of Nietzschean Philosophy*. In discussing aphorism 37 of *Beyond Good and Evil* (see pages 30-32 above), Lampert states (p.90):

The dialogue intimates a key facet of Nietzsche's thought: the mind's teaching on the totality of things reasonably generates a response of the heart, a religious response. . . . The chapters on philosophy [One and Two] must therefore be followed by the chapter on religion [Three], for the two themes are connected by the deepest logic of mind and heart.

In my analysis, which stays as faithful as possible to the words of aphorisms 36 and 37, *the will to power* is shown, as will to power, not to generate but itself to *be* a "religious" response; in Lampert's, the will to power elaborated in aphorism 36 "generates" a vindication of God on behalf of the heart in light of something that is related but essentially other than the will to power doctrine, namely, the affirmation of eternal return on behalf of the heart.

The whole matter of the relation of philosophy to religion is pursued again and stated with even more clarity on pages 121-122, in a section titled, *The Religion of the Future*²⁸. There Lampert discusses aphorisms 55-57, having stated (correctly, inasmuch as aphorism 56 has the most elucidating commentary on the teaching of eternal return in all of the book, and hence the forthcoming "therefore") on an earlier occasion (p. 115) that: "In sections 55-57, therefore, the essential argument on philosophy and religion reaches its most important conclusion." There he says (p.121):

It can already be said that eternal return belongs in the chapter on religion and not in the previous chapters [One and Two, which were on philosophy] because it is not itself philosophy, it falls outside of what can be known.

And again (p.121):

Eternal return stands to will to power as religion stands to philosophy; the highest value arises out of the fundamental fact by a logic of love.

²⁸ Which occurs in the chapter titled, *Das Religiöse Wesen*, (itself named after part three of Nietzsche's work on which he is commenting), the chapter that deals most specifically with our concerns.

And again (p.121):

Eternal return is the ideal at the core of the new, earth affirming religion.

And again (p.122):

Eternal return is a desire of the heart consistent with the dictates of the mind.

In sum, for Lampert the teaching of the eternal ideal is ultimately not a metaphysical teaching but rather, “the highest ideal for a world-affirming human being” (p. 118), a religious ideal—a desire of the heart that is outside of the realm of the knowable accessible to the mind alone, though driven to love Truth by the heart..

Having brought up the topic of aphorism thirty-seven of *Beyond Good and Evil*, this would be a convenient place to quote and discuss Lampert’s reading of that aphorism, for that reading betrays four deficiencies that are pervasive in his interpretive work on Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil*. First, Lampert forces an interpretation on Nietzsche’s text that is not only unwarranted but which directly ignores any exploration of the explicit or “exoteric” meaning, treating the surface as only the ‘starting point’ or a “promising beginning” from which to leap to a textually unsupported theses. Second, Lampert’s failure to think Nietzsche metaphysically causes him not to take the vindication of God seriously, which is to say, not to take seriously the absolute and for Nietzsche palpable equivalence of human being and all beings in their being to Being as God, Dionysus, or the transmoral ultimate principle of will to power/eternal return. Third, Lampert’s analysis attributes to Nietzsche thoughts that reflect moral notions and categories inapplicable to Nietzsche’s understanding, notions and categories Nietzsche exploded through psychological-historical investigations. Fourth, Lampert’s analysis takes Nietzsche’s premise of the Biblical God’s nonexistence to be a manifest fact (“manifest” for the rational, at least) and thus merely one premise within the constellation

of premises that form the logical structure of Nietzsche's philosophy; thus at no point does Lampert force Nietzsche to defend himself from the charge of thoughtless and axiological atheism posing as philosophic openness to the truth of Being.

With the preceding points in mind, it suffices to say in anticipation of the forthcoming quotation that if the contrary to "X (God) is refuted, Y (the devil) is vindicated" is "X is vindicated, Y is refuted," as Lampert himself states, this cannot become equivalent to "X is Y, Y is X" without failing to take the refutation of the Biblical God seriously in its implications for morality and the meaning of morality, since the refutation of that God through psychological-historical self-investigation explodes the categories of good and evil that Lampert employs in the analysis that simply "swaps" X with Y without fully or truly appreciating the *transmoral* quality of Nietzsche's affirmation of God (or Being) as Dionysus (in sum, the contrary of Dionysus is *not* the devil *or* the Biblical God). In aphorism thirty-seven, let us recall, Nietzsche says:

"What? Doesn't this mean, to speak popularly: God is refuted, but the devil is not?"
On the contrary! On the contrary, my friends! And, to the devil – who forces you to speak popularly?

In response to this Lampert writes says (p. 89):

To think the contrary of what they have stated is a promising beginning, for the exact contrary is that the Devil is refuted but God is not. Pondering the exact contrary will give enlightened, free-minded atheists the savory pleasure of entertaining the ultimate blasphemy to our tradition of divinity. The will to power teaching, a complete immanentism, refutes a transcendent, immutable God, but is that God God? On the contrary, that God must be seen as the Devil, an all-powerful tyrant who put the earth under a curse and assigned it to the Prince of Darkness. The will to power teaching does not refute what the old divinity called the Devil's: the world, the worldly, the love of the world with its incessant change and inexorable mortality, but is the Devil the Devil? On the contrary, what was once seen as the Devil's is vindicated as divine. This crime against our divinity goes far beyond the merely historical judgment that God is dead; it speaks the ultimate ill of the dead so it can't be tastefully spoken though it can be usefully implied. The crime against our divinity reverses the earlier crime against our world.

On pages 31-32 of this dissertation, however, I interpret that passage as follows, making clear the difference between my interpretation and Lampert's:

The impetus for the aphorism's question (which comes from the free-spirits) is clearly the fact that the doctrine of the will to power seems to them to be an *evil doctrine*: they say *in effect*, "Goodness, morality or truth as an essential principle in beings is *refuted* by the will to power, but evil, immorality or deception as an essential principle in beings – and now the only principle – is *vindicated* by the will to power". But let us analyze Nietzsche's response to these "friends". Nietzsche asks: "And, to the devil – who forces you to speak popularly?" This does not mean that the reference to the devil displays a merely popular (i.e., vulgar, blunt, unexact and unselective) mode of thinking. Rather, the reference to the entire dichotomy of "God and Devil" is here held to reflect vulgarity of thinking, for the Christian "apprehends in 'God' the ultimate antithesis of his own ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt before God" and "stretches himself upon the contradiction 'God' and 'Devil'"²⁹. With this in mind it is clear that by "On the contrary!" Nietzsche means to say: "God is not refuted but rather, *vindicated* as the creative will of life that is the essence of the world, and the devil is refuted in his vulgar understanding as "evil" or "sinful" but vindicated as the 'wickedness' or 'devilry' of nature, that is, as God's perpetual power-seeking, immorality and will to destruction. This is as much as to say that the doctrine of the will to power refutes the moral God, the conventionally understood God of the Biblical tradition while affirming Dionysus. But with what right can Nietzsche deny Providence and "baptize" the essence of the world as the God Dionysus when the world has *already* been proclaimed or revealed to be the created possession of the Biblical God? In short, the validity of the doctrine of the will to power as a refutation of the Biblical God and a vindication of a non-Biblical God must be mercilessly questioned so as to ascertain whether Nietzsche has dismissed the revelation of the Biblical God illegitimately and, moreover, has perhaps placed a false idol in His place.

I proceed in the rest of the work to provide the textual proof for this reading of aphorism 37, which cannot be understood apart from aphorism 36 on the will to power (with respect to which it must be borne in mind that on Nietzsche's analysis the will to power is the ultimate cause of the moral opinions that produce experiences mistaken by believers to be revelatory proofs for the moral God's existence, a fact exposed by psychological-historical self-examination), thus excluding myself, I believe, from the accusation that I too leap from the text of aphorism 37 to my own textually unwarranted conclusion.

There is another very telling instance of Lampert's reading *past* a text's primary meaning so as interpret its hidden or secret meaning, and it concerns a comment he makes as to Nietzsche's choice of the title, *Das Religiöse Wesen*, for his discussion of religion. In footnote #2, on page 102, Lampert writes:

Wesen is a useful term for an anti-Platonic philosopher: its primary meaning, essence or nature, makes it serviceable for Platonism's search for form or essence, but it also means an individual

²⁹ *Genealogy of Morals*, 2nd Essay, section 22.

being or creature or person; the very title therefore suggests that the religious essence is to be found in the religious being.

On the basis of this reading Lampert goes on to completely deny and ignore an interpretation that would look to the primary meaning of the word, deeming it a merely Platonic and thus antiquarian and erroneous concern. To be sure, the title does suggest that the religious essence is to be found in the religious being, but what it suggests primarily and more radically or *fundamentally* is that the essence of man is religious. My analysis in this dissertation is to the effect that this is so, and that the religious essence of man is equivalent to the essence of man as will to power, which is the essence of the world perpetually giving birth to its own eternity, and thus not to be conceptually or psychologically severed from its fundamental and simultaneous character of being eternal return (in short, the fundamental pathos of Being or existence, which pathos is a unity in itself, can only be conceived as “both” will to power and eternal return on my analysis). Reading the title this way, one would anticipate that the end of part three would make clear what the rest of part three, which consists mostly of a steady bashing of religion and the psychological health of religious Christians, did not, namely, the fact that when all is said and done not only is conventional religion something sometimes harmful, sometimes beneficial, but always, in one form or another, indispensable, but above all the fact that the very essence of man, as will to power/eternal return is itself *religious*. And to be sure, Nietzsche ends the entirety of his analysis of the religious essence in part three by making clear his radical position on the religious or Dionysian essence of man. The matter is made clear above all by his reference to the “Divine hammer” by which to artistically shape the destiny of mankind, the hammer yielded by the Dionysian philosopher who destroys idols or ideals for the purpose of erecting or creating ones newer and more life-

inspiring (itself clear from the subtitle of *Twilight of the Idols*, which is *Or, On How to Philosophize with a Hammer*). To turn to the last aphorism of *Das Religiöse Wesen*, Nietzsche says in aphorism sixty-two (and one should not miss the fact that Christianity, though considered by Nietzsche to be an *indeliberately* enacted miscarriage, is also considered *sublime*):

Suppose we could contemplate the oddly painful and equally crude and subtle comedy of European Christianity with the mocking and aloof eyes of an Epicurean god, I think our amazement and laughter would never end: doesn't it seem that a single will dominated Europe for eighteen centuries—to turn man into a *sublime miscarriage*? Anyone, however, who approached this almost deliberate degeneration and atrophy of man represented by the Christian European (Pascal, for example), feeling the opposite kind of desire, not in an Epicurean spirit but rather with some divine hammer in his hand, would surely have to cry out in wrath, in pity, in horror: "O you dolts, you presumptuous, pitying dolts, what have you done! Was that work for your hands? How have you bungled and botched my beautiful stone! What presumption!"

But someone might question the applicability of an essence, let alone a religious essence, to man, and above all Lampert himself, since he deems the search for a human essence to be a relic of Platonism that Nietzsche, the "anti-Platonic philosopher," (footnote #2, on p. 102, quoted on page 92 of this work), dismisses as something that ought to be of no concern to all modern philosophers and free spirits (see page 85 of this work). Lampert himself does not and cannot deny Nietzsche's explicit statements to the effect that the will to power is the essence of the world or all that lives (see for example, aphorism 259 of *Beyond Good and Evil*); he denies, however, that Nietzsche is concerned with any permanent human essence along Platonic lines. On its own this denial is fine, yet, again, Lampert's severance of the will to power's unity as a teaching to the teaching of eternal recurrence makes it impossible for him to elucidate the full implications of Nietzsche's argument that the essence, being, or *Wesen* of man is religious, and religious *because* it is eternal return/will to power. Lampert claims that in the whole of *Beyond Good and Evil* (p.115):

Only in the chapter on religion and only once and without naming it does *Beyond Good and Evil* touch the teaching with which Nietzsche wished to be identified: "I, the teacher of the eternal return" (TI Ancients 5).

This is doubtful, and the aphorism that most clearly establishes this also establishes my point concerning the religious essence of man as eternal return/will to power. That aphorism is aphorism 230, where Nietzsche again touches on the teaching without naming it, and again in the most telling – because entirely explicit – way. There, Nietzsche describes his task as follows:

To translate man back into nature; to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*.

The reference to eternal human nature is not a reversion to Platonism but an indication of the essence of man as eternal return/will to power (or, Dionysian; or, the eternal will's eternal willing of its own eternity).

There are two more of Lampert's interpretations I wish to discuss. The first is his interpretation of aphorism fifty-five of *Beyond Good and Evil*, the other his interpretation of aphorism fifty-six (already touched on above). Let us begin with that concerning aphorism fifty-five, where Nietzsche discusses the "great ladder of religious cruelty," through its historical stages and up to the current age of nihilism or "God's death." The relevant portion of that aphorism reads:

Finally—what remained to be sacrificed? At long last, did one not have to sacrifice for once whatever is comforting, holy, healing; all hope, all faith in hidden harmony, in future blisses and justices? Didn't one have to sacrifice God himself and, from cruelty against oneself, worship the stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, the nothing? To sacrifice God for the nothing—this paradoxical mystery of the final cruelty was reserved for the generation that is now coming up: all of us already know something of this.—

On this passage Lampert comments (p.115):

This final sacrifice is a "paradoxical mystery" because it sacrifices the very things for the sake of which humanity's other sacrifices were made. It seems the last possible sacrifice, the sacrifice of everything worth sacrificing for, nihilistic sacrifice."

But this is *not* the correct explanation of the paradox: the paradox lies in the fact that all past moral-theological ideals are being destroyed without recognizing it by a single moral-theological ideal that now draws forth the cruelty of self-sacrifice, namely, that of Science, Knowledge, or Truth (discussed in this dissertation in the section titled, *The Meaning of God's "Corpse"*). In this sense one could say that the Biblical God "commits suicide." Be that as it may, Lampert's use of "reason" and his conviction that for Nietzsche reason can come to the logical truth of the teaching of the will to power (which goes on to "generate" the response of the heart that is eternal return) would seem to indicate his own moral-theological attachment to the ideal of Science, Knowledge, or Truth. But be that, too, as it may, we can say in general that paradoxes as paradoxes only appear to be contradictions, thereby concealing the inner unity of the phenomenon they refer to. In this case, the solution to the paradox is the will to power. For the will to power fueled in the past the moral-theological beliefs that are presently being destroyed by the ideal of Truth as much as it is fueling that ideal of Truth itself. In this sense one could say that Dionysus brings masks of himself into existence and then kills them.

To move on, we begin by quoting the relevant passage in Nietzsche, aphorism fifty-six of *Beyond Good and Evil*, which is as follows:

Whoever has endeavored with some enigmatic longing, as I have, to think pessimism through to its depths and to liberate it from the half-Christian, half-German narrowness and simplicity in which it has finally presented itself to our century, namely, in the form of Schopenhauer's philosophy; whoever has really, with an Asiatic and supra-Asiatic eye, looked into, down into the most world-denying of all possible ways of thinking – beyond good and evil and no longer, like the Buddha and Schopenhauer, under the spell and delusion of morality – may just thereby, without really meaning to do so, have opened his eyes to the opposite ideal: the ideal of the most high spirited, alive, and world-affirming human being who has not only come to terms and learned to get along with whatever was and is, but who wants to have what *was* and *is* repeated into all eternity, shouting insatiably *da capo* – not only to himself but to the whole play and spectacle, and not only to a spectacle but at bottom [*im Grunde*] to him who needs precisely this spectacle – and who makes it necessary because again and again he needs himself -- and makes himself necessary --- What? And this wouldn't be – *circulus vitiosus deus*?

On this Lampert comments (p.118-119; and the entirety of the analysis there should be contrasted with my own in the section titled *Overcoming Nihilism: The Joyous Knowledge*, and above all page 275): “The affirmation is ultimately of the most affirmable thing in the whole affirmable spectacle, the human spectator of the spectacle.” This is almost correct but ultimately wrong: “ultimately,” fundamentally, [*im Grunde*], the affirmation named refers to the self-affirmation of Being or God as Eternal Dionysus; secondarily, inasmuch as “the viewer is a self-conscious fragment” of “the whole” that is ‘the world,’ it names the self-affirmation of man (p.119). Being is the ground of man and not vice versa, but because Lampert’s analysis cannot bring itself to the conclusion that eternal return is intended by Nietzsche to state the *fact* of Being, his analysis on p.119, which looks only to man’s affirmation of eternity while denying any intention on Nietzsche’s part to be speaking of what is more primordial or ontologically prior, must force a very misleading and insufficient interpretation upon the text. We can note further Lampert’s telling claim that in *The Religiöse Wesen*, Nietzsche shows in aphorisms 47 through 52 that “[w]hat is basic to Christianity contrasts radically with what was basic to its now almost inaccessible Greek predecessor, Homeric religion”, and that “Christianity also contrasts radically with its Hebrew predecessor” (p.101). But this is imprecise: understood *radically*, what is basic to Homeric religion, Judaism, and Christianity is the *will to power* that drives them: the distinction is between stronger and weaker forms of the will to power, and it is just this that part three on religion (*The religious essence*) attempts to teach.

Let us conclude our analysis of Lampert’s treatment of Nietzsche’s ambiguous atheism in his work, *Nietzsche’s Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil*, by

looking to his analysis of two more aphorisms, aphorisms forty-six and forty-seven³⁰.

Aphorism forty-six is about the self-cruelty or sacrifice involved in Christianity, and Lampert, taking Nietzsche's cue from the previous aphorism (45), sensibly points to Pascal as the exemplar of the quintessentially Christian sacrifice: the sacrifice of reason to faith. Yet he leaves the matter at the following observation (p.103): "Pascal is important in part because he signals individually what was characteristic of early Christianity generally: the suicide of reason in the name of faith where reason is still powerful." Lampert goes on to provide a footnote before leaving Pascal in which he lists twelve other places in Nietzsche's writings that discuss Pascal, ten of which are from *Daybreak*. But this brief reference rather depreciates the fact that Pascal's experience and the meaning and importance of that experience for Nietzsche lies, as I show, above all in the aspect of Pascal's conscience as providing the revelatory knowledge of good and evil without which his entire faith will collapse (the topic of aphorism 91, discussed in the section of this dissertation titled *The Plan of the Work*, in which I discuss the section of the work titled *The Refutation of the Biblical God Through Self-Knowledge*, and then again, at great length, in that section itself).

Lampert goes on in his discussion of aphorism forty-six to discuss the conscience, even making reference to aphorism 335 of *The Joyous Science* (which I claim provides perhaps the best summary in all of Nietzsche's writings of his 'refutation' of the Biblical God, and which I spend, in a manner, my entire dissertation elaborating upon; see p. 34-36 of this dissertation). Lampert writes (p.104):

³⁰ What I have said previously concerning the religious essence of man is in fact a commentary on Lampert's analysis of the very important aphorism 45, and the footnote in Lampert from which my discussion took its cue is from that section in which he interprets aphorism 45 in light of the word "*Wesen*", equating the search for truth concerning "the human soul and its limits" to the study of the individual human being who is religious, as opposed to the religious essence of man as man as I argue to be the case.

The cruelty of Christian faith is exercised by “an overripened, multiple, and multiply spoiled conscience.” This conscience, inner commandments working on behalf of faith to kill reason, is spoiled or pampered because it is a conscience without conscience, an unconscionable conscience: Nietzsche said, “Hooray for physics!” because physics or rationally inquiry into nature places a conscience over conscience (GS 335), replacing a pampered conscience with one “hardened in the discipline of science” (230). Conscience ruled by reason is also cruel, demanding its own sacrifices as Nietzsche emphasizes in his basic lesson on *Geist* (229-230), and when the time comes for Nietzsche to define the transvaluation of values he makes part of its task the steeling of a new conscience (203).

But this remark requires a further account of how the dictates of conscience are thought to be proven true by the criterion of *proof by power*, which in turn requires the long path of *psychological-historical investigations* by which the grounds of the moral conscience are slowly undermined and eventually collapsed, the chief ground being the arrogant pretence or “immorally” held claim to moral knowledge.

As for the moral miracle and breakthrough of grace, which is another of the major Christian phenomenon that any serious investigation would have to discuss (as well as the lives of saints and the extraordinary revelatory experiences of prophets, neither of which are discussed in any detail by Lampert), Nietzsche discusses the matter in aphorism 47. Lampert’s discussion of that aphorism is as follows:

Section 47 How can one interpret the phenomenon of religious conversion? Nietzsche insists that great caution is necessary in interpreting the “religious neurosis,”³¹ the “miracle” of transformation from sinner to saint. He almost orders the interpreter “to look away, to go away” from this questionable phenomenon, which even the philosophers have counted the more interesting. Nietzsche himself has not gone away from the problem, for the final sentences suggest how an interpretation can be ventured if the transformation is viewed with a sufficiently artful philology of the soul, a proper physioshyology.

If one asks not about the cause of the neurosis but about what causes it to be so interesting even to philosophers, an answer can be given “without any doubt at all.” The saint fascinates because of an inexplicable “appearance of miracle” about him, “namely, the *immediate succession of opposites*” he seems to embody; conversion in an instant from “bad man” to “good man” seems to bespeak the presence of something supernatural. “The previous psychology suffered at this point,” but the problem is soluble by a psychology free of “the faith in opposite values” (2) that kept previous psychology from the depths (23). If explanation is freed from moral categories, the appearance of miraculous transformation of something into its opposite disappears: the opposites inhere not in the thing but in the interpreter’s categories. The saint is a natural phenomenon if an extreme one; the individual miracles of Christianity no more need a

³¹ Here, Lampert’s text has the following footnote: “Nietzsche’s suggestion that *die religiöse Neurose* and *das religiöse Wesen* are synonymous, that religion simply is neurosis, is belied soon enough with the appearance of the religion of a noble kind of human (49).”

supernatural explanation than does the historical miracle of its victory over Rome. “—What? ‘Miracle’ only a mistake of interpretation? A lack of philology? —” Philology, the art of interpretation, is as necessary for reading the text of “the human soul and its limits” (45) as for reading the text of nature (22).

My analysis of the “breakthrough of grace” or “moral miracle” (as Nietzsche refers to it in aphorism 87 of *Daybreak*, which aphorism has its ‘parallel’ here in aphorism 47 of *Beyond Good and Evil*)³² differs very much from Lampert’s. About this Lampert says: “If one asks not about the cause of the neurosis but about what causes it to be so interesting even to philosophers, an answer can be given ‘without any doubt at all.’” But I suggest that what *is* doubtful is what Nietzsche refers to in aphorism 47 as a *justified doubt* concerning not only the direction of cause and effect involved in the relationship between ascetic religious practices and ecstatic religious inspiration but even the presupposition of any causal relationship at all between the two—what Nietzsche deems so doubtful and potentially dangerous a question that he almost orders his readers to flee from, is the essential question itself: is the claim of divine revelation true? Do moral miracles – or even miracles simply, if they can even be severed from morality – exist at all? As we saw, Lampert goes on to say that the problem is soluble and thus our doubts are put to rest through the employment of a “psychology free of ‘the faith in opposite values’ (2)”. But just how is “explanation” to be “freed from moral categories” such that the opinion or “appearance of miraculous transformation of something into its opposite disappears”? By which magician’s trick do the chains that bind us to moral categories and the interpretations of the miraculous simply “disappear” so that we may throw away our God, our history, our hopes, and our moral intuitions (such that it is wrong to kill innocents or to commit incest)? I argue that there is no magician’s trick in

³² Just as aphorism 53 of *Beyond Good and Evil* surely has aphorism 91 of *Daybreak* in mind (as I argue in the sections *The Refutation of the Biblical God through Self-Knowledge* and *The Biblical God and Dionysus*; as we have already seen, Leo Strauss draws this connection).

Nietzsche's thinking but rather the long, hard road of vivisection and inquiry involved in the psychological-historical investigation into the origins of our moral prejudices, a road so hard, dangerous, and terribly weighty in its implications that Nietzsche all but commands his readers to flee its approach.

In the end, it is Lampert's omission of the necessary connection between Nietzsche's radical and sweeping claims in *Beyond Good and Evil*, (to the effect that the doctrine of the will to power is a refutation of the Biblical God), to the psychological-historical examinations of Nietzsche's earlier writings (which show such revelatory experiences as the Christian's to be psychologically-causally dependent upon the "immorally" held prejudice of moral knowledge) that causes Lampert to treat the matter as something "rationally" self-evident to both himself and Nietzsche. We earlier quoted Lampert from his *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche* saying that the enlightenment's response to Christianity (namely, to undermine its claim to truth and eventually expel it from history) was a "perfectly reasonable response". A parallel claim is made in *Nietzsche's Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil*, page 100, where Lampert speaks of the "atheism and nihilism that arise naturally out of the reasonable fight against Christianity". Moreover, Lampert there confirms my earlier analysis of what I claim to be his fundamental thesis concerning Nietzsche: "The eighteen sections of chapter 3 develop an underlying argument: philosophy must rule religion, reason rule belief." The matter is stated all the more forcefully on page 136, which brings Lampert's discussion of the first three chapters to a close:

The argument of the first three chapters of *Beyond Good and Evil* is Nietzsche's fundamental argument, the argument that moves from philosophy to political philosophy and that is displayed mythically in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: the rational must rule the irrational, the natural the unnatural.

This belief that for Nietzsche *reason and rational analysis* are sufficient to refute the claims of faith is doubtful in light of an examination or articulation as to the true nature of “reason” on Nietzsche’s understanding and likewise what a “rational” examination of faith can look like (I deal most thematically with this question in the sections titled *The Problem of Method* in chapter one, and *Nietzsche’s Confrontation with the Problem of Method* in chapter three). Short of this, the claim that reason is an autonomous activity of the mind in terms of the working of its logic (I say “in terms of the working of its logic” because Lampert interprets mind as guided by the heart in its *love of its object*, which is truth; in a sense, the heart is treated by Lampert as the fuel and the mind the engine), and that reason suffices to reasonably refute the truth-claims of Christianity (or any conventional faith), is undermined by something Nietzsche says in the *Epilogue to The Case of Wagner* (another statement which I would claim my dissertation to be, in a manner, one long elucidation of). Contrasting master morality with the morality of Christian value concepts, Nietzsche says:

These opposite forms in the optics of value are *both* necessary: they are ways of seeing, immune to reasons and refutations. One cannot refute Christianity; one cannot refute a disease of the eye. That pessimism was fought like a philosophy was the height of scholarly idiocy. The concepts “true” and “untrue” have, as it seems to me, no meaning in optics. –

In conclusion, it is not by any logical or rational method that Nietzsche deems Christianity (or pessimism in general, of which Christianity is one form, albeit an extreme one) to be refutable, but rather by the psychological-historical examinations which reveal the confusions and contradictions contained in the myriad opposing and complementary arguments or rather unexamined prejudices of our unphilosophic “heads” and “hearts.” Working through the depths of one’s own soul (ultimately understood as

will to power, which is to say the single and unified effective force of what we initially and falsely refer to by the duality of the mind-heart complex) is according to Nietzsche the manner in which to fight and refute Christianity, and the dissertation that follows intends to demonstrate just this. With these comments, then, let us move on to a discussion of the rest of the relevant scholarly literature.

You ought to know that there is no presumption, erroneous or apposite,
without there being a reason leading to and provoking it.

(Alfarabi)

We move on to a work by someone else deeply influenced by Heidegger, Eugen Fink's *Nietzsche's Philosophy* (translated by Goetz Richter, 2003). It is worth noting at the outset that despite the fact that I shall argue Fink's failure to see Nietzsche's serious treatment of religion and morality, Fink's *Nietzsche's Philosophy* is by any fair-minded account abundant in seriousness and profundity. Because I shall focus on the one part of Fink's treatment that is directly related to our theme, and moreover, because I shall use Fink as a kind of anticipatory back-drop by which to deal with many of the spurious claims found throughout the literature (as we shall see), I fear leaving the reader with an unjust appraisal of Fink's excellent work.

In his opening paragraph, Fink claims that "Nietzsche stands for a radical critique of religion, philosophy, science and morality" (p.1; I shall not discuss the treatment of philosophy and science, in keeping with my aforesaid intentions). Nowhere in Fink's work, however, do we find anything approaching persuasive argumentation for the legitimacy of this critique of morality and religion, notwithstanding its radical character.

On the contrary, so far is the critique from being persuasive that Fink himself not only declines to provide a thematic treatment of the matter (focusing rather on the radical critique of philosophy and science), but later confesses in passing his belief that Nietzsche's refutations of religion and morality are "a truly sophistic and an unphilosophical aspect of his works" (p.37).

According to Fink, Nietzsche's treatment is sophistical and reductionistic, and includes elements of biology, history, psychology and anthropology. One can surely appreciate Fink's point on this matter. To be sure, Nietzsche avails himself of arguments of every kind and is more than happy to let a lazy reader rest on a lazy solution (though Fink himself is surely far from a criticism of this sort). Indeed, who would debate the presence of the most seemingly asinine and venomous arguments against morality and religion in Nietzsche? In Volume I of *Human all too Human*, for example, Nietzsche gives one to believe that we only need look to modern comparative ethnology and its understanding of the origins and history of the belief in God so as to be rid of the belief. Moreover, the argument of *Daybreak* appears to be the very same: an understanding of how the belief in God arose and became so important over the course of human history is sufficient, it seems, to definitively refute the existence of the revealed God. Indeed, Nietzsche's view of theological matters often appears frighteningly reductionistic in a manner that does him no honor as an investigator and psychologist: religion is declared a neurosis, revelation is declared the product of epilepsy (or, an over-excitability and irritability of the organism generally), and religious visions and experiences are declared hallucinations and often the product of madness. The apparent crudeness of this treatment can be summed up, perhaps, by Nietzsche's treatment of Socrates' famous

daimonia, namely, as a possible ear infection which Socrates, “in accordance with the moralizing manner of thinking that dominated him”, interpreted as a divine sign, as *revelatory* (*Human all too Human*, *The Religious Life*, aphorism 126). Nietzsche would have us believe, then, that the higher states of the moral-religious soul are, rightly seen, sickly or deteriorated states of the body; one is left wondering where philosophizing has gone in all this reductionism.

In the face of all this, however, I contend that no one is more aware than Nietzsche himself as to the status of his often playful (not to say malicious) arguments. Indeed no understanding of Nietzsche’s highly nuanced thinking is possible if one does not temper the one-sided, seemingly venomous and superficial arguments Nietzsche provides on a topic with the profound, grateful, and reverential ones provided on the same theme (and often these opposed qualities are in the very same aphorism and even in the very same words, depending on the height of the reader, as with the aphorism above; to say nothing of still other aspects of Nietzsche’s arguments, such as the ‘cool-headed,’ dialectical arguments that, according to Nietzsche, especially characterize *Daybreak*; cf. *Ecce Homo*, *Why I Am So Wise*, section 1). Not only is Nietzsche a *great ironist*, his judgments are *nuanced* precisely in their insistence that one not succumb to a *singular* and *unconditional* perspective on the whole that is any given phenomenon. We mention this now due to the fact that, as we shall see, again and again in the literature Nietzsche’s less compelling reasonings against morality and religion are taken to be his most serious reasonings. Nietzsche’s truly *decisive* arguments have been almost entirely unrecognized.

That said, and unfortunately like the analysis of so many others, Fink's analysis in *Nietzsche's Philosophy* succumbs to his own failure to appreciate Nietzsche's most serious arguments. According to Fink's exceedingly brief treatment of the matter, Nietzsche provides a psychological-historical analysis of religion and morality, "a genealogy of the ideal derived from its opposite, namely the derivation of right from common utility, of truth from a deceptive, illusionary instinct and of holiness from the very unholy basis of vengeful drives and instincts" (p.37). Again, because the accusation of 'reductionism' will be a common one, it is well to take it up in outline immediately.

Recall the earlier statement by Fink to the effect that Nietzsche's refutations of religion and morality are "a truly sophistic and an unphilosophical aspect of his works" (p.37). This means: in his refutations of religion and morality Nietzsche does not seek truth but merely gives the appearance of seeking truth. He does this by asserting that high ideals derive from low origins. "High" and "low" are here spoken of from the perspective of the moral-religious; Nietzsche denies their standard entirely, holding rather that the traditionally despised things, such as selfishness and lies, for example, are of higher value than their traditionally revered "opposites." That said, what makes the derivation of the high from the low sophistic and unphilosophic is its *willfulness*: it does not attempt to demonstrate or honestly investigate but merely asserts while accepting nothing as true except what can be assimilated into the prejudicial conclusion established from the outset. We must hear all this, then, when we speak of Fink's essential accusation as "reductionism," for this word carries with it the negative connotation of willfulness characterized above, and it is just this willfulness that Fink has in mind when he speaks of the element of sophistry in Nietzsche's refutations.

The accusation, as developed by Fink, that Nietzsche derives the high from the low in order only to debunk the former is unfair to Nietzsche's method. Now it is true that Nietzsche invites us to know ourselves, that is, to examine ourselves and all our opinions, and it is true that according to Nietzsche the highly moral, upon honestly taking themselves to task, will discover that their reasons for "loving morality" and "acting moral" are "not moral" but rather "immoral" by their own standards. For example, one will find that their will to sacrifice for the noble is only dubiously a "sacrifice" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 220):

. . . But anyone who has really made sacrifices knows that he wanted and got something in return – perhaps something of himself in return for something of himself – that he gave up here in order to have more there, perhaps in order to *be* more or at least to feel that he was more.

Now, so often in Nietzsche one can mouth his insights but *cannot* truly accept them without already knowing them oneself. Can Nietzsche *prove*, for example, that sacrifices are never what the pious man tries to convince himself that they are (i.e., acts done entirely for the love of God, selfless, entirely unegoistic or un-selfed acts which give no consideration to one's own desires for happiness, joy, fulfillment or blessedness, acts in which we willingly do harm to ourselves, that is, truly will to do *harm* to ourselves upon consideration of the sum total of the consequences of the act), and moreover that they can never be so, and further still that no man would ever wish that they be so, lest they wish for a "terrible" reality? Of course not; he can only ask that you 'prove' or 'disprove' it to yourself by your own honest self-examination. Short of that, Nietzsche's screaming of 'unholy truths' will likely be ignored by his moral readers as the impotent chatter of a cynic, perhaps dangerous in its consequences and seductive for like-minded cynics, but of no consequence to the truth, to *their* truth.

Indeed, nothing would surprise Nietzsche less than the fact that moralists often brush him aside as a raving and tormented dogmatist and egomaniac, which is in fact the opinion he leaves of himself with most of his readers. To go further, Nietzsche deems himself to be a perfect writer who, as such, allows only perfect readers to comprehend his full teaching. This is not to say that Nietzsche does not make allowance for all of his imperfect readers (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 27):

It is hard to be understood, especially when one thinks and lives *gangasrotagati* [as the current of the Ganges moves] among men who think and live differently, namely *kurmagati* [as the tortoise moves] or at best “the way frogs walk,” *mandukagati*—I obviously do everything to be “hard to understand” myself!—and one should be cordially grateful for the good will to some subtlety of interpretation. But as for “good friends,” who are always too lazy and think that as friends they have a right to relax, one does well to grant them from the outset some leeway and playground for misunderstanding:—then one can even laugh;—or get rid of them altogether, these good friends—and laugh about that, too!

We might also consider here aphorism 290 of *Beyond Good and Evil*:

Every profound thinker is more afraid of being understood than of being misunderstood. The latter may hurt his vanity, but the former his heart, his sympathy, which always says: “Alas, why do *you* want to have as hard a time as I did?”

Nietzsche, like his God Dionysus, purposely cultivates many masks and false impressions of himself; no wonder, then, to us and to him that he has been (or in his case, would be) championed by people of all variations of political partisanship, moral-enthusiasts and immoralist-enthusiasts alike. Indeed, at the very end of the previous aphorism (aphorism 289, which is quoted in full on pages 326-27 of this work), Nietzsche writes:

Every philosophy also *conceals* a philosophy; every opinion is also a lurking-place, every word is also a mask.

And just six aphorisms prior, in aphorism 283 of the same work, Nietzsche has his most inquisitive reader, for whom one mask is not enough, request of him that he provide, “Another mask! A second mask!”

Thus Herr Nietzsche, one might say, insomuch as he is put forth as a mask – not to say a caricature – and a personality and a persona, plays Socrates to his own Plato (who, according to Nietzsche, used Socrates as a front for “all of his own masks and multiplicities”; *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 190), always stinging us anew from out of the torpor of thoughtlessness and self-satisfaction. One could of course accuse Nietzsche of a sophistical trick: he renders all his conclusions invulnerable, one might say, by claiming to teach a hidden truth that can *only* be known subjectively, a truth that emerges only after the most personal quest for self-knowledge and which he is only too willing to invite us to ignore as merely *his* truth. Nietzsche would reply, I suppose, by saying that this is no failure on his part: the matter at hand, namely philosophic truth, allows for no other manner of comprehension, and the task at hand, pedagogy or teaching, allows for no better manner of proceeding (cf. *BGE*, aphorism 63). Consider, for example, aphorism 87 of *Beyond Good and Evil*:

Bound heart, free mind. – If one tethers one’s heart severely and imprisons it, one can give one’s mind many liberties: I have said that once before. But one does not believe me, unless one already knows it –

Or consider *Ecce Homo, Why I Write such Good Books*:

Ultimately, nobody can get more out of things, including books, than he already knows. For what one lacks access to from experience one will have no ear for. Now let us imagine an extreme case: that a book speaks of nothing but events that lie altogether beyond the possibility of any frequent or even rare experience—that it is the first language for a new series of experiences. In that case, simply nothing will be heard, but there will be the acoustic illusion that where nothing is heard, nothing is there.

Thus Fink’s claim that Nietzsche’s genealogy sophistically derives the high from the low is tempting but false, mistaking Nietzsche’s grounding argument to be the psychological-historical argument from *human history* when in fact the grounding argument is the psychological-historical examination of *his own soul*. With that in mind

we can ask: what exactly is it that is sophistical or reductionistic in a thorough-going, brutally honest examination of our moral opinions and feelings that finds, not through willfulness but by the thread of truth, that our morality is not as splendid as we opine it to be and which invites us to form our own conclusion on the basis of our own self-investigation?

The most decisive statement Fink makes concerning Nietzsche's treatment of morality and religion is the following: "A psychological clarification constitutes already a refutation for him. He does not examine the truth of religion or metaphysics. This question is dismissed at the mere possibility that the search for truth is based on motivations within life which are not disinterested but aim for redemption or the like" (p.38; we must understand "psychological" here in light of the genealogical method that Fink has in mind). Thus, according to Fink, Nietzsche never asked the question as to the truth of religion (that is, as a *genuine question*). What justifies this for Nietzsche on Fink's reading is Nietzsche's understanding of the question of truth. Of course, to discuss this issue would take us into metaphysical and anti-metaphysical considerations far beyond the scope of this chapter (and one could hardly find a thinker more able to discourse on this matter than Eugen Fink). But that said, the position Fink attributes to Nietzsche is, I believe, untenable as concerns the latter. Whatever Fink's or our own understanding of Nietzsche's relation to the question of truth, we must recognize that Nietzsche's opening up of the question for a new thinking upon it itself comes with a thoughtful *denial* of 'truth' as put forth by the religious and most importantly concerning their claim that God is the truth and that this truth is not known by thought or reasoning but by *inspiration*, which aids thinking towards the attainment of a wisdom that thinking

alone can never achieve. Only after *already* thoughtfully denying religious truth and *its* concept of life does Nietzsche argue that the traditional question of truth is of no consequence in the face of considerations of life (as Nietzsche is said to argue and in fact does argue). We shall later return to this topic when we discuss Giles Fraser's *The Piety of Unbelief*, for he also argues the thesis that Nietzsche's understanding of truth as subservient to life somehow allowed him to *not even ask the question* as to the truth of religion.

To elaborate and conclude the discussion of Fink's *Nietzsche's Philosophy*, a critique of morality and religion from the perspective of life or will to power (whether denying or inverting idealism) is indeed a radical critique inasmuch as it introduces a new measure and thus new scales by which to evaluate the phenomena. However, this does not itself establish a legitimate prejudice in favor of the 'scales of life' as opposed to the 'scales of morality and religion' as posited by the moral and religious in accordance with their own self-understanding. Only if the latter scales and the latter understanding – which we are all born into and begin from – is found, on its own grounds and not in light of some alien standard, to be decisively *wanting* (i.e., unworkable, incomprehensible) might a prejudice in favor of the 'scales of life' be legitimate (which interpretation, for its part, must stand firmly on *its* own grounds). This is *not* a question of certainty, nor a question of a given philosopher's 'obligation' to 'refute' every conceivable alternative understanding of the world everywhere and always. It is, however, a question of the strength of the evidence and the character of our situation, and no non-Eastern human being born into this constellation of ideas or judgments can deny the power of guilt, conscience, vice, sin, reverence, awe, ecstasy and all forms of theistic states of moral

consciousness (which inspire one with hope, fear, wonder, assurance, and worth) nor the power of their *testimony* to a moral world order and an essentially moral essence to our being. Thus the will to power and its radical critique are a strengthened hypothesis to the extent that Nietzsche provides good reasons for denying the plausibility of alternative hypothesis, including the 'religious-hypothesis' (which is never understood as a mere hypothesis by the religious themselves but rather as a kind of knowledge or wisdom: and precisely herein, Nietzsche would say, lies what is the most powerful evidence for this view, but also its Achilles heel).

From Fink we move to Walter Kaufmann's hundred-times combated and landmark work *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (4th edition, 1974), which is still one of the most thoughtful scholarly books on Nietzsche available. In his third chapter, *The Death of God and the Revaluation*, Kaufmann directly addresses – albeit with exceeding briefness – our question as to the reasoning behind Nietzsche's atheism, which he seems to accept as “the major premise of Nietzsche's philosophy” (p.99). Kaufmann rightly rejects accounts of Nietzsche's thoughts on this matter that try to explain it with reference to his childhood (and so forth) as “psychological trivializations” that “quite miss the point”. For Kaufmann, Nietzsche's atheism is “a corollary of his basic commitment to question all premises and to reject them unless they are for some reason inescapable” (p.101). Concerning Nietzsche's method or experimental philosophy, Kaufmann *gets it right* in a decisive respect, saying, “This experiment does not require the premise that God does not exist. It demands no more than that we agree not to invoke any god to cut discussion short” (p.102). Kaufmann's basic stance towards Nietzsche in this matter appears correct: “Because Nietzsche did

not start with any premises that he consciously failed to question, he *could* not base his philosophy on the assumed existence of God” (p.100; nor, we should add on Kaufmann’s behalf, on the assumed *nonexistence of God*). That said, Kaufman fails to provide Nietzsche’s decisive arguments for his atheism. For according to Kaufman, “Nietzsche’s opposition to Christian morality, no less than his opposition to the Christian faith, is reducible to the contrast between strength and weakness” (p.364). But to this we can give a respectful reply similar to that given to Fink, namely, that Nietzsche can only confidently and non-dogmatically put forward *his* measure of strength and weakness as the definitive standard after plausibly denying the Christian measure of these matters, which relies on the power of faith and which finds its proof of truth in the testimony of this very power.

From Kaufmann we move on to the work of Charles M. Natoli in *Nietzsche and Pascal on Christianity*. Natoli’s book asks point blank many of the same questions that we have been asking concerning Nietzsche’s atheism, and even relies on *Daybreak* for its most pivotal arguments. That said, however, Natoli believes Nietzsche to have grounded his atheism in his account of the natural history of moral and religious illusions over time. On the premise of Natoli’s misunderstanding of Nietzsche, he ‘correctly’ and easily accuses Nietzsche of committing the ‘genetic fallacy’ and of having begged the question concerning God and Christianity in the decisive respect inasmuch as his atheism was axiomatic, a mere unexamined premise that he took for granted. Unfortunately, however, Natoli misunderstands Nietzsche’s argument against Christianity and thus his criticism of Nietzsche does a decent job of criticizing, not Nietzsche, but a kind of phantom or mask of Nietzsche (albeit one purposely cultivated by Nietzsche).

From Natoli's work we move on to another work that directly addresses our topic, R. Motson Thompson's *Nietzsche and Christian Ethics* (1951). In this work, Thompson accuses Nietzsche: of misunderstanding the Christian ethic; of being influenced by Christianity (p.10); of being compelled to come up with the doctrine of the eternal recurrence because his atheism left him nothing to worship (p.16); of promoting the worst of racial-theories concerning superior and inferior races (p.17-18); of having a mind "too full of prejudice" to be called scientific (p.29); of being a mere mocker of Christianity; of being personally pathological and a "madman" (p.46); of having put forth the will to power (itself a pathological doctrine) from out of his own insanity (p.40, p.46); and other such accusations. Unfortunately, attacks like this are all too common in the literature and are not at all limited to those who openly argue against Nietzsche from a Christian perspective (such as Natoli and Thompson).

Though not adding anything substantive whatsoever to our discussion, it is worth noting that Thomas H. Brobjer provides a skeletal and chronological summary of the twists and turns of Nietzsche's thoughts concerning Christianity. He does this in a piece titled *Nietzsche's Changing Relation with Christianity: Nietzsche as Christian, Atheist, and Antichrist*, which can be found in *Nietzsche and the Gods* (2001; edited by Weaver Santanello).

We move next to a work that bears directly on our theme, Morgan Rempel's *Nietzsche, Psychohistory, and the Birth of Christianity*. The advance made on our problem in Rempel's work lies in its giving priority to Nietzsche's psychological-histories of individual *persons* as definitive for his thinking, as opposed to the psychological history of mankind over time. Rempel recognizes as an "essential"

consideration of Nietzsche's that what is needed for the assessment of religious persons and phenomena is "someone skilled at asking psychohistorical questions and formulating hypothesis concerning underlying motivation" (p.6). Likewise, Rempel recognizes that "Nietzsche's entire philosophical orientation cannot be understood *apart* from his psychological orientation" (p.7). Rempel's analysis, however, is weakened chiefly by two failings.

First, Rempel fails to bring out the fact that for Nietzsche the starting point and reference point of all psychohistorical analysis is necessarily *one's own self-knowledge* or *the psychohistorical account of oneself* (which is not inattentive to the fact of historical horizons). Second, Rempel fails to see that Nietzsche is using the psychology of the moralist to get at phenomena such as religious inspiration and miracles (i.e., claims of their occurrence and modes of their interpretation). According to Rempel, "Nietzsche conceived of his own investigation of Christianity and its key players as psychological case histories" (p.10). However, Rempel fails to see all that is at stake in these "case histories", namely, the investigation of revelatory experiences as the point of access into the *question* concerning the existence of the essentially moral God. Thus, Rempel fails to see that Nietzsche's psychological-histories of Christian persons such as Paul, Luther, Pascal, and Wagner not only relay Nietzsche's findings as "case histories of sickness" (p.10), but point to the establishment upon persuasive grounds of the *diagnosis* of sickness *itself*. To the extent, then, that Rempel fails to provide an argument on Nietzsche's behalf for the legitimacy of his atheism, Rempel's 'Nietzsche' presupposes the Christian to be sick before ever taking seriously the possibility of the believer's own claim to be healed or saved.

To see this we can look to the example of Rempel's understanding of epilepsy (a topic that frequently occurs in Nietzsche's discussions of revelation). Concerning the epileptic Paul and his world historical vision on the road to Damascus (the express topic of aphorism 68 of *Daybreak* and one of the most important aphorisms in the work), Rempel claims that for Nietzsche "any 'vision' Paul may or may not have experienced en route to Damascus is quickly and summarily dismissed as the product of an epileptic mind" (p.74). And despite giving serious consideration to Nietzsche's use of the notion of epilepsy, even pursuing it to its physiological and conceptual forms, Rempel never takes seriously the possibility that Nietzsche ever took claims of revelation seriously. In order to show that Nietzsche *did* take the question of revelation seriously and thus did not mindlessly jump to the conclusion of epilepsy, it suffices to look at aphorism 47 of

Beyond Good and Evil:

Wherever on earth the religious neurosis has appeared we find it tied to three dangerous dietary demands: solitude, fasting, and sexual abstinence. But one cannot decide with certainty what is cause and what effect, and *whether* any relation of cause and effect is involved here. The final doubt seems justified because among its most regular symptoms, among both savage and tame peoples, we also find the most sudden, most extravagant voluptuousness which then, just as suddenly, changes into a penitential spasm and denial of the world and will – both perhaps to be interpreted as masked epilepsy? But nowhere should one resist interpretation more: no other type has yet been surrounded by such a lavish growth of nonsense and superstition, no other type seems to have interested men, even philosophers, more. The time has come for becoming a bit cold right here, to learn caution – better yet: to look away, *to go away*.

Rempel's failure to appreciate the full range of Nietzsche's discussions of "epilepsy" is related to what is *missing* from his lengthy analysis of aphorism 68 of *Daybreak* and its psycho-history of Paul, namely, any treatment of the aphorism in light of the work as a whole or even in light of Book I (in which book aphorism 68 occurs). For Book I of *Daybreak* contains an argument which links the findings of Nietzsche's

‘case study’ of Paul³³ with his understanding of Biblical religion and Biblically based religious experiences *as such*, thus claiming in its penultimate aphorism to have a decisive refutation of the moral God. For Rempel, *Calvary* represents the battlefield between Nietzsche and Paul over the “true meaning of Jesus’ martyrdom and death” (p.139). But this misses the mark: not Calvary but rather *the road to Damascus* is the site at which the ‘battle’ is waged, a battle concerning how to truly interpret the event at Calvary. In keeping with Nietzsche’s thought, this battlefield presupposes still another battlefield that Rempel ignores: the battlefield that is one’s own soul.

As we have seen, the predominant arguments in the literature concerning Nietzsche’s atheism all take their bearings in one way or another from *history*. The interpretation from history is likewise the core of the treatment to be found in Richard Schacht’s *Nietzsche* (1983), Werner Dannhauser’s *Nietzsche’s View Of Socrates*, and Karl Löwith’s *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. Neither Dannhauser nor Löwith address thematically the question of Nietzsche’s atheism and the legitimacy of its grounds, but rather, deal entirely with other facets of Nietzsche’s thought. However, because each of these works is important to the scholarly literature in their own right, it is worth noting their basic stance on the issue in which we are concerned, which can be seen from certain rare but decisive statements. To begin with Schacht and his discussion of Nietzsche’s atheism in chapter three of the work, the strength of his treatment is in its fighting insistence that Nietzsche took the question of

³³ On p.127 (cf. p.115 and 129) Rempel quotes a passage from the *Antichrist* that would seem to demolish my thesis (*Antichrist*, aphorism 42). For Nietzsche implies there that Paul was simply a bold-faced or fully self conscious *liar* when it came to his teaching. However, an analysis of the aphorism in the context of the work (with special emphasis on the decisive treatment of *lying* and *honesty* in the work) would show that Nietzsche is not truly attributing such clear-sighted lying to Paul (as opposed, say, to the clear-sighted lying of the honest Plato; cf. aphorism 55).

God's existence *seriously* (i.e., as a *question*). The weakness, however, lies in Schacht's understanding of Nietzsche as having grounded his atheism in his analysis of mankind's history and the genealogy of moral and religious illusions over time. Indeed, Dannhauser takes the same track concerning Nietzsche and history in his *Nietzsche's View of Socrates* (for example, on p. 160-162; 166; 168), though unlike Schacht and to his credit he does not defend the method. Lastly, Karl Löwith also looks to Nietzsche's understanding of history so as to understand the reasons for his atheism, though from a different perspective: Löwith considers decisive for Nietzsche the (dubious) argument concerning the death of God in human history (along the lines of the death of Zeus or Ammon, for example; see, for instance, p. 40).

At this point we can address a recent book by Giles Fraser (who also happens to be the Vicar of Putney), titled *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief* (2002). In this theological treatment of Nietzsche's philosophy, Fraser attempts to understand Nietzsche's thoughts on religion as the outgrowth of his childhood upbringing and his personal obsession with salvation. What we have said hitherto in our analysis of other works and their failings suffice as a commentary of Fraser's work in several respects: for example, like Thompson, Fraser trivializes Nietzsche's thought as the mere product of his peculiar childhood; and like Fink, Fraser points to Nietzsche's 'biological' orientation as justifying (in Nietzsche's mind) the absence of the need to take the question of God and Christianity seriously. But what is least favorable in Fraser's account is his ironic accusation that Nietzsche's anti-Christianity only masks his deep-seated Christianity, which does not succeed in concealing Fraser's own attempt to hijack all discussion of the human condition to the realm of Christianity.

Above all, Fraser fails to appreciate what is decisively *not Christian* about Nietzsche's thought. Take for example his understanding of Nietzsche concerning the fall and redemption of man. According to Fraser, Nietzsche conceives of salvation "as some sort of reversal of the original 'moral' fall", a return to "something like the sort of life led by Adam and Eve" (p.5). This fails to take both Nietzsche and conventional Christianity seriously (i.e., Christianity as meaningfully understood by the great mass of its adherents, namely, as *moral*). For Nietzsche, there is no genuine 'reverse-fall' where, having accepted morality, we feel guilty and sinful for having 'betrayed the earth,' only to be absolved by the superman or new Adam, thus living out our days in peace and leisure amongst nature. Fraser fails to recognize that when you consciously, thoughtfully, methodically, and thoroughly drain the 'human drama' from any and all notions of Christian morality, you drain it fundamentally from any *meaningful* relation to conventionally understood Christianity. There simply is no *moral* redemption from morality, but rather a super or extra-moral affirmation of the whole of life which necessarily affirms the past into and out of which the present and future come to be (cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism32). In this manner the past is redeemed *not from sinfulness*, but from the rule of absurdity, chance, senseless suffering, senseless cruelty and all that is all too human. Would Fraser or anyone, for that matter, will the nonexistence of the world in order to stop the Holocaust from happening? And yet, in a manner all of us must will all that has been terrible in the past in order to affirm the present and our own selves; indeed, (if we can accept Nietzsche's premises at least for the purpose of an educational thought-experiment), he who affirms a single moment of their

life necessarily affirms the whole of eternity, for this is a consequence of the strict necessity of becoming or time (*Will to Power*, 1032):

The first question is by no means whether we are content with ourselves, but whether we are content with anything at all. If we affirm one single moment, we thus affirm not only ourselves but all existence. For nothing is self-sufficient, neither in us ourselves nor in things; and if our soul has trembled with happiness and sounded like a harp string just once, all eternity was needed to produce this one event – and in this single moment of affirmation all eternity was called good, redeemed, justified, and affirmed.

For this reason and others Nietzsche called the doctrine of the eternal recurrence *the greatest weight* (cf. *Joyous Science*, aphorism 341); indeed, the weight is so great that according to Nietzsche mankind must attempt to breed human beings capable of bearing it (i.e., overmen). And what, according to Nietzsche, is the last thing to be overcome before one fully wills the eternal recurrence? *Pity* (*Ecce Homo, Why I am so Wise*, section 4):

The overcoming of pity I count among the *noble* virtues: as “Zarathustra’s temptation” I invented a situation in which a great cry of distress reaches him, as pity tries to attack him like a final sin that would entice him away from *himself*. To remain the master at this point, to keep the eminence of one’s task undefiled by the many lower and more myopic impulses that are at work in so-called selfless actions, that is the test, perhaps the ultimate test, which a Zarathustra must pass—his real *proof* of strength.

So far, then, is Nietzsche from denying or fleeing the suffering, badness, and cruelty of the human condition (as Fraser accuses him of doing, accusing Nietzsche of being a “comfortably off bourgeoisie” and, echoing Nussbaum, “an armchair philosopher of human riskiness”, p.3), that pity constitutes the ‘last stand’ of his pessimism (by his own account the most thorough-going pessimism *yet conceived and experienced*). It is, if we may use Nietzsche’s own language of self-description, Nietzsche’s ambition, torture, and happiness, it is in sum his peculiar fate, to be this creative-destructive, self-overcoming will that must recognize its own cruelty in destruction – to say nothing of

the joy of the knife and the hammer – but which is driven by creation and its eternal “Yes!” This condition of joy is inseparable from *pain*, but not the pain anticipated or imagined by the moralist (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 124):

Whoever rejoices on the very stake triumphs not over pain but at the absence of pain that he had expected. A parable.

This is the Dionysian condition of total world-affirmation, the joyous knowledge or science which redeems death and decay as natural to life, which affirms becoming as essential to Being (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 69):

One has watched life badly if one has not also seen the hand that considerably—kills.

Nietzsche is that seeming-Cyclops, that one-eyed being with delicate hands whose pity does not paralyze his will from wielding a hammer, a divine hammer that gives meaning or purpose to our suffering. For Nietzsche will or life itself, Being itself, *is* this divine hammer, this great *Yes!*

These things said, Nietzsche *might* meaningfully be called a Christian if by “Christian” one *means* a non-moral or extra-moral, non-doctrinal, non-ecclesiastical Christianity of love and earth that is without resentment. But Fraser means to call Nietzsche Christian in an entirely different sense. In the end, Fraser’s argument takes its bearings from little more than the easily observable fact that Nietzsche often uses the language and formal structure of Christianity’s ‘narrative’ to couch his own anti-Christian and non-Christian insights, combined with Fraser’s own inability to fathom the world through non-Christian eyes.

One especially helpful discussion in Fraser’s *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief*, is his account of the effect Nietzsche’s philosophy has had on certain

theologians who have come to be called ‘death of God’ theologians (Karl Barth, Thomas Altizer, Eberhard Jungel, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer). I admit from the outset that with the exception of Altizer I have had access to these thinkers only through Fraser’s account of them. That said, to the extent that we are interested here in *thoughtful arguments* and not *biography*, I believe it not inappropriate to provide some discussion on this portion of Fraser’s work. Let us begin with Barth.

According to Fraser, Karl Barth attempts a kind of revolution in Christianity by putting the locus of Christian truth squarely in the realm of grace and entirely out of the realm of *all* claims (including theological claims) made by men to know God through anything other than the miracle of grace. Barth seems to thank Nietzsche for showing Christians the impossibility of their knowing anything about God through traditional theology. Indeed, it should be clear by now that Nietzsche would agree with Barth to a point: for Nietzsche, Barth is *correct* in finding the true testimony or *proof* of faith to be in the *experience* of faith, the moral miracle or breakthrough of grace. However, contrary to Barth, Nietzsche takes those same experiences – as this very dissertation endeavors to show – to be the point of access into his decisive ‘refutation’ of the Biblical God.

The remaining death of God theologians discussed by Fraser, namely, Bonhoeffer, Altizer, and Jungel, may be grouped with another thinker who Fraser does not address, G. Wilson Knight (whose work, *Christ and Nietzsche: An Essay in Poetic Wisdom*, is outstanding). We choose this group of thinkers as the group with which to close our discussion of the literature for the following reason: these thinkers represent some of the most radical understandings of Nietzsche and Christianity that one could sensibly come to. The claim that links all these thinkers is this: all of them claim that

Nietzsche is a kind of *true Christian* inasmuch as Christianity *itself* is in fact beyond good and evil, beyond all dogma, all righteous illusions. This thesis must be distinguished from the petty accusation of ‘closet-Christianity’ that can be found throughout the literature on Nietzsche and which we have already discussed. Indeed, that Nietzsche *himself* considered the very real possibility that Jesus was beyond good and evil has tremendous textual evidence (see, for example, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 164: “Jesus said to his Jews: ‘The law was for servants – love God as I love him, as his son! What are morals to us sons of God!’”), and likewise the adamant distinction between Christ’s teaching and *historical Christianity* (which is essentially *Paul’s* teaching, and a sublime miscarriage of human history; see for example *Daybreak*, aphorism 68, *The First Christian*, on Saint Paul, end). Essentially, then, what these Christians argue for is a Christianity beyond Christian morality. Such a faith, were one to experience it, could certainly withstand Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity as having its best evidence grounded in moral illusions or self-ignorance. Yet we must be *exceedingly* cautious in this matter, and above all due to the following fact: in our sophisticated and relativistic times it is all too common amongst men to find those who would claim to be ‘beyond good and evil’ and seriously (albeit thoughtlessly) to believe it, while being, in fact, immersed in good and evil. Thus, when Altizer or others speak of their Christian faith as beyond good and evil, we wonder whether what is peculiarly *Christian* about this Christianity is simply the same old Christian morality that they are merely claiming to have expunged from themselves. At the same time, however, we must avoid a related vice, namely, that of interpreting any and every use of words such as “justice,” “vice,” “worth,” “guilt,” “conscience,” or “redemption” as revealing the secret moral prejudices

of an author, for all of these words and others like them can signify non-moral phenomenon. For myself, I must reserve judgment of these ‘atheistic theologians’ or ‘radical Christians’ until my having examined their works first hand. As for Altizer, for example, I have only had access to one essay of his, namely his *Eternal Recurrence and Kingdom of God* (in *The New Nietzsche*, edited by David B. Allison, 7th printing, 1995).

In the end, however, whether Knight or Altizer or the others are truly embracing Christianity from a stand-point beyond good and evil is perhaps of minor importance. What is certainly of major importance is what is *pointed* to in their positions, namely, the possibility of religion beyond morality. Indeed, it is precisely *this possibility* to which Nietzsche’s entire philosophy is pointing: beyond the moral God and the revelatory experiences which testify to his existence is *Dionysus* and the revelatory experiences of this tempting and attempting God, the very revelatory experiences that Nietzsche claimed to have inspired his *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, (and in the end, even “Dionysus” merely names the unnameable). To be sure, it is in Nietzsche’s denial of the Biblical God and vindication of the eternal Dionysus that the solution is found to the riddle that is Nietzsche’s *pious impiety* (*Will to Power*, aphorism 1038):

And how many gods are still possible! As for myself, in whom the religious, that is to say god-forming, instinct occasionally becomes active at impossible times – how differently, how variously the divine has revealed itself to me each time!

So many strange things have passed before me in those timeless moments that fall into one’s life as if from the moon, when one no longer has any idea how old one is or how young one will yet be – I should not doubt that there are many kinds of gods – There are some one cannot imagine without a certain halcyon and frivolous quality in their make-up – Perhaps light feet are even an integral part of the concept “god” – Is it necessary to elaborate that a god prefers to stay beyond everything bourgeois and rational? And, between ourselves, also beyond good and evil? His prospect is *free* – in Goethe’s words . . .

Without neglecting the fact – made clear in the chapters that follow – that Nietzsche’s teaching concerning Dionysus is the *core* of his philosophy and thus inseparable from his doctrines of the will to power and eternal recurrence of the same (themselves inseparable), we can say the following as concerns the question of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other like-minded religions: *even* were we to grant the truth of Nietzsche’s analysis concerning moral (or immoral) illusions as the root, or a root, of certain religious experiences that testify to a moral God, the possibility that the Old Testament, the New Testament, or the Noble Qur’an could contain an esoteric and true teaching unknown and unfathomed by Nietzsche, the possibility that a Jew, Christian, Muslim, or otherwise could experience the stirrings of their God even after being cured of their righteous delusions (consider the great mystics of the world’s faiths), this possibility (be it truly a possibility) would perhaps suffice to provide the faithful of these faiths with the following respectful response to Nietzsche: Most excellent sir, you have attacked the outer wall (the arrogant pretence of moral knowledge), but you have not approached the inner sanctum (the essential, revealed, and unblemished truth of God and man).

Chapter III

Nietzsche's Later Reflections on *Daybreak* (1881):

The 1886 *Preface*

The Surfaces, Nihilistic Swamps, Depths, and Grounds of the Work

Before turning to *Daybreak* itself, it is helpful to begin with Nietzsche's *own* reflections on the work provided in the five short sections of his 1886 *Preface*, coming as it does some five years after the publication of the book. The 1886 *Preface* is also especially helpful in the following respect: in it, Nietzsche openly addresses the question as to the topic or theme of his book, the questionable nature of which being what inclines us from the outset to "ask him what he is looking for down there" (*Preface*, section 1). For it would not be too misleading to say that in *Daybreak* it seems as though Nietzsche might have written the five-hundred seventy-five aphorisms on separate cards, shuffled them, and then placed the aphorisms into the book in no discernable order. Fortunately for us, however, as we shall see the 1886 *Preface* provides us with a summary glimpse as to what Nietzsche himself deemed to be the major theme or *thread* of the work. For the book is indeed a seamless whole (or at least, a reflection of the unity of the author's thought), but it falls upon the reader to reconstruct the entirety of Nietzsche's arguments

from their fragmented presentation. As Nietzsche says concerning the book in aphorism four-hundred fifty-four (cf. aphorism 530):

Digression. – A book such as this is not for reading straight through or reading aloud but for dipping into, especially when out walking or on a journey; you must be able to stick your head into it and out of it again and again and discover nothing familiar around you.

With Nietzsche's direction we quickly discover that theme to be the tunneling (i.e., the making of a passage way), mining (i.e., exploration) and undermining (i.e., both an excavating under and an impairing or weakening in imperceptible stages; a refutation from the origins or foundations) of our "faith in morality". Nietzsche anticipates our puzzlement upon first hearing this. "But you do not understand me?" he asks us³⁴. But puzzlement or poverty is not wholly without resources: we can say that the theme of the book concerns at least one aspect of faith and morality respectively. That said, for further clarity concerning Nietzsche's use of this metaphor of digging and tunneling into the grounds of the soul – which in his own case he likens to the self-knowledge by which one digs through and spoils one's erroneous knowledge of good and evil – we can look to *Schopenhauer as Educator*, section 1:

But how can we find ourselves again? How can man know himself? He is a thing dark and veiled; and if the hare has seven skins, man can slough off seventy times seven and still not be able to say: 'this is really you, this is no longer outer shell'. Moreover, it is a painful and dangerous undertaking thus to tunnel into oneself and to force one's way down into the shaft of one's being by the nearest path. A man who does it can easily so hurt himself that no physician can cure him.

Now, in the first section of the *Preface* Nietzsche conspicuously and consistently uses the third person, and this conspicuousness is heightened by the quick shift to the *first person* that begins the second section. Nietzsche thus intimates a certain distance

³⁴ *Preface*, section 2; Nietzsche has "crept through the worm-holes of errors of every kind"; Nietzsche intends the reader to recall the eating of the apple by which man acquired knowledge of good and evil; cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 449.

between himself and his book in section-one, where he responds to his curious but baffled readers about the theme and intentions of the work, but then intimates a retraction of that distance when speaking in the first person to his patient friends in section-two. This same paradox can be quickly observed by comparing the first sentence of *Ecce Homo, Why I Write Such Good Books*, “I am one thing, my writings are another matter”, with the last words of the *Preface* in *Daybreak*: “*learn to read me well*”³⁵. We might consider also the beginning of Nietzsche’s 1886 *Preface* to volume II of *Human all too Human*:

One should speak only when one may not stay silent; and then only of that which one has overcome—everything else is chatter, ‘literature’, lack of breeding. My writings speak only of my overcomings: ‘I’ am in them, together with everything that was inimical to me, ego ipissimus [my very own self], indeed, if a yet prouder expression be permitted, ego ipsissimum [my innermost self]”.

This paradox has its solution in Nietzsche’s method of writing whereby his intended meaning is very clear and directly on the surface: the man concealed *by* the book reveals himself *through* the book, but this latter *only* to those with eyes for the depths. But this does not go far enough, for aphorism four-hundred forty-six makes clear the difference and supremacy of exploring the *grounds* of a matter to merely going down to its depths (aphorism 446):

Order of Rank. – There are, first of all, superficial thinkers; secondly, deep thinkers – those who go down into the depths of a thing; thirdly, thorough thinkers, who thoroughly explore the grounds of a thing – which is worth very much more than merely going down into its depths! – finally, those who stick their heads into the swamp: which ought not to be a sign either of depth or of thoroughness! They are the dear departed underground.

We might also look here at Nietzsche’s *Joke, Cunning, and Revenge*, #44:

³⁵ Italics added on the word “me”.

The Thorough Who Get to the Bottom of Things

A seeker, I? Oh, please be still!
I'm merely *heavy*—weigh many a pound.
I fall, and I keep falling till
At last I reach the ground.

The grounds are the *ultimate* reasons and the depths are the deeper arguments of the work. That said, according to Nietzsche the depths suffice to see a man going slowly, cautiously, and gently inexorably. We are thus opened to the possibility of seeing a different Nietzsche than that one generally perceived by the tradition, namely, the “Herr Nietzsche” of bold assertions, *presto* in style, and thoughts that seem always to require exclamation marks, that seem always to be matters of force or willfulness. As Nietzsche said elsewhere, in *Daybreak*—written as a *convalescent* after a long period of sickness or decadence—he exhibits above all “a dialectician’s clarity *par excellence*”³⁶. Nietzsche goes on to address the likely perception of those with eyes for depths (an inferior state to having eyes for *grounds*) as to what faith (“ein Glaube”) seems (“scheint”) to perhaps (“irgend”) be leading him on, causing him to perhaps (“vielleicht”) desire to be not only enigmatic but incomprehensible. We will have to keep tunneling to the grounds to know the status of this “seems” and “perhaps”.

Despite his telling readers in the first section not to ask him what issue he is investigating, Nietzsche begins the second section by freely telling us himself (now in the first person singular). One can say the following: the *speed* with which Nietzsche informs of the very intentions he had just told readers not to ask him about, when contrasted to his reference to the *patience* of those he will tell it to (his friends), indicates that Nietzsche’s treatment of this matter will be less than entirely frank. Alternatively,

³⁶ *Ecce Homo, Why I Am So Wise.*

and better, Nietzsche will immediately and very frankly (or, very clearly and with no deception) tell *his friends* what he was looking for, for he has unlearned silence, but only because they have *already* learned the *art of patience in reading*. Clearly, one must read the *Preface* itself with the same delicacy as that with which the book proper is to be read³⁷.

Nietzsche goes on to discuss the dangers and perils and disintegrating effects of the examination undertaken in the book, which will surely be for many a swamp in which in which to writhe and wallow. Indeed Nietzsche himself confesses that he almost did not make it out alive from the underground excavations from which *Daybreak* was born. For the book is an investigation and digging out – both a digging out in the history of the individual psyche or soul and a digging out in the history of mankind – of man’s ancient faith in morality for the purpose of undermining that very faith. The difference between these two kinds of *histories* is fundamental because, as we shall see in chapter III, the history of mankind is no legitimate ground for a *demonstration* of the non-existence of God or the error of faith. This is due to the fact that such histories (or, arguments concerning origins generally), must *ignore* religious accounts of the origins and moreover are in the last analysis hypothetical (if not outright conjectural). Added to this is the fact that such accounts are utterly inadequate in the face of the evidence provided by the believers *right here and now*, namely, the felt experience of the divine in their life. A history of an origination *in a soul*, on the other hand, deals with the claims of the believer as he himself understands them on the basis of his own living experience of them. In

³⁷ Somewhat tangentially, a small sample of Nietzsche’s thoughts pertaining to writing and method, both in his own writings and in the history of thought is here provided: *Daybreak*, aphorism 45, 375, 449, 469, 524, 527, 530, 535, 553; *Twilight of the Idols*, in *Expeditions of an Untimely Man*, aphorism 26, the central aphorism, also 42 and 46; *The Gay Science*, aphorism 359, 365, 377, also aphorism 4 of the Preface, and especially 375, 381 and 449 ; *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 25, 27, 30, 40, 278, 283, and 289.

principle, through a history of a soul one could challenge certain religious claims *anywhere* and at *any time*.

Nietzsche's Confrontation with the Problem of Method

Section three begins with the moral prohibition against thinking about morality, against questioning the truth of morality and hence the immorality presupposed in the writing (and reading) of the book, attractive as it might be to us. Though in general Nietzsche considers the backing of moral prohibitions by threats of punishment for disobedience to be very important for sustaining the authority of morality in the world, he attributes the secure repose of morality in the world “far more” to something other than its ability to frighten. According to Nietzsche, the security from criticism enjoyed by morality “reposes far more in a certain art of enchantment it has at its disposal – it knows how to ‘inspire’”. It is here that Nietzsche points us to the most questionable and potentially most insidious aspect—also the most fundamental—of his undermining of faith in morality through psychological-historical self-examination: the relationship between our moral thoughts and feelings and our actual experiences of inspiration or divine revelation (great and small).

Nietzsche goes on in the third section to indicate the enormity of the task he is undertaking, for he himself brings up the seemingly insurmountable challenge with which he is faced, namely, addressing the validity of claims made on behalf of morality (Kant) and faith (Luther) that take their bearings precisely by their absurdity (i.e., the very inaccessibility of the faith to any rational grounding and thereby to any *rational denial*;

these essentially claim: “I believe because it is absurd”, as Luther famously said and Kant implied with his *a priori* moral principles). Nietzsche is going to confront the problem of a God seemingly inaccessible to human reason, a mysterious God, and he is going to do so by thinking, reflecting, or reasoning upon morality. Nietzsche informs us that he will attempt to discover the “truth” about the moral-theological not by strict adherence to a principle of Hegel’s as Hegel understood it but by the possibility of attaining truth that he finds lying “behind” Hegel’s principle: *Contradiction moves the world, all things are themselves contradictory*. For Nietzsche, as we shall see, the fundamental importance of *contradiction* lies not in the self-manifestation of Being, God, or Reason by way of *dialectical history* (these three are all equivalent in Hegel’s metaphysics), but rather in the contradictions inherent in our *moral prejudices*, and these as revealed by an examination of their “immoral” history in the soul of the moral-religious person. Indeed, and contrary to Hegel, Nietzsche’s pessimism extends to the realm of logic itself: that is, the principle of contradiction is itself on shaky grounds according to Nietzsche, depending as it does on the principle of unity presupposed in such ideas as “substance,” “being,” “rest,” and “self-identity ($A=A$),” and the logician, with their naïve hopefulness that reason with its “laws” can penetrate the enigma of existence, is but a peculiar type of optimist: “Logic calms and gives confidence—in short, a certain warm narrowness that keeps away fear and encloses one in optimistic horizons” (*The Joyous Science*, aphorism 370).

The last statement of section three is picked up immediately in section four, for there Nietzsche elaborates by saying that his pessimism will cause him to call into question our faith in, or moral orientation towards, reason itself (on which dubious

foundation all logic and hence dialectics depends). Given the fact that the validity of Nietzsche's entire method in *Daybreak* depends on the capacity of reason to discover the truth about the moral-theological, one must wonder how in the world Nietzsche is going to ground his method in something other than faith (i.e., a mere or unexamined faith in reason). For if he cannot provide such grounding, the teaching of the book will indeed be "incomprehensible" (section 1), since it will rest fundamentally on a contradiction: the rational examination that refutes people's unexamined faith will itself rest on an unexamined faith in reason. Nietzsche goes on to say that the examination of our faith in reason is secondary to the more fundamental investigation into our faith in morality. For he says that faith (thus including faith in reason) "as faith," is "a *moral* phenomenon" (*Preface*, section 4). Faith, then, is grounded in morality. Indeed, according to Nietzsche the claims of faith – including certain claims of 'inspiration' – stand or fall by the claims of morality. Both reason, then, or a certain species of reason, and faith rest on *morality*. Nietzsche thus calls on German pessimism to take its last step and in a fearful fashion place its *credo* (reason) beside its absurdity (morality). Using reason (the faith in which is itself based on morality) to reveal the grounds of morality as absurd, Nietzsche claims that *Daybreak* suffers fearlessly from the contradiction of exhibiting a morally motivated withdrawal of faith in morality. The contradiction exhibited by this German-all-too-German book – its moral denial of morality – would then be the last remnant of Luther's original German logic (section 3): I believe my reason that tells me that morality is false *because* it is moral to believe my ever faithful reason (recall the "free-spirits").

Nietzsche can only avoid this consequence by grounding his reasoning in something other than a moral faith in itself as unconditionally good and able to reveal the

truth. He accomplishes this through the peculiar manner in which he ‘proceeds rationally,’ for he proceeds by allowing or compelling morality’s own ‘inner logic’ to unfold, its own ‘rationale,’ neither refuting morality through an alien standard (such as those of modern natural science, for example, or those of modern philosophy) nor relying on a dubious faith in reason or logic. In this manner Nietzsche has morality collapse upon its own grounds³⁸. If morality did not have a rationale this would be impossible, and in itself morality seems to *require* no rationale but to take one on—if it takes one on at all—merely as *ornament*. But Nietzsche believes there to be a *psychological necessity* on the part of believers that they have a rationale for, or a web of opinions concerning, their beliefs in order for those very beliefs to be present³⁹ and likewise believes that that rationale is not decorative but *essential* to the moral-religious *experience* and above all the inspirational or revelatory experiences which they take as proof of their faith’s truth, and moreover a proof that is absurd in the sense of being inaccessible to mere reason. Believers believe that they *know* what is good and what evil, and although it is in theory possible that the recognition that one does not know what one believed one knew should not make any dent on the felt, inner *experiences* of the divine presence and call, according to Nietzsche it is psychologically demonstrable – albeit to himself and through himself as the decisive ‘case-study’ – that with the genuine recognition of one’s ignorance of good and evil (which may take many, many years to accomplish, to say the least that one might say), all claims of revelation from the moral God are rescinded on the part of the believer himself.

³⁸ When this collapse is complete or total, even truthfulness, the pathos of seeking “truth” as unconditionally valuable, collapses: the philosopher of the future embraces his truths as his lies, and this in light of the grounding truth of the will to power.

³⁹ However little they may be brought to conscious thought and however lacking in thoroughness what is brought to conscious thought.

To approach this matter in a different way so as to elaborate upon it, neither philosophical nor moral-religious thought is presuppositionless⁴⁰, and each attempts to give validity to their presuppositions by providing positive evidence for them. However, such evidence will always be questionable as a refutation of rival understandings based on rival presuppositions inasmuch as the ‘evidence’ itself, in order to stand as evidence claimed for one particular position against another, will always presuppose the premises to be proved by it (that is, those very premises or presuppositions that are in dispute). Thus, no persuasive refutation of a rival position can begin from premises unacceptable to that rival position. Nietzsche, however, examines the life based on faith by proceeding on the basis of the self-understanding of believers themselves and above all with respect to their moral opinions, merely asking them to attempt to find the truth about themselves with their intellectual conscience, *not* to *accept* alien premises and arguments but only to *investigate* their own⁴¹. “But morality”, such a one might say, “is not in need of, nor should sensibly be asked to give, an *understanding* of itself, i.e., rational justification, and we have seen this strange and deviant obsession and suspicious line of questioning before with Socrates, a man who, in his own lifetime of conversations, persuaded or infected almost no one!” We might see here Nietzsche’s *Joyous Science*, aphorism 347:

For this is how man is: an article of faith could be refuted before him a thousand times—if he needed it, he would consider it “true” again and again, in accordance with that famous “proof of strength” of which the Bible speaks.

⁴⁰ See for example *Genealogy of Morals*, 3.24: “there is no such thing as ‘science without presuppositions’; this thought does not bear thinking through, it is paralogical”; cf. *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 344. See also *Twilight of the Idols, Expeditions of an Untimely Man*, aphorism 5: “Christianity is a system, a consistently thought out and *complete* view of things. If one breaks out of it a fundamental idea, the belief in God, one thereby breaks the whole thing to pieces”.

⁴¹ – “And is not *honesty* moral and thus the rational investigation into morality moral?” one wants to ask with at least two pregnant question marks

Morality, then, seems to descend to no 'logic' or 'reasoning' but its own and as such is its own justification. But according to Nietzsche this only seems to be so. For Nietzsche, *the moral prejudice concerning the morality of morality* is a belief, an error, a lie or conviction, and a consequence of *self-ignorance* (itself a consequence of a *will* to such ignorance or a desire for flight from oneself). The self-destruction of the 'moral logic' and what follows there from (namely, the faith and above all *experiences* of faith which are grounded in that 'logic of the heart') paves the way (in part) for Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power, which doctrine comes to explain what was formerly interpreted as revelatory promptings and assurances from the moral God, including the god "truth" believed in by those with faith in reason, however tepidly most scientists and rationalists may experience such a thing or fail to isolate its cause in their moral beliefs concerning the goodness, inherent dignity, and truthfulness of "science" and "reason" (consider on what grounds such persons, as *persons* and not "automatons for knowledge", as human beings who wake up in the morning and have to look in the mirror and face those whose admiration and respect they desire, would argue for the dignity and integrity of their own lives and degrees and jobs and researches). By inviting believers of all stripes but above all the deeply religious to attempt to articulate and know themselves, Nietzsche gives their 'theistic' faith enough rope to hang itself: the dictum "I believe *because* it is absurd", ought, according to Nietzsche, to be followed by the *more humble* or less vain or less immoderate recognition that one believes because one is *oneself* absurd (aphorism 417; the irony being that precisely with that recognition, by Nietzsche's account, one ceases to believe).

Before moving on, let us look once again at this entire issue of “refuting” and “affirming” doctrines (Biblical or otherwise). According to Nietzsche, a thought, a way of thinking, a truth and even and above all an ultimate “truth” is never established or denied on the basis of a pure *logos* if by this we mean an impersonally inferable system of premises and deductions that explain the whole. For human beings this is impossible and above all because such a ‘logos in itself’ denies the personal and radical perspectivity of the knower or perceiver. Alternative ‘truths’ about the world are in the end always a question of the perceiver: it is always a question of one’s self-knowledge. For our opinions as a whole interpret phenomenon and are taken from our observances of phenomenon; we believe in our opinions because they ‘explain the phenomenon’ for *us*, and those with alternative and even opposing ‘truths’ do likewise: both look to the same phenomenon, the same facts or text, but the *facts* are precisely what are subject to interpretation. It is always a question of what ‘evidence’ speaks to us, the ‘listener,’ and *why*. The truth about the whole is thus inseparable from the truth about ourselves, and its *evidence* must conform to the evidence of *ourselves*. Thus, our opinions about the whole always reflect our self-understanding (or misunderstanding) and it is this that constitutes the *true reasons* why we ever affirm or deny a ‘truth,’ and not some wholly objective, impersonal, and unqualifiedly ‘true *logos*’ we possess or could possess that ‘proves’ our opinion and ‘disproves’ alternative opinions. It is in this light that we can understand the following statement made by Nietzsche:⁴²

An affectation on departing. – He who wants to desert a party or a religion believes it is incumbent upon him to refute it. But this is a very arrogant notion. All that is needed is that he should be clear as to the nature of the bonds that formerly tied him to this party or religion and to the fact that they no longer do so; that he should understand what kind of outlook impelled him to them and that it now impels him

⁴² *Human all too Human*, Volume II, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, aphorism 82; cf. aphorism 16 of the same.

elsewhere. We did *not* attach ourself to this party or religion on *strictly rational grounds*: we ought not to *affect* to have done so when we leave it.

Taste, Physiological and Philological: The Selective

Principle of Being as Will to Power

To conclude with our analysis of the *Preface*, Nietzsche claims throughout his writings to have thought pessimism – itself a *moral* phenomena, and succinctly defined as “the contempt for that existence which is knowable by *us*” – through to its depths and to have ‘come out the other side’ (i.e., to have overcome pessimism or nihilism by the most severe internal or intimate critique of it)⁴³. Yet here in the preface to *Daybreak* Nietzsche tempts the reader into believing that the book is self-contradictory, indeed motivated by pessimism inasmuch as it grounds reason in morality. What are we to make of this? Is there evidence in the *Preface* under discussion that Nietzsche believes himself here in *Daybreak* to have gone beyond the pessimism and German logic that grounds reason in morality and which has contempt for the existence which is knowable by us? There is indeed cause for suspicion due to what immediately follows the ‘confession’ of the contradiction at the core of the book. For Nietzsche asks, concerning his loud claim that the book is motivated by morality, “[o]r what else should we call that which informs it – and *us*? for our taste is for more modest expressions.” Nietzsche not only invites us to attempt to answer the question, but he also points again to the relationship between the man and the book in which he is both concealed and revealed. One possibility suggested by Nietzsche above as a more modest word to characterize the reason for both his and his

⁴³ *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 346; see also *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 56.

book's withdrawal from morality is *taste*. For taste, as Nietzsche means it, instinctually takes its cue not from pleasure as such but from *the good* or health or, to use Nietzsche's preferred language – the “good” still sounds too moral and absolute, whereas power-seeking sounds “evil” and anti-Christian to modern ears, which is an affect Nietzsche *wants* – from *power*, the feeling of power being pleasurable and thus, on Nietzsche's understanding, not separable from pain. Here we might see *Ecce Homo, Why I Am so Wise*, section 2:

I took myself in hand, I made myself healthy again: the condition for this—every physiologist will admit it—is *that one is fundamentally healthy*. A typically morbid being cannot become healthy, still less make itself healthy; conversely, for one who is typically healthy being sick can even be an energetic *stimulant* to life, to more life. Thus in fact does that long period of sickness seem to me *now*: I discovered life as it were anew, myself included, I tasted all good and even petty things, as others cannot easily taste them,—I made out of my will to health, to *life*, my philosophy ...

For pay heed to this: it was in the years of my lowest vitality that I *ceased* to be a pessimist: the instinct for self-recovery *forbade* to me a philosophy of indigence and discouragement ...

And in what does one really recognize that someone has *turned out well*! In that a human being who has turned out well does our senses good: that he is carved out of wood at once hard, delicate and sweet-smelling. He has a taste only for what is good for him; his pleasure, his joy ceases where the measure of what is good for him is overstepped. He divines cures for injuries, he employs ill chances to his own advantage; what does not kill him makes him stronger. Out of everything he sees, hears, experiences he instinctively collects together *his* sum: he is a principle of selection, he rejects much. He is always in *his* company, whether he traffics with books, people or landscapes: he does honor when he *chooses*, when he *admits*, when he *trusts*. He reacts slowly to every kind of stimulus, with that slowness which a protracted caution and a willed pride have bred in him,—he tests an approaching stimulus, he is far from going out to meet it. He believes in neither “misfortune” nor in “guilt”: he knows how to *forget*—he is strong enough for everything to *have* to turn out for the best for him.

Indeed taste is grounded in *phusis* (nature), and gives its name and is essential to *sophia* or wisdom⁴⁴. We might see here *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, written some six years prior to *Daybreak*, part three:

Blessed are those who possess taste, even though it be bad taste! – and not only blessed: one can be wise, too, only by virtue of this quality; which is why the Greeks, who were very subtle in such things, designated the wise man with a word that signifies the *man of taste*, and called wisdom, artistic and practical as well as theoretical and intellectual, simply ‘taste’ (*sophia*).

⁴⁴ For an exceedingly brief sample of Nietzsche's thoughts concerning this matter, see *Gay Science*, aphorisms 39, 132, 308, 319, 335, and 347; *Daybreak*, aphorism 119, the first third of aphorism 188, aphorisms 505, 553, and 558; *Twilight of the Idols, Expeditions of an Untimely Man*, aphorism 32, and *Morality as Anti-Nature*, aphorism 3, towards the end; see especially *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 105.

We might also look to the end of *Human all too Human*, Volume II, *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, aphorism 170:

The Greek word which designates the sage belongs etymologically to *sapio*, I taste, *sapiens*, the tasting one, *sisyphos*, the person of the most delicate taste; the peculiar art of the philosopher therefore consists, according to the opinion of the people, in a delicate selective judgment by taste, by discernment, by significant differentiation. He is not prudent, if one calls him prudent, who in his own affairs finds out the good; Aristotle rightly says: "That which Thales and Anaxagoras know, people will call unusual, astounding, difficult, divine but—useless, since human possessions were of no concern to those two." Through thus selecting and precipitating the unusual, astounding, difficult, and divine, philosophy marks the boundary lines dividing her from science in the same way as she does it from prudence by the emphasizing of the useless. Science rushes headlong, without selectivity, without "taste," at whatever is knowable, in the blind covetousness to know all at any cost; philosophical thinking however is always on the scent of the things worth knowing, on the track of the great and most important discernments.

We thus have reason for suspicion and more than mere suspicion concerning Nietzsche's exceedingly *loud* profession in section four – consistently in the first person *plural* – of the piety inherited over millennium as the motivation for the rejection of piety *exhibited* more or less by the book (i.e., merely exhibited but not constitutive of its *grounds*).

But without looking outside of *Daybreak's Preface*, we get our most compelling indication in section five that we must be suspicious of the 'confession' in section four. For in section five Nietzsche invites us – returning midway to the emphatic use of the first person singular (though the entire aphorism has the tone of being imminently personal) – to revisit this issue "more coldly, more distantly, more prudently, from a greater height". Here the greatest heights are the ultimate depths or better, the grounds. Indeed, Nietzsche there 'rebukes' himself for his previous fervor and loudness, saying that he will communicate his thoughts so "secretly" that no one will hear them but the perfect (and hence patient) reader who is the friend. This style of writing, which loves *lento*, is in accordance, he says, with his morally questionable "*taste*." Thus the reader can have confidence that the more laborious route or journey through *Daybreak* that I

will be guiding them through will reveal a more subtle teaching than that contained in the feverish ending of section four. The rest of section five indicates the hermeneutical approach Nietzsche's words demand, the very approach I have followed in this chapter examining the *Preface*: one must go "slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers . . . "⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ For more on eyes, ears, fingers, and other such one can look to *Twilight of the Idols, What the Germans Lack*, aphorisms 6 and 7.

Chapter IV

Nietzsche's Psychological-Historical Account of Morality: Conjectures, Arguments, Polemics

Preliminary Reflections

Daybreak consists of five books and five hundred and seventy-five titled aphorisms. The books are untitled and, moreover, the ordering of the aphorisms seems almost entirely arbitrary: as a consequence (and as already discussed), many a reader of *Daybreak* has been struck by the work's apparent randomness or desultory character. And yet, prior even to the addition of the later-written *Preface*, we are given several indications by Nietzsche as to the theme of the work as a whole. First, we have the title: *Daybreak*. With this title Nietzsche addresses the history of Western philosophy as far back as Plato and further still: for the breaking-through of the sun represents, among other things, the awakening of a new understanding, a new viewing by man of the beings and Being (the sun). Indeed, no understanding of Nietzsche is possible if one does not properly appreciate Nietzsche's own understanding of his relation to the prior tradition of Western philosophy. Be that as it may, Nietzsche indicates by the work's title that he has himself experienced a fundamental awakening.

Second, we have a subtitle: *Thoughts on Moral Prejudices*. The subtitle sheds light on the title: Nietzsche's awakening to a new cognizance is related to his thoughts or

reflections on moral prejudices. In fact, Nietzsche's "thoughts" constitute a thinking-through-and-beyond of moral prejudices, for the breaking through of an entirely new understanding is only made possible by this overcoming. One sun has set (the horizon of thought governed by moral prejudices, i.e., governed by the belief in their truth as grounded in the Biblical God), and breaking through the darkness like the phoenix, a new sun, and thus a new, non-moral or extra-moral horizon of thought is opened. As

Nietzsche says elsewhere (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 380):

"The wanderer" speaks. – If one should like to see our European morality for once as it looks from a distance, and if one would like to measure it against other moralities, past and future, then one has to proceed like a wanderer who wants to know how high the towers in a town are: he leaves the town. "Thoughts about moral prejudices," if they are not meant to be prejudices about prejudices, presuppose a position *outside* morality, some point beyond good and evil to which one has to rise, climb, or fly – and in the present case at least a point beyond *our* good and evil, a freedom from everything "European," by which I mean the sum of the imperious value judgments that have become part of our flesh and blood. That one *wants* to go precisely out there, up there, may be a minor madness, a peculiar and unreasonable "You must" – for we seekers for knowledge also have our idiosyncrasies of "un-free-will" – the question is whether one really *can* get up there.

This may depend on manifold conditions. In the main the question is how light or heavy we are – the problem of our "specific gravity." One has to be *very light* to drive ones will to knowledge into such a distance and, as it were, beyond one's time, to create for oneself eyes to survey millennia and, moreover, clear skies in these eyes. One must have liberated oneself from many things that oppress, inhibit, hold down, and make heavy precisely us Europeans today. The human being of such a beyond who wants to behold the supreme measures of value for his time must first of all "overcome" this time in himself – this is the test of his strength – and consequently not only his time but also his prior aversion and contradiction *against* this time, his suffering from this time, his un-timeliness, his *romanticism*.

Yet, thus far, it seems, we have only addressed the subtitle as it relates to the question as to the *truth* of moral prejudices; Nietzsche also reflects upon the *value* of moral prejudices, and these reflections too must bear a relation to the comprehensive intellectual awakening indicated by the title. For this we can see *The Will to Power*, aphorism 254:⁴⁶

The inquiry into the *origin of our evaluations* and tables of the good is in absolutely no way identical with a critique of them, as is so often believed: even though the insight into some

⁴⁶ Cf. *Will to Power*, aphorism 251; cf. *Joyous Science*, aphorism 345, end.

pudenda origo [shameful origin] certainly brings with it a *feeling* of a diminution in value of the thing that originated thus and prepares the way to a critical mood and attitude toward it.

What are our evaluations and moral tables really worth? What is the outcome of their rule? For whom? In relation to what?—Answer: for life. But *what is life*? Here we need a new, more definite formulation of the concept “life.” My formula for it is: Life is will to power.

What is the meaning of the act of evaluation itself? Does it point back or down to another, metaphysical world? (As Kant still believed, who belongs *before* the great historical movement.⁴⁷) In short, where did it originate? Or did it not “originate”?—Answer: moral evaluation is an *exegesis*, a way of interpreting. The exegesis itself is a symptom of certain physiological conditions, likewise of a particular spiritual level of prevalent judgments: Who interprets?—Our affects.

No embracing or denying of the choice-worthiness of a given moral prejudice is to be encouraged without a proper consideration of the goodness or value of such a prejudice.

It is only because of our ready inclination to unqualifiedly predicate “goodness” of “truth” that we fail to see that the inquiry into morality’s *truth* and the inquiry into morality’s *value* are two inquiries, related but differentiable. This is also, arguably, the chief reason why one who is still too *timely* in his untimeliness takes a stance *against* his time as being based on untruths or lies⁴⁸.

Third, Nietzsche provides us with an epigram, a passage from the Rig Veda:

“there are so many days that have not yet broken”. Nietzsche intends here to point to two different “daybreaks” and their variations. That is, on the one hand Nietzsche points to the philosophers he anticipates in the future, the solitaries in whom new intellectual horizons are opened (just as similar experiences of enlightenment occurred in solitaries past, which is not to say that the content or vision is the same for all of them). On the other hand, Nietzsche refers to the rising and setting of suns in world history, as intellectual horizons (i.e., the systems of reasonings by which men understand all things, or better, the prevalent understanding of Being and beings) arrive and pass through the ages. Indeed, Nietzsche envisions and intends a comprehensive overcoming of the

⁴⁷ A reference, above all, to Hegel and Darwin.

⁴⁸ A reference to the end of the aphorism titled “The wanderer speaks”, just quoted. One might also recall here aphorisms 37 and 105 of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

moral-theological horizon by historical man; the result of this overcoming is what he would later term “Overman”.

Philosophy, History, and Historical Philosophizing

The first book begins with eight short aphorisms that encapsulate the concerns of that book as a whole; with the ninth aphorism, one of the lengthiest in all of *Daybreak*, the analysis proper begins. Aphorism one is titled *Supplemental rationality*:

Supplemental rationality. – All things that live long are gradually so saturated with reason that their origin in unreason thereby becomes improbable. Does not almost every precise history of an origination impress our feelings as paradoxical and wantonly offensive? Does the good historian not, at bottom, constantly *contradict*?

Rationality has been added to things in order to complete them or supply a deficiency. These things are the human things that have lived long, things such as science, morality, and philosophy, all of which have a history and thus an origin also. Indeed, in Nietzsche’s thought not only does everything have a history but also, the being of a being is inseparable from its history, denying as he does the existence of eternal forms from a metaphysical realm whose patterns either pilot the cosmos or otherwise exist *in* the cosmos (i.e., the traditional way of thinking since Plato). Indeed Nietzsche’s method may be called, as he himself calls it, *historical philosophizing*, which is to be contrasted above all with logical or dialectical philosophizing: As he says in a decisive aphorism⁴⁹:

Forfeit to history. – The veil-philosophers and world-obscurers, that is to say all metaphysicians of finer or coarser grain, are seized with eye-, ear- and toothache when they begin to suspect that the proposition ‘The whole of philosophy is henceforth forfeit to history’ is quite true. On account of the *pain* they feel they must be forgiven for throwing stones and dirt at him who speaks thus: the proposition itself, however, can thereby become dirty and unsightly for a time, and its effectiveness be diminished.

⁴⁹ *Human all-too-Human, Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, aphorism 10; cf. *Of First and Last Things*, aphorism 2.

Only what is wholly necessary, eternal, and selfsame can be defined and thus without a history, without an *origination*, or, as Nietzsche says in a decisive passage: “only that which has no history is definable”⁵⁰.

Nietzsche is going to provide several histories and several originations: in this book we are going to see, to give a sample, the origins of morality, of rights, of actions, of the *vita contemplativa*, of rationality, of sight, of intellectual advancement, of providence, of predicates, of man, of judgments, of feelings, of superstitious practices, of religion, of science, of poetry, of thinking, of medicine, and of law-giving. According to Nietzsche, the conclusion that our most rational-seeming, weightiest, and noblest human capacities and concerns have their origin in *unreason* is going to strike us as paradoxical and sacrilegious (wicked or wanton). We have a pious or moral attitude towards these things, and our understanding of these things is going to be *contradicted* by our newly attained understanding of the *origins* of such things. The good historian in Nietzsche’s sense contradicts in that he shows us that the grounds of a thing are not what we believe them to be but rather more sensibly the ‘opposite’. For example, we believe that reason (if not as our worldly reason than as the ‘higher rationality’ of God, or both, assuming they are not the same thing) or truth is the ground of our morality when it is more manifestly unreason, whether as affects, errors, or both, that is the ground of that morality. Intimately related, we believe that truth in which our morality is grounded to be a higher (moral) truth from a higher realm of Being in which our being may participate, whereas Nietzsche argues that our morality has an origin and is thus

⁵⁰ For more on this one might see the first two aphorisms in *Human all-too-Human*, *Of First and Last Things*, also, *Genealogy of Morals*, 2.13 and *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 2; recall also *The Will to Power*, aphorism 254, already quoted above. For Nietzsche Dionysus is the Eternal One, and is, having been defined as will to power, also becoming, change, history, chance, or eternal pregnancy: this riddle has its solution in eternal return (to which theme we shall later return).

grounded, in a manner, in *history*, in the earth, in the “lower” realm of change and natural development. Even worse (*Will to Power*, aphorism 308):

Morality is just as “immoral” as any other thing on earth; morality is itself a form of immorality.

The great liberation this insight brings. Contradiction is removed from things, the homogeneity of all events is saved—

Concerning this reasoning in popular morality, in it as in popular medicine, “both material and form are worthless.” (aphorism 11). The saturated belief that our morality is rational, that the material and form of our moral speculations are of the greatest worth (and not absurd or contradictory), goes hand in hand with our belief that we *know* what good and evil are.

This brings us to the second aphorism:

Prejudice of the Learned. – The learned judge correctly that people of all ages have believed they know what is good and evil, praise- and blameworthy. But it is a prejudice of the learned that we now know better than any other age.

As we shall see, Nietzsche’s argument that the non-philosophic believe themselves knowledgeable in good and evil, in what is deserving of praise and deserving of blame, is at the very crux of his greater argument for denying the Biblical God (i.e., by way of denying the veracity of the recipients of revelatory experiences that seem to testify to that God). But the philosopher argues here in particular that the learned among the moderns, beneficiaries –though not unqualifiedly – of the study of history, “judge correctly” that all prior peoples have wrongly believed themselves to be in possession of “morality itself”, and yet they still believe themselves to be in possession of moral knowledge. The learned may have lynx-eyes for the past and its peoples, but they are certainly blind toward themselves and their environment (what is in them and what is around them).

In aphorism three Nietzsche continues with the theme of popular morality and its belief in its own rationality, calling attention also to his “prophecy,” really his hope and knowledgeable prediction, that the moral horizon in which man presently lives and has lived in for a long time now will end (aphorism 3):

Everything has its time.—When man gave all things a sex he thought, not that he was playing, but that he had gained a profound insight: -- it was only very late that he confessed to himself what an enormous error this was, and perhaps even now he has not confessed it completely. – In the same way man has ascribed to all that exists a connection with morality and laid an *ethical significance* on the world’s shoulder. One day this will have as much value, and no more, as the belief in the masculinity or femininity of the sun has today.

With this belief in the “ethical significance” of the world man believes himself to be in possession of a “profound insight”. One day he shall perhaps see fully that the material and form of this profound insight were worthless, and thus abandon the belief entirely.

Nietzsche returns to this theme in aphorism one-hundred, which reads:

Awakening from a dream. – Wise and noble men once believed in the music of the spheres: wise and noble men still believe in the ‘moral significance of existence’. But one day this music of the spheres too will no longer be audible to them! They will awaken and perceive that their ears had been dreaming.

Wise and noble men of the past – again influence one and all by Plato – believed in the harmony of the spheres and its beautiful music, this music being the effect of the (almost) perfect harmony of the universe as ordered by the Divine Mind (or, as Aristotle defined Being/God: “Thought thinking itself”), its spheres and bodies moving according to a measure or ratio in themselves and with respect to the other existents: i.e., moving according to reason or *logos*. But according to Nietzsche their ears had been dreaming: the universe is a vast chaos, a chance “arrangement” of beings that in no way justifies our belief in it as the “best arrangement possible”. Nietzsche denies Being as Divine Mind as it was conceived by Plato and others, for he denies their understanding of mind, *nous*, or

reason and with that the *ideas* as eternal and essential. We might consider here aphorism 474:

The Only Ways. – ‘Dialectics is the only way of attaining the divine Being and getting behind the veil of appearance.’ – this is asserted by Plato as solemnly and passionately as Schopenhauer asserts it of the antithesis of dialectics – and both are wrong. For that to which they want to show us the way does not *exist* – and have all the great passions of mankind not hitherto been as these are, passions for nothing? And all their solemnities – solemnities about a nothing?

Moving from ancient metaphysics to modern morality, however, man today believes in the ethical significance of the world, and this too is a kind of music. Nietzsche prophesizes that this music will no longer be audible to men in the future who have awoken to the fact that their ears had been dreaming: the god whose communications men formerly believed they had been hearing shall communicate no more. For now, however, in the main men still believe firmly in providence, no matter how much this idea may have moved to the background of their thinking or even have been denied outright. One can observe gamblers for this: perhaps no one believes in luck or chance *less* than gamblers. But we need not look only to the degenerate to see this: one may look, for example, to passionate lovers and their belief in the destiny of their meeting for the same belief.

Aphorism four picks up on our theme and is as follows:

Against the imagined disharmony of the spheres. – We must again rid the world of much *false* grandeur, because it offends against the justice which all things may lay claim to from us! And to that end it is necessary not to want to see the world as being more disharmonious than it is!

By seeing the world through moral eyes man introduces a disharmony into the world: man is a free-willing moral agent, a moral-reasoner, the rest of the beings are blindly led by God in accordance with his Righteous plan. As a consequence a further contradiction emerges in the universe: that between what is naturally good or bad (or good and bad in a *worldly* sense) and what is supernaturally, divinely, or morally good and evil; a single

thing may be a worldly good and a superworldly evil simultaneously (for example, a stolen fortune). Thus we have a disharmony between 'man' and 'nature' (or, world), and this grounded in the greater disharmony between the higher moral realm – the otherworld that is eternal – and the lower immoral realm that is the mortal stuff of this world. This disharmony introduces grandeur inasmuch as the universe takes on a moral dimension under the governance of the Providential God from whom that composite or mixed being *man* owes his participation in the higher eternal realm. But according to Nietzsche, this is a false grandeur and the disharmony that produces it must be expelled from our thinking: intellectual justice requires that we know the beings as they are honestly or manifestly knowable and not in accordance with the imaginations produced by our hopes and fears. To go further, according to Nietzsche this grandeur is the product of our vanity (*The Wanderer and his Shadow*, aphorism 304):

Man! – What is the vanity of the vainest man compared with the vanity which the most modest possesses when, in the midst of nature and the world, he feels himself to be 'man'!

We have already seen Nietzsche confidently proclaim the coming end of the moral horizon, even calling upon mankind to consciously bring about that end. Why is the end of the moral horizon foreseeable and even desirable? Because morality itself is on the decline among men, having been challenged on the one hand by the fruits and reasonings of modern natural science, and so saturated on the other hand by moral reasonings as to be rarefied and lofty to the point of near total weightlessness. As reason and civilization enhance the power of morality in the world wanes: reason empowers man, enabling him to understand the world's workings and thereby more able to secure his good for himself and thus less fearful in general and less dependant on the gods in particular. Nietzsche calls attention to this in aphorism five, calling on us to be grateful

for the great alleviation of fears that we have inherited as the accomplishment of past mankind and thus, in part, an accomplishment of past moralities⁵¹ (aphorism 5):

Be grateful! – The greatest accomplishment of past mankind is that we no longer need to live in continual fear of wild animals, of barbarians, of gods and of our own dreams.

The tension between rationality and morality that is the submerged theme of aphorism four becomes the explicit theme of aphorism six:

The conjurer and his opposite. – What is astonishing in the realm of science is the opposite of what is astonishing in the art of the conjurer. For the latter wants to persuade us to see a very simple causality where in truth a very complicated causality is at work. Science, on the contrary, compels us to abandon belief in simple causalities precisely where everything seems so easy to comprehend and we are the fools of appearance. The “simplest” things are *very complicated* – a fact at which one can never cease to marvel!

Nietzsche compares the intentions of the scientist to that of the conjurer. Where a complex natural causation is at work, the conjurer tries to “persuade” us that a simple causality is at work on the basis of the efficacy of the will⁵²: he wills for things to move, to rest, to appear and disappear, and the things, in turn, appear obedient to his will. The scientist “compels” us, on the other hand, to accept a complex natural causation in the events wherein we see a simple causation based on the efficacy of the will. In this aphorism Nietzsche comes down on the side of the scientist in that he deems the “simplest” things to be very complicated; we certainly cannot infer from this, however, that Nietzsche believes modern natural science to be any kind of refutation of religion, but rather far from it:

Irony against those who believe Christianity has been overcome by the modern natural sciences. Christian value judgments have not by any means been overcome this way. “Christ on the cross” is the most sublime symbol—even today.

⁵¹ Aphorism 5; cf. *The Will to Power*, aphorism 404. Indeed, the new drive to knowledge, as previously discussed in Chapter One, is itself moral and the product of past moralities.

⁵² For more on this one should see *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 127.

The diminishing effect of science on morality is taken up again in aphorism 7, though this time with a view to the overall effect of science and morality on the human soul:

Learning to feel differently about space. – Is it the real things or the imaginary things which have contributed most to human happiness? What is certain is that the *extent of the space* between the highest happiness and the deepest unhappiness has been produced only with the aid of the imaginary things. *This* kind of feeling of space is, consequently, being continually reduced under the influence of science: just as science has taught us, and continues to teach us, to feel that the earth is small and the solar-system itself no more than a point.

With morality the lows are lower but the highs are higher, and the moral man can experience the entire range of his soul, from the deepest misery or wretchedness to the highest happiness (cf., aphorisms 57 and 113). Modern, scientific man may be spared such wretched depths as that experienced by the moral man (for example, in the fear and even anticipation of eternal damnation; cf. Aphorism 551), but the price of this is that he is also denied the heights of happiness available to the moral man (such as that experienced in the certitude that one dwells in the bosom of the Lord). Nietzsche does not say for certain that this trade of “higher-lows” for “lower-highs” has been a poor bargain, indeed it may be a good bargain, but he does say for certain that the modern soul is *flatter* as a consequence of science and thus feels differently about itself and the world.

For more on this we can look to *The Joyous Science* aphorism one-hundred fifty-two:

The greatest change.—The illumination and the color of all things have changed. We no longer understand altogether how the ancients experienced what was most familiar and frequent—for example, the day and waking. Since the ancients believed in dreams, waking appeared in a different light. The same goes for the whole of life, which was illumined by death and its significance; for us “death” means something quite different. All experience is shown differently because a god shone through them. All decisions and perspectives on the remote future, too; for they had oracles and secrete portents and believed in prophesy. “Truth” was experienced differently, for the insane could be accepted formerly as its mouthpiece – which makes *us* shudder or laugh.

Every wrong had a different effect on men’s feelings; for one feared divine retribution and not merely a civil punishment and dishonor. What was joy in ages when one believed in devils and tempters? What was philosophy when doubt was experienced as a sin of the most dangerous kind - as sacrilege against eternal love, as mistrust against all that was good, high, pure, and merciful?

We have given things a new color; we go on painting them continually. But what do all our efforts to date avail when we hold them against the colored splendor of that old master – ancient humanity?

Man only learns “*to feel differently*” about space, which is to say, about the importance or grandeur of himself with respect to the world, after he has learned “*to think differently*” (aphorism 103, end). If, in the future, we are able to think beyond the confines of materialistic natural science and enter into a new *thinking* (and quantum physics certainly appears to be a step in this direction), we shall thereby guarantee for ourselves a new *feeling* as well. Nietzsche aims at this through his healthy mankind of the future and ultimately through his doctrine of the will to power and the men of the future who shall be shaped or formed by it. But we shall return to this later in Chapter V (and, moreover, with our talk of the will to power we have left the confines of *Daybreak*).

The effect of science on mankind is taken up in aphorism 8:

Transfiguration. – Those that suffer helplessly, those that dream confusedly, those that are entranced by things supernatural – these are the *three divisions* into which Raphael divided mankind. This is no longer how we see the world – and Raphael too would no longer *be able* to see it as he did: he would behold a new transfiguration.

Science or rationality has transfigured man such that we are no longer classifiable into the three types that Raphael saw before him in his time and depicted in his painting

Transfiguration. At the very least we would have to have a classification that includes the learned as a class, those prophets of progress who, armed with scientific knowledge and the technology made available by that knowledge, take their destiny into their own hands (as they believe). But man today is surely not “man in himself”: Nietzsche envisions very many future transfigurations of mankind, the most decisive being those that shall accompany the breaking open of new days (i.e., the daybreaks that introduce new intellectual horizons). But that is not all: there have been *past* transfigurations for

humankind, and we today have been transfigured from out of the past; indeed, as Nietzsche says later in aphorism forty-nine: “The becoming drags the has-been along behind it”. Of utmost importance to us here is the transfiguration of modern morality and spirituality from out of its dark and long distant past in what Nietzsche calls the *morality of custom* (or, mores).

This much, then, must be said about the opening eight aphorisms. With the ninth aphorism (*Concept of morality of custom*), the psycho-historical account of the origin of morality begins. Indeed, every major theme in Nietzsche’s account finds its germ in aphorism nine, and for this reason we shall deal with it at great length.

The Morality of Custom as the Foundational Stage of Morality

Nietzsche begins aphorism nine (*Concept of morality of custom*) by calling attention to modern day man and his relative “immorality”. Committed to an ideal of “progress” that looks to the future with promise and the past with shame, the “power of custom” has become remarkably enfeebled and the sense for custom or the “moral sense” has become “so rarefied and lofty it may be described as having more or less evaporated”. Not only is modern man at a great distance from the origin of morality, but he is the inheritor of the moral reasoning of centuries (the ‘saturation’), and in particular the inheritor of a peculiar mode of reasoning on morality that began with Socrates and which aims at showing the goodness of morality for the individual. Modern man believes that he knows good and evil better than any other age. Initially, however, morality had nothing to do with individual advantages but rather was aimed at the community to which

individuals must sacrifice themselves. Moreover, without logic and science, ancient peoples “reasoned” upon morality in a different manner than we do today. For all these reasons and others, “the fundamental insights into the origin of morality are so difficult for us latecomers, and when we have nevertheless acquired them, they stick to the tongue and do not want to come out, because they sound so tasteless or seem to slander morality.”

Nietzsche calmly announces that this shock to our moral sensibilities is already palpable in his, “*chief proposition*,” namely, that, “Morality is nothing other (therefore no more!) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be.” This is indeed shocking: certain customs may indeed be better than others for human flourishing, but *qua customs* they are all equally fictitious in their claim to truth as well as in their claim to be moral in themselves. The root of the matter is that morality as such has no real standard on which to ground itself, for there is no such thing as an unqualifiedly “true morality” by which other moral systems could be ranked as more or less moral, since for Nietzsche “there are no moral phenomena at all but only a moral interpretation of phenomena”⁵³. Moral interpretations, then, as *moral* interpretations, never make contact with reality due to the fact that there *is no moral reality* to make contact with. For Nietzsche the first proposition of civilization, the “mighty proposition with which civilization begins,” namely, that “any custom is better than no custom”, reflects this indifference to the *content* of the custom (*Daybreak*, aphorism 16).

Morality, then, is nothing other than obedience to customs. But what are customs? Customs “are the traditional way of behaving and evaluating.” Because modern man’s life is less and less determined by tradition, the, “circle of morality” is

⁵³ *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 108; cf. *Daybreak* aphorism 139.

“smaller” for him (recall aphorism 7). In any event, because morality is obedience to custom and custom is the traditional way of behaving and evaluating, we must ask: what is tradition? According to Nietzsche, tradition is “a higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*.” What commands us has power and authority over us and in particular the power to help us or harm us; as such, the commanding authority is understandably an object of *fear*. Thus Nietzsche asks: “What distinguishes this feeling in the presence of tradition from the feeling of fear in general? It is fear in the presence of a higher intellect which here commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal – there is *superstition* in this fear.” We may thus tentatively define morality as *superstitious fearful obedience to an incomprehensible, indefinite and impersonal higher intellect (or intellects) with power over us*. In sum, morality is in its original form obedience to a commanding god or gods (whether ancestors, celestial bodies, animals, or whatever).

We must distinguish custom in general from the *sense* for custom. The first “represents the experiences of men of earlier times as to what they supposed useful and harmful,” the latter “applies, not to these experiences as such, but to the age, the sanctity, the indiscussibility of the custom” (aphorism 19; and it is this sense for custom that Nietzsche says has more or less evaporated, having become so saturated by ‘reason’). Thus Nietzsche is able to say in aphorism nine that “if an action is performed not because tradition commands it but for other motives (because of its usefulness to the individual for example), even indeed for precisely the motives that once founded the tradition, it is called immoral and felt to be so by him who performed it.” Despite the fact that the

original motive for creating a tradition is attaining the useful and avoiding the harmful, an act is only felt to be moral when it is performed out of the sense for custom, which means that it is performed in thoughtless obedience to the custom as command and not as beneficial to the individual, at least not primarily (see “first of all his own salvation” in aphorism nine). To this extent, Nietzsche claims that morality “makes stupid”, for the sense for morality is a feeling that is “a hindrance to the acquisition of new experiences and the correction of customs: that is to say, morality is a hindrance to the creation of new and better customs” (aphorism nineteen). Clearly, then, the sense for morality makes us stupid with respect to our attaining good and avoiding harm, which was the end or purpose behind the customs origination.

And yet, that morality makes stupid and lazy, and that the moral man desires a certain stupidity, is not the end of the story. Man, as the rational animal, cannot help but speculate over morality and this is true of man even in the earliest stages of history. According to Nietzsche, this speculation constituted “the tremendous exercised ground of the intellect” (aphorism forty), and there was indeed lots to speculate over, for “originally all education and care of health, marriage, cure of sickness, agriculture, war, speech and silence, traffic with one another and with the gods belonged within the domain of morality”⁵⁴. Prescriptions of custom often originated from some “unique strange occurrence” (for example, an eclipse or a volcano) and initially ‘made sense’: the volcano, for example, erupted after the tribe had eaten some berries picked from land surrounding the volcano: therefore, henceforth such berries are ceremoniously offered to the god and become prohibited to the people – except perhaps on specific occasions, or as a privilege of the shamans (or priests) – who fear that eating them will be met with future

⁵⁴ Aphorism nine; one might also see here Plato’s *Symposium*, 202e-203a.

eruptions as punishment. With time, however, the prohibition becomes incomprehensible as the people forget the initial motive for the prescription. At this point vast speculation over the custom begins, increasing its value and transforming its most absurd aspects into its most holy aspects. According to Nietzsche, it is out of this speculation over usages that religion, science, poetry, thinking, medicine and law-giving began: "Fear of the Incomprehensible which in an ambiguous way demanded ceremonies of us gradually passed over into the stimulus of the hard to comprehend, and where one did not know how to explain one learned how to create" (aphorism forty).

Now, what kind of reasoning is involved in this creative speculation? Clearly, moral reasoning is involved; that is to say, all of the premises of the morality have already been granted, and what remains is speculation that is grounded in those thoughtlessly accepted premises (such as, for example, the fact of revelation). This is not the same thing as a genuine seeking of knowledge concerning morality. Such reasoning would seek to understand the origins of these premises and their alignment to the real, to what in truth is, but moral reasoning merely adds a rational-seeming superstructure to an unexamined moral foundation. Indeed, the nature of moral reasoning and its worthlessness when held to the standard of reasoning simply is taken up by Nietzsche in aphorism eleven:

Popular morality and popular medicine. – The morality which prevails in a community is constantly being worked at by everybody: most people produced example after example of the alleged *relationship between cause and effect*, between guilt and punishment, confirm it as well-founded and strengthen their faith: some observe actions and their consequences afresh and draw conclusions and laws from their observations: a very few take exception here and there and thus weaken faith on these points. – All, however, are at one in the *wholly crude, unscientific* character of their activity; whether it is a matter of producing examples, making observations or taking exception, whether it is a matter of proving, confirming, expressing or refuting a law – both material and form are worthless, as are the material and form of all popular medicine. Popular medicine and popular morality belong together and ought not to be evaluated so differently as they still are: both are the *most dangerous* pseudo sciences.

Whatever “rationality” is involved in morality is thus according to Nietzsche merely a kind of pseudo-rationality and creative art.

Sacrifice in the Morality of Custom

Initially moral prescriptions did not aim at the good of the individual moral actor: morality demanded that “one observe prescriptions *without thinking of oneself* as an individual,” indeed “the individual is to sacrifice himself”. Originally, the community was paramount and the wellbeing of the community depended entirely on the faithful observance of their customs as unconditionally *commanded*. This basic orientation continued even into the time of the Romans; hence, “to a virtuous Roman of the old stamp every *Christian* who ‘considered first of all his *own* salvation’ appeared – evil” (aphorism nine). One’s own salvation must be, at most, a secondary consideration: first and foremost it is the community and its wellbeing that must be considered.

Within the domain of this original understanding of morality (i.e., as obedience to the god’s commandments as testimony to the total authority of the god), men could of course be more or less moral. But according to this understanding, who is the most moral man? Nietzsche claims that, *at first*, the most moral man is “he who obeys the law most frequently...*then*, he who obeys it even in the most difficult cases” (aphorism nine). Nietzsche does not explain why the man considered most moral shifts from the man of most frequent obedience to the man who obeys even in the most difficult cases, but we can infer the following reason: inasmuch as obedience to custom is demanded so that “the hegemony of custom, tradition, shall be made evident”, a single splendid act of sacrifice

can establish this hegemony more evidently and strikingly (and thus make a greater impression on the people) than a lifetime of mundane observances can ever do. That the one type makes a more striking impression is surely correct, but that he has in fact sacrificed more to morality, that he is in fact more moral is highly questionable. But be that as it may, Nietzsche maintains that this distinction between the morality of most *frequent* obedience and the morality of most *difficult* obedience is the fundamental distinction as concerns the morality of custom. The latter, the morality of most difficult observance, branches off into “several diverse kinds of morality” (aphorism nine) in accordance with how a given people answers the question as to what constitutes the greatest sacrifice. In sum, both the man of frequent obedience and the man of difficult obedience make *sacrifices* for their morality: one sacrifices a little bit all the time, the other sacrifices immensely – such as Abraham was commanded to do with the sacrifice of his son, though his act was not related to a community in the first instance, but to his one soul’s relation to God – on certain occasions (and to sacrifice is, on the common understanding, to willingly or voluntarily suffer, which means to suffer harm).

Morality as the Development of Cruelty (Revenge)

In aphorism fifteen we learn of two stages of mankind hitherto. The two stages are essentially linked by cruelty, or rather in the *consolation of the advantage attained in becoming conscious of the power one still possesses* (which power may be real or supposed). In the first stage of mankind cruelty and its consequent suffering are directed outwards; men, fearful and weak, come to feel confident (through pride) and powerful by

cruelly making *others* suffer: “first stage: man sees in every feeling of indisposition and misfortune something for which he has to make someone else suffer – in doing so he becomes conscious of the power he still possesses and this consoles him”.

In the second stage of mankind the pleasure in cruelty and thus the inflicting of suffering are directed *inwards*. It is here, for the first time, that a *meaning* is interpreted into one’s own sufferings (i.e., suffering is now imagined to bear a relation to our ‘nature,’ to our inner thoughts and outward actions, and a beneficial relation at that).

Here (aphorism 15):

... man sees in every feeling of indisposition and misfortune a punishment, that is to say, an atonement for guilt and the means of *getting free* from the evil spell of a real or supposed injustice. When he realizes this *advantage* which misfortune brings with it, he no longer believes that he has to make someone else suffer for it—he renounces this kind of satisfaction because he now has another.

This advantage lies, as with his counterpart the earliest barbarian, in the consciousness of his power (real or imagined), though this time attended by moral exaltation. The moral man seeks his *advantage* in making himself suffer and finds an *advantage* in suffering generally (really, through the moral interpretation of his suffering by which, ultimately, he takes revenge on the world – including some part of himself – for his impotence). But according to Nietzsche: “[t]hat which we do for our own *benefit* ought not to entail for us any moral praise, either from others or from oneself; the same goes for that which we do for our own *pleasure*.” (aphorism 508). Thus, according to the argument put forward, the moral man is certainly not morally praiseworthy in his flattering attempt to please and appease the gods through his self-inflicted cruelty (cf. aphorism 76).

Now, we quoted Nietzsche above in his saying that through suffering one hoped to “put the community in good odor with the evil gods” (aphorism 18). Why are the gods

referred to as evil? The answer is that at this point man considers himself evil and reads himself into nature accordingly, (evil here does not mean sinful, but rather, free, capricious, unusual, unforeseen, and incalculable; recall aphorism 9). Nietzsche teaches this in aphorism seventeen saying:

Nature, good and evil. – At first, men imagined themselves into nature: they saw everywhere themselves and their kind, especially their evil and capricious qualities, as it were hidden among the clouds, storms, beasts of prey, trees and plants: it was then they invented ‘evil nature’. Then there came along an age when they again imagined themselves out of nature, the age of Rousseau: they were so fed up with one another they absolutely had to have a corner of the world into which man and his torments could not enter: they invented ‘good nature’.

In both cases men are “evil”; at the first stage man reads his evil qualities into nature and is not morally troubled by this. Many thousands of years later in Rousseau’s time, the evil man is the eighteenth century’s “civilized man” who is held to be alienated from “good nature” (i.e., *morally* good nature, and essentially Christian)⁵⁵. By imagining themselves *into* nature (and each of them, both the first men and the men of the age of Rousseau, did this) they in fact imagined themselves *out* of nature: nature is neither good nor evil in the manner in which men imagine it (cf. aphorisms 23 and 31).

But let us return to the topic of cruelty and suffering, using aphorisms nine and eighteen in order to delineate the stages of mankind more thoroughly. In stage one cruelty is directed outwards as a kind of revenge on the world for one’s impotence. Then, as the idea of voluntary suffering “creeps into the world” (aphorism 18), stage two slowly emerges. In stage two cruelty is directed inwards and this is the horizon of our morality, the horizon in which suffering is interpreted as “meaningful and valuable” (aphorism 18). This last stage can be divided into three sub-stages: 1) The morality of most frequent obedience or most frequent suffering; 2) The morality of most difficult obedience; and, 3) the morality of voluntary suffering as a conscious means to one’s “own *advantage*”,

⁵⁵ For more on this one can see, for example, *The Will to Power*, aphorism 340.

one's "personal key to happiness" (aphorism 18). This last stage begins with Socrates, and we today have been brought up in its aftereffect which is no longer the pristine type of the morality of custom. The first two sub-stages which together constitute the morality of custom are practiced, according to Nietzsche, *not* as a "means of discipline, of self-control, of satisfying the desire for individual happiness – but as a virtue which will put the community in good odor with the evil gods and which steams up to them like a perpetual propitiatory sacrifice on the altar" (aphorism 18).

But how radical is the shift from voluntary suffering for the sake of the community to voluntary suffering for the sake of the individual? According to Nietzsche, this shift is not as radical as it seems. Socrates taught a "morality" that was truly egoistic, but so-called Socratic morality and its offspring (including, especially, Christian morality) teach a kind of pseudo-egoism. Indeed, according to Nietzsche, "The prescriptions called 'moral' are in truth directed against individuals and are in no way aimed at promoting their happiness" (aphorism 108). At bottom, all these post-Socratic moralities which claim to aim at individual happiness are in fact aimed at the community and are obeyed, ultimately, not because they are useful to us as individuals, but because we sense that they are commands from a transcendent source, commands which strike at our inner essence, and draw forth from that inner essence the decisions that define the ultimate worth and meaning of our lives. The morality of custom is still at work in us moderns despite our claims to progress and refinement in moral matters and despite our pride in our "reason and feeling of freedom" (aphorism 18). This is absolutely clear from Nietzsche's saying, in comparing our modern morality to the "tremendous eras of 'morality of custom' which precede 'world history' as the *actual and decisive eras of*

history which determined the character of mankind”: “Do you think all this has altered and that mankind must therefore have changed its character? Oh observers of mankind, learn better to observe yourselves!” (aphorism 18; cf. aphorisms 105, 107, 132).

As is clear from our preceding discussions, the root of morality is cruelty (which was initially directed towards others and still in a manner ‘pre-moral’ and eventually, towards ourselves; and it is only this latter period which may be designated simply as *moral*, for only here does it involve *sacrifice* or voluntary cruelty towards oneself as a requirement of obedience). But what is the root of this cruelty? Fear and impotence are the roots of cruelty; or, more simply, the drive or lust for power is the root of human cruelty. More specifically, the desire to attain the *feeling* of power and to be *distinguished* thereby, to take *pride* in oneself thereby: “For to practice cruelty is to enjoy the highest gratification of the feeling of power” (aphorism 18), and for Nietzsche the feeling of power is equivalent to *happiness* (cf. aphorism 356). This becomes clear from aphorism 113 (*The striving for distinction*). There, Nietzsche writes:

The striving for distinction is the striving for domination over the next man, even though it be a very indirect domination and only felt or even dreamed. There is a long scale of degrees of this secretly desired domination, and the complete catalogue of them would be almost the same thing as a history of culture, from the earliest, still grotesque barbarism up to the grotesqueries of over-refinement and morbid idealism... Here at the end of the ladder stands the ascetic and martyr, who feels the highest enjoyment by himself enduring, as a consequence of his drive for distinction, precisely that which, on the first step of the ladder, his counterpart the *barbarian* imposes on others on whom and before whom he wants to distinguish himself. The triumph of the ascetic over himself, his glance turned inwards which beholds man split asunder into a sufferer and a spectator, and henceforth gazes out into the outer world only in order to gather wood as it were for his own pyre. This final tragedy of the drive for distinction in which there is only one character burning and consuming himself – this is a worthy conclusion and one appropriate to the commencement: in both cases an unspeakable happiness at the *sight of torment*! Indeed, happiness, conceived of as the liveliest feeling of power, has perhaps been nowhere greater on earth than in the souls of superstitious ascetics.

Pride and Power

At this point we would do well in parsing out more carefully the notion or idea of pride and that of the feeling of power. The two notions, pride and the feeling of power, are not equivalent. Indeed, Nietzsche distinguishes the two in aphorism one-hundred twenty-eight, arguing that, “the doctrine of freedom of will has human pride and feeling of power as its father and mother”. Where pride exists, the feeling of power is necessarily present but it is not true that wherever the feeling of power exists, pride is necessarily present. Pride is not, then, the feeling of power simply (both of which may be non-moral or moral). Indeed, pride involves not only the feeling of power (as always, real or imagined), but also and especially the feeling that one is *distinguished* by the heights of one’s power, as well as the feeling of confidence or hopefulness (understood as a feeling of *expectation*; see aphorism 28). With pride one feels oneself distinctly heightened or exalted in the feeling of power (itself born of consciousness of power), and able to enact one’s will. Where pride is moral the exaltation is a specifically moral exaltation: one feels hopeful and enthused. The specifically *moral* character of this exaltation is identifiable in the element of the individual’s consciousness of his own power (real or potential, and perhaps merely imagined) as *judge* and *executioner*, whether punishing others or punishing himself (cf. aphorism 113). In such a state one interprets a moral meaning to cruelty and suffering, which become forms of punishment or revenge. To go further, in this state of moral pride one not only *knows* what good and evil are, one *knows* oneself and others to be the one or the other.

To begin to see better all of this, we can look to aphorism 32:

The brake.-- To suffer for the sake of morality and then to be told that this kind of suffering is founded on an *error*: this arouses indignation. For there is a unique consolation in affirming through one's suffering a 'profounder world of truth' than any other world is, and one would much *rather* suffer and thereby feel oneself *exalted* above reality (through consciousness of having thus approached this 'profounder world of truth') than be without suffering but also without this feeling that one is exalted. It is thus pride, and the customary manner in which pride is gratified, which stands in the way of a new *understanding* of morality. What force, therefore, will have to be employed if this brake is to be removed? More pride? A new pride?

We see that it is not pride simply, but "the customary manner in which pride is gratified", that stands above all as a brake on any new understanding of morality. Pride may thus be gratified in more than one way. And what is this customary manner in which pride is gratified? It is gratified by the feeling of moral exaltation brought about by the powerful feeling of being *able* to freely suffer for the sake of morality, to freely suffer in affirmation of the *truth* of morality, and this in the face of a deceptive world that tempts us to act against that truth and thus to relinquish the true world. We are proud of our freely-willed endurance of suffering for the sake of morality; that is, of both the occasions of our exercising it and our very power to do it. For this we can look to aphorisms four-hundred twenty-five and three-hundred fifty-four:

We gods in exile! —It is through *errors* as to its origin, its uniqueness, its destiny, and through the *demands* that have been advanced on the basis of these errors, that mankind has raised itself on high and again and again 'excelled itself': But through these same errors and unspeakable amount of suffering, mutual persecution, suspicion, misunderstanding, and even greater misery for the individual in and for himself, have come into the world. Men have become *suffering* creatures as a consequence of their moralities: What they have purchased with them all in all a feeling that at bottom they are too good and too significant for the Earth and paying it only a passing visit. For the present, the 'proud sufferer' is still the highest type of man.

Courage to suffer. – As we are now, we are able to endure a fairly large amount of unpleasure, and our stomach is designed to take this heavy fare. Perhaps without it we would find life's repast insipid: and with our ready tolerance of pain we should have to give up too many pleasures!

We might also look to the opening sentence of aphorism forty-five:

Of all the means of producing exaltation, it has been human sacrifice which has at all times most exalted and elevated man.

Madness and Law-Giving: The Individual and the Herd

Let us then continue with our thorough analysis of aphorism nine, which aphorism we have been using as a springboard to the themes of the book as a whole. We get in aphorism nine the first mention of *madness* and *legislation*, and it is to these themes that we now turn. Our entry point into this topic is the peculiar character of the morality of custom as aimed entirely at the community and its wellbeing while being, consequently, vehemently hostile to the individual as individual. Indeed for Nietzsche, *all* of the thousand moralities hitherto have constituted a constant attack on, and diminishment of, the individual; morality has been a systematic attempt to turn man into a perfect *herd animal*. In fact, for Nietzsche the advancement of monotheistic religions has only worsened matters in this particular respect (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 143):

Monotheism, on the other hand, this rigid consequence of the doctrine of one normal human type – the faith in one normal God beside whom there are only pseudo-gods – was perhaps the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity. It threatened us with premature stagnation that, as far as we can see, most other species have long reached; for all of them believe in one normal type and ideal for their species, and they have translated the morality of mores [the morality of custom] definitively into their own flesh and blood. In polytheism the free-spiriting and many-spiriting of man attained its first preliminary form – the strength to create for ourselves our own new eyes – and ever again new eyes that are even more our own: hence man alone among all the animals has no eternal horizons and perspectives.

So concerned is Nietzsche with the genuine advancement of the individual that in his *Zarathustra* he posits the individual, the “I” or the “ego”, as the thousand-and-first goal of man (i.e., the ultimate goal that grounds and thus redeems all the previous goals pursued by man).

Returning, then, to aphorism nine, Nietzsche writes: “In all of the original conditions of mankind, ‘evil’ signifies the same as ‘individual’, ‘free’, ‘capricious’, ‘unusual’, ‘unforeseen’, ‘incalculable’. Judged by the standard of these conditions, if an

action is performed *not* because tradition commands it but for other motives...it is called immoral and felt to be so by him who performed it". Nietzsche continues with this theme later in the aphorism, saying: "Originally, therefore, everything was custom, and whoever wanted to elevate himself above it had to become lawgiver and medicine man and a kind of demi-god: that is to say, he had to *make customs* – a dreadful, mortally dangerous thing!" Nietzsche returns to this theme at the end of aphorism nine, stating:

Every individual action, every individual mode of thought arouses dread; it is impossible to compute what precisely the rarer, choicer, more original spirits in the whole course of history have had to suffer through being felt as evil and dangerous, indeed through *feeling themselves to be so*. Under the dominion of the morality of custom, originality of every kind has acquired a bad conscience; the sky above the best men is for this reason to this very moment gloomier than it need be.

Now, according to Nietzsche it is "the madman's privilege" to be "unable to adapt himself" (i.e., to the herd; aphorism 451). We can understand this best if we look to the most important aphorism in the book on this theme, aphorism fourteen, which is titled, "*Significance of madness in the history of morality*". There, Nietzsche begins by saying:

When in spite of that fearful pressure of 'morality of custom' under which all the communities of mankind have lived... -- when, I say, in spite of this, new and deviant ideas, evaluations, drives again and again broke out, they did so accompanied by a dreadful attendant: almost everywhere it was madness which prepared the way for the new idea, which broke the spell of a venerated usage and superstition

Concerning this Nietzsche asks: "Do you understand why it had to be madness which did this?" (aphorism fourteen). The answer, in short, is that through madness one can ascribe the new ideas and customs to the god or gods, for "madness was accounted godliness" (aphorism eighteen). But it is helpful here to quote Nietzsche at some length, for at aphorism fourteen he says the following of the character of this madness and its necessity:

Something in voice and bearing as uncanny and incalculable as the demonic moods of the weather and the sea and therefore worthy of a similar awe and observation? Something that bore so visibly the sign of total unfreedom as the convulsions and froth of the epileptic, that seemed to mark the

madman as the mask and speaking-trumpet of a divinity? Something that awoke in the bearer of a new idea himself reverence for and dread of himself and no longer pangs of conscience and drove him to become the prophet and martyr of his idea? – while it is constantly suggested to us today that, instead of a grain of salt, a grain of the spice of madness is joined to genius, all earlier people found it much more likely that wherever there is madness there is also a grain of genius and wisdom – something ‘divine’, as one whispered to oneself. Or rather: as one said aloud forcefully enough. ‘It is through madness that the greatest good things have come to Greece.’ Plato said, in concert with all ancient mankind. Let us go a step further: all superior men who were irresistibly drawn to throw off the yoke of any kind of morality and to frame new laws had, if they were not actually mad, no alternative but to make themselves or pretend to be mad – and this indeed applies to innovators in every domain and not only in the domain of priestly and political dogma: -- even the innovator of poetical meter had to establish his credentials by madness.

The Lawgiver suffers from himself and his own individuality: his own inability to adapt himself to the customs of his people constitutes a tremendous *moral affliction*; he has *dread* for himself and suffers from *pangs of conscience* for he is, in fact, a *criminal* in accordance with the existent customs: he ‘*kills the law*’ in himself. Of this terrible state Nietzsche says (aphorism 14):

Who would venture to take a look into the wilderness of bitterest and most superfluous agonies of soul in which probably the most fruitful men of all times have languished! To listen to the sighs of these solitary and agitated minds: “Ah, give me madness, you heavenly powers! Madness, that I may at last believe in myself! Give deliriums and convulsions, sudden lights and darkness, terrify me with frost and fire such as no mortal has ever felt, with deafening din and prowling figures, make me howl and whine and crawl like a beast: so that I may only come to believe in myself! I am consumed by doubt, I have killed the law, the law anguishes me as a corpse does a living man: if I am not *more* than the law I am the vilest of all men. The new spirit which is in me, whence is it if it is not from you? Prove to me that I am yours; madness alone can prove it.’

And again in aphorism eighteen Nietzsche comments:

All those spiritual leaders of the peoples who were able to stir something into motion within the inert but fertile mud of their customs have, in addition to madness, also had need of voluntary torture if they were to inspire belief – and first and foremost, as always, their own belief in themselves! The more their spirit ventured on to new paths and was as a consequence tormented by pangs of conscience and spasms of anxiety, the more cruelly did they rage against their own flesh, their own appetites and their own health – as though to offer the divinity a substitute pleasure in case he might perhaps be provoked by this neglect of and opposition to established usages and by the new goals these paths led to. Let us not be too quick to think that we have by now freed ourselves completely from such a logic of feeling . . .”

Having established his credentials through suffering and madness (i.e., having established to his own and others satisfaction that he is a recipient of divine revelation,

though Nietzsche leaves open the possibility that the messenger may be ‘faking it’), the people come to believe in the Lawgiver-Madman and follow his prescriptions: “They have seen things that others do not see” they reason to themselves (aphorism 66)⁵⁶.

The innovator or madman, we said above, is a *criminal* according to the standard of the customs he overthrows. This may strike us as shocking. Nonetheless, this is Nietzsche’s teaching, as is evidenced by several aphorisms. We might look to aphorism 98 (cf. aphorism 11):

Mutation of morality. – There is a continual moiling and toiling going on in morality – the effect of *successful crimes* (among which, for example, are included all innovation in moral thinking).

We might also look to aphorism twenty (*Freedoers and freethinkers*). The freedoer is at a disadvantage in comparison to the free thinker only to the extent that he suffers “more obviously” from the consequence of his deed than the latter from his thoughts” (aphorism 20; cf. 366). With regard to *motive*, each are “in search of gratification” and thus “on an equal footing”. But with regard to *consequences* it is the free thinker who is at a disadvantage, “provided one does not judge – as all the world does – by what is most immediately and crassly obvious”. The freedoer commits his crime, his small infraction against the rights of some others, but the matter generally ends there: it does not upset the social order in a fundamental way. The freethinker, on the other hand, commits a much more monstrous crime: he may potentially change and perhaps even overhaul the social order itself by way of introducing *new* thoughts and hence new customs and new feelings. On this Nietzsche comments: “Plato has given us a splendid description of how the philosophical thinker must within very existing society count as the paragon of all wickedness: for as critic of all customs he is the antithesis of the moral man, and if he

⁵⁶ Nietzsche, however, does not simply and dogmatically deny this judgment; rather, the philosopher (as investigator) replies to the believers concerning this, “—precisely! And this should make us cautious towards them, not credulous!” (cf. aphorism 548).

does not succeed in becoming the lawgiver of new customs he remains in the memory of men as ‘the evil principle’” (aphorism 496). Socrates is not held in the memory of men as a paragon of wickedness or an “evil principle”, but rather, is believed to be the martyr and tragic hero of rationality, having been put to death by Ancient Athens for his most dubious position on the their gods (“atheism”). We are given the reason for this change of opinion concerning Socrates – which really appears to have been the conscious work of Plato, who strove always to make Socrates “young and beautiful” – and others at the end of aphorism twenty:

Whoever has overthrown an existing law of custom has hitherto always first been accounted a *bad man*: but when, as did happen, the law could not afterwards be reinstated and this fact was accepted, the predicate gradually changed; -- history treats almost exclusively of these *bad men* who subsequently became *good men*.

The Origins of Providence

We today, we who no longer feel the morality of custom in its full grandeur and terrible logic, but rather, openly and (half) shamelessly conceive of our morality as *individually advantageous*, live in the “evil zone”. In the beginning, the sense of community was so robust and all-encompassing that the individual as-such was inconsequential, or at least, only consequential to the extent that he represented something dangerous to himself and others. Individuals may produce divine wrath through their crimes, but the guilt and the punishment fell above all on the community. Nietzsche explains, saying (aphorism nine; and one might note the implication that we moderns to not participate in anything that could be called “community”):

Everywhere that a community, and consequently a morality of custom exists, the idea also predominates that punishment for breaches of custom will fall before all on the community: that supernatural punishment whose forms of expression and limitations are so hard to comprehend

and are explored with so much superstitious fear. The community can compel the individual to compensate another individual or the community for the immediate injury his action has brought in its train; it can also take a kind of revenge on the individual for having as a supposed after-effect of his action, caused the clouds and storms of divine anger to have gathered over the community – but it feels the individual's guilt above all as *its own* guilt and bears the punishment as its own punishment -- : 'customs have grown lax', each wails in his soul, 'if such actions as this are possible'.

Clouds and storms are not natural events but rather, agents of divine wrath. Early man, like the ancient Greeks, did not know nature as *necessity*, as “causes and effect” or “ground and consequence” (aphorism 544). The “all powerful taste” was to think “under the spell of custom, for which there was nothing but established judgments, established causes, and no other reasons than those of authority” (aphorism 544). That these two understandings are in *tension* are evidenced by aphorism ten. In the horizon of morality all action or motion, indeed the manifest world, was the effect of *will*. For this we can look to aphorisms seventeen, twenty-three, and thirty-one. In aphorism thirty-one we read: “During the great prehistoric age of mankind, spirit was presumed to exist everywhere and was not held in honor as a privilege of man”. Rather, it was held in honor simply as part and parcel of the deification or anthropomorphization of the world: one was honored to be descended from animals or trees. It is only a more recent prejudice concerning the exalted status of spirit (or, soul) that makes us see the world as being more disharmonious than it is by establishing “the great gulf between man and nature” (aphorism 31): man, it is believed, is the rational being and above all he is exalted as the moral reasoner. In any event, that man reads himself into nature (though he in truth reads himself out of nature) is evidenced by aphorism seventeen:

Nature, good and evil. – At first, men imagined themselves into nature: they saw everywhere themselves and their kind, especially their evil and capricious qualities, as it were hidden among the clouds, storms, beasts of prey, trees and plants: it was then they invented ‘evil nature’. Then there came along an age when they again imagined themselves out of nature, the age of Rousseau: they were so fed up with one another they absolutely had to have a corner of the world into which man and his torments could not enter: they invented ‘good nature’.

The consequences of this animation of the world are discussed in aphorism twenty-three. Given that all existent things “were also alive and animate, with the power to cause harm and to evade human purposes, the feeling of impotence has been much greater and much more common among men than it would otherwise have been: for one needed to secure oneself against things, just as against men and animals, by force, constraint, flattering, treaties, sacrifices”. Men therefore sought to counter outside wills with his own will, and the means to this control over outside wills was *morality* (which, of course, involved sacrifices and thus a great amount of cruelty towards self and others). With morality human will became powerful over the outside wills, and with Christianity this delicate “gold balance” between man’s will and God’s will reaches its height, which is to say its greatest spiritualization (and with it the extent of self-cruelty applied). Indeed, according to Nietzsche “the means for discovering this feeling”, namely, the feeling of the will’s power in the face of opposing wills or an opposing Will, “almost constitute the history of culture”⁵⁷

Within the moral horizon, cause and effect mean as much as “cause and punishment” (aphorism 13) or “guilt and punishment” (aphorism 11; and also, virtue and reward; see aphorism 33). According to Nietzsche these are “imaginary causalities” (aphorism 10) and in all reasoning upon such causalities “the material and form” of the speculations “are worthless” (aphorism 11). According to this understanding, the cause of an action is human will, but the *effect* of the action was not a consequence of the action but rather the supplementary action of a god (or gods, or human-like wills; aphorism 12).

⁵⁷ Aphorism 23; cf. the parallel comment in aphorism 113. In his later *Beyond Good and Evil* (aphorism 229), he says even more definitively: “Almost everything we call ‘higher culture’ is based on the spiritualization of *cruelty*, on its becoming more profound: this is my proposition.”

Two wills are at work, each independent of the other, and it is the gold-balance between these two wills that is taken for cause and effect: the threatening independence is thus converted into an imaginary dependence, the glue of which is morality.

To expand, by interpreting ourselves into nature, we not only interpret nature anthropomorphically, we *connect* nature and human will and this we do through *morality*: like two sides of a scale, whatever is added or diminished on one side will have its effect on the other. This connection between the human soul and the whole of nature, when connected by the hopeful guarantee of morality, is for Nietzsche the origin of the belief in providence (i.e., the just government of the universe by God). On this entire understanding, Nietzsche comments (aphorism 12):

Is a greater confusion conceivable? The action and its outcome had to be worked at separately, with quite different means and practices!

But how well does this gold-balance work? According to Nietzsche, the proof of a moral prescription (i.e., that it accomplishes what it promises to accomplish) is in the strictest sense impossible to refute: one can only deny the worth of the material and form of the reasonings behind such a prescription. In moral reasoning, the results of moral prescriptions “are either invisible or indistinct” and thus according to Nietzsche “these prescriptions rest on hypothesis of the smallest scientific value which can be neither demonstrated nor refuted from their results” (aphorism 24; cf. aphorism 21). But if the actions on the “divine side” of this gold-balance cannot be demonstrated or refuted, might it be the “human side” of this gold-balance that can “refute” the argument for providence (the “shopkeeper’s scale” and his “*desire to counter-balance guilt with punishment*”⁵⁸)? Be that as it may, the result of all this, according to Nietzsche, is that man has become

⁵⁸ Aphorism 202; cf. aphorism 15: the human being is an ingenious animal on Nietzsche’s understanding, a kind of Dionysian creator-god who turns even his own suffering to his advantage.

subject in his education to “the fantasies of jailers and hangmen” (aphorism 13). For it is essentially a hangman’s metaphysics that reads punishment (and thus cruelty), not only “into the consequences of our actions” but also and more definitely into the very fabric of the universe, thus robbing it of its innocence, the innocence of pure chance (understood as *non-moral* and *unplanned* or chaotic necessity; aphorism 13). The two wills, the (human) will as cause and the (divine) will as consequence, through the noxious weed of punishment, are balanced in the scales, with “causes” made into “sinners” and “consequences” into “executioners” (aphorism 208).

Nietzsche brings our somewhat one-sided discussion of the origin of providence – having neglected the aspects of love and rewards and focused instead on fear and punishment – to a more rounded and fitting conclusion in aphorism thirty-three. The ultimate consequence of the belief in providence is contempt for reality in favor of a “so called higher-world”. Let us quote Nietzsche at some length:

Contempt for causes, for consequences and for reality. – Whenever an evil chance event – a sudden storm or a crop failure or a plague – strikes a community, the suspicion is aroused that custom has been offended in some way or that new practices now have to be devised to propitiate a new demonic power and caprice. This species of suspicion and reflection is thus a direct avoidance of any investigation of real natural causes of the phenomenon: it takes the demonic cause for granted. This is one spring of the perversity of the human intellect which we have inherited: and the other spring arises close beside it, in that the real natural *consequences* of an action are, equally on principle, accorded far less attention than the supernatural (the so-called punishments and mercies administered by the divinity)...Thus, under the spell of the morality of custom, man despises first the causes, secondly the consequences, thirdly reality, and weaves all his higher feelings (of reverence, of sublimity, of pride, of gratitude, of love) *into an imaginary world*: the so-called higher world. And the consequences are perceptible even today: wherever a man’s feelings are *exalted*, that imaginary world is involved in some way. It is a sad fact, but for the moment the man of science has to be suspicious of *all higher feelings*, so greatly are they nourished by delusion and nonsense. It is not that they are thus in themselves, or must always remain thus: but of all the gradual *purifications* awaiting mankind, the purification of the higher feelings will certainly be one of the most gradual.

This contempt for reality, this ability to accord reality value “only *insofar as it is capable of being a symbol*” is the hidden root of pessimism, which is the contempt for the world that knowable by *us*. In this moral and fundamentally pessimistic horizon, the manifest

world is a deception, a temptress that beckons us to take pleasure in her. One must not succumb to this temptress, but rather, one must *suffer* her temptations and her blows, for it is only thus (i.e., “In affirming through one’s suffering a ‘profounder world of truth’ than any other world is”) that one may experience the tremendous pleasure of feeling “oneself *exalted* above reality (through consciousness of having thus approached this ‘profounder world of truth’)” (aphorism 32). In this manner, the shopkeeper is paid, and, clever mercenary that he is, with substantial interest too; and all this is termed “sacrifice” and “loving God unqualifiedly for God’s sake”. It is this traditional cure for pessimism that Nietzsche seeks to abolish (deeming it a pseudo-medicine which, in the form of Christianity, covers pain with affects and thus deepens pain so as better to apply its affect-medication or *consolations*); indeed, Nietzsche seeks to abolish the very pessimistic understanding that made such pseudo-medicines necessary. Though we shall have to save the discussion of pessimism and its cures for Chapter Six, we cannot escape a discussion here of the origin of our modern pessimism in the contemplative life.

The Origin of Pessimism in the *Vita Contemplativa*

Nietzsche turns to the topic of the origin of the contemplative man in aphorisms 39 - 43. Inasmuch as we have dealt already with aphorisms 39, and 40 in previous discussions, we can move immediately to aphorisms 41-43.

Aphorisms 41 and 42 are related in that each treats the contemplative life with an eye to its relation to action. The contemplative man is contrasted with the man of action. The relation between all the aphorisms in our group is evident from the titles of the three

aphorisms. Aphorism 41, *Towards an evaluation of the vita contemplativa*, is in a manner a set-up to aphorisms 42 and 43, *Origin of the Vita Contemplativa* and *The Many forces that now have to come together in a thinker*, respectively.

Aphorism 41 begins with Nietzsche's attempting to *temper the pride* of the contemplative man. The contemplative man is ready (too ready) to boast of his "good deeds", but Nietzsche reminds him of how *harmful* contemplative men have been in their effects upon men of action. The religious, the artists, the philosophers, and the thinkers and workers in science have all done great harm to the men of action, though, to be fair, they have all done great good to these men as well. But Nietzsche here stresses their evil consequences for men of action, for he is not only attempting to temper the pride of these men, but is also showing their *origin in pride* (which origin is of preliminary importance to the examination and evaluation of the type as it is now).

The *vita contemplativa* has its origin in antipathy to action, to hostility and pessimism toward action and towards life generally. In aphorism forty-two Nietzsche says:

In rude ages, where pessimist judgments as to the nature of man and world prevail, the individual in the feeling of possessing all his powers is always intent upon acting in accordance with these judgments and thus translating idea into action through hunting, robbing, attacking, mistreatment and murder, including the paler reflections of these actions such as are alone tolerated within the community. But if his powers decline, if he feels weary or ill or melancholy or satiated and as a consequence of the time being devoid of desires and wishes, he is then a relatively better, that is to say less harmful man, and his pessimistic ideas discharge themselves only in words and thoughts, for example about the value of his comrades or his wife or his life or his gods – his judgments will be *unfavorable* judgments.

We must attempt to understand the character of these pessimistic judgments. We get our best clue from the *violent* nature in which these pessimistic ideas are translated into action. Clearly, in these rude ages the world was considered an especially frightful place,

an especially harmful place that is inimical to the good of man. Here we should recall aphorism twenty-three:

Because for many thousands of years it was thought that *things* (nature, tools, property of all kinds) were also alive and animate, with the power to cause harm and to evade human purposes, the feeling of impotence has been much greater and much more common among men than it would otherwise have been.

According to Nietzsche, the thinker emerges when one's powers are on the decline, when one is either weary, ill, melancholic or satiated: "All the products of his thinking are bound to reflect the condition he is in, which is one wherein fear and weariness is on the increase and his valuation of action and active enjoyment on the decrease" (aphorism 41). At this point the thinker turns to thinking upon morality and upon the general harmfulness of his condition, to thinking upon what he formerly acted upon with enjoyment in and against his hostile environment; in this manner he emerges as the sage, the ascetic, the religiously inspired knower of the higher (moral) realm. It was only in this manner that the active men could tolerate their useless inactivity (aphorism 42):

Later on, all those who continually acted as the single individual had formerly acted while in this condition, and who thus judged unfavorably and whose lives were melancholy and poor in deeds came to be called poets or thinkers or priests or medicine men – because they were so inactive one would have liked to have despised such men and ejected them from the community; but there was some danger attached to that – they were versed in superstition and on the scent of divine forces, one never doubted that they commanded unknown sources of power. This is the estimation under which *the oldest race of contemplative natures* lived – despised to just the extent they were not dreaded! In this muffled shape, in this ambiguous guise, with an evil heart and often an anguished head, did contemplation first appear on earth, first weak and fearsome, secretly despised and publicly loaded with superstitious reference! Here, as always, it is a case of *pudenda origo*!

According to Nietzsche's argument, it was the pessimistic contemplative men who gave birth to the pessimism of all moralities and religions, to their hatred of reality.

Philosophy has not escaped this inherited posture of morally-religiously inspired hatred for the earth. Of philosophy and philosophers Nietzsche says the following:

To abstract oneself from sensory perception, to exalt oneself to contemplation of abstractions – that was at one time actually felt as *exaltation*: we can no longer quite enter into this feeling. To revel in pallid images of words and things, to sport with such invisible, inaudible, impalpable

beings, was, out of contempt for the sensory tangible, seductive and evil world, felt as a life in another *higher* world. 'These *abstracta* are certainly not seductive but they can offer us guidance!' – with that one lifted oneself upwards. It is not the content of these sportings of spirituality, it is they themselves which constituted 'the higher life' in the pre-historic ages of science.

The philosophers offered as compensation for their pessimistic thoughts and actions the same consolation offered by *all* of the moral-religious, namely, the compensation of the exalted state experienced when one participates in the "higher" world, the *moral* realm that is the higher truth (cf., aphorism 50).

To summarize, aphorism 41 (*Towards an evaluation of the vita contemplativa*) was a kind of preliminary setup to aphorisms 42 and 43. Aphorism 42 dealt with the origin of the contemplative man and the contemplative life. That origin is in superstition and pessimism, or more simply, in sickness. But aphorism 43 moves from the origin of the *vita contemplativa* to the *vita contemplativa* in the *present*. However shameful his origins, the contemplative man has become the highest type of man simply for Nietzsche; so far is he from being sickly, he represents the highest attainable healthiness:

The thinker needs imagination, self-uplifting, abstraction, desensualization, invention, presentiment, induction, dialectics, deduction, the critical faculty, the assemblage of material, the impersonal mode of thinking, contemplativeness and comprehensiveness and not least justice and love for all that exists.

Are Historical Arguments Sufficient to Refute God?

The preceding chapter has in one way or another continually concerned itself with the *origins* of things moral-religious, and to this end we have followed Nietzsche as he recounts his theories concerning the history of mankind's moral development. It may seem strange to us, and legitimately so, that Nietzsche would believe the more sophisticated manifestations of morality and religion – such as the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Hindu religions, for example – to be not only explainable but also refutable with reference to the origins of such things in more primitive ages and 'stages' of human cultural development (i.e., more superstitious or less rational peoples). We might wonder, indeed, of what importance the understanding of the origin of something is for an understanding of its present state? Nietzsche addresses this question in aphorism forty-four:

Origin and significance. – Why is it that this thought comes back to me again and again and in ever more varied colors? – That *formerly*, when investigators sought out the origins of things they always believed they would discover something of incalculable significance for all later action and judgment, that they always *presupposed*, indeed, that the *salvation* of man must depend on *insight into the origin of things*: but that now, on the contrary, the more we advance towards origins the more our interest diminishes; indeed, that all the evaluations and 'interestedness' we have implanted into things begin to lose their meaning the further we go back and the closer we approach the things themselves. *The more insight we possess into an origin the less significant does the origin appear:* while *what is nearest to us*, what is around us and in us, gradually begins to display colors and beauties and enigmas and riches of significance of which earlier mankind had not an inkling. Formerly, thinkers prowled around angrily like captive animals, watching the bars of their cages and leaping against them in order to smash them down: and *happy* seemed he who through a gap in them believed he saw something of what was outside, of what was distant and beyond.

How significant, then, are the origins of things and especially the human things? In one sense they are of the utmost importance. For in the first place their status as divine or worldly is a question of no small consequence, indeed it is the question of the *greatest* consequence, which is why thinkers tried so *desperately* to attain a saving knowledge of

the origins as divine, as outside the world and its flux or transience. Moreover, not only does the question of origins ultimately converge with the question of Being, but man can admire himself, it seems, only if he is somehow divine in his being or at least able to become divine; to be “worldly” in his origins is to be animal, to be the product of nature and its chance arrangement of transient things is considered *shameful, pudenda*. The study of history, when understood to reveal such shameful origins, becomes a malady for man.

In another sense, however, and one which one would have to be at Nietzsche’s heights of self-knowledge to appreciate (the entirety of aphorism forty-four presumes a very elevated position), the origins no longer seem shameful, nor are they given excessive weight as to their significance. From Nietzsche’s claimed perspective, what the origins reveal, precisely in their contrast to their present after a *long* history, is rather the tremendous plastic powers of nature and especially of man, of his self-creation and continual re-creation into something more subtle, more complex, more delicate perhaps, but containing powers and possibilities unknown to man hitherto. As Nietzsche relates from his dialogues with Dionysus:

Thus he once said: “Under certain circumstances I love what is human”—and with this he alluded to Ariadne who was present—“man is to my mind an agreeable, courageous, inventive animal that has no equal on earth; it finds its way in any labyrinth. I am well disposed towards him: I often reflect how I might yet advance him and make him stronger, more evil, and more profound than he is.”—“Stronger, more evil, and more profound?” I asked startled. “Yes,” he said once more; “stronger, more evil, and more profound; also more beautiful”—and at that the tempter god smiled with his halcyon smile as though he had just paid an enchanting compliment.

This fact of historical man is something Nietzsche will reflect upon more and more and with ever greater curiosity, delight, and wonder as the thought expressed in aphorism forty-four, which thought “comes back” to him “again and again and in ever more varied

colors”, finally comes to him attended by the divine coloration of the will to power and eternal return.

Aphorism forty-four, however, is misleading inasmuch as it may lead one to think that history or natural history alone suffices for one to know the origins of things and then, being disenchanted with them as de-deified, one can turn to oneself, to what is in one and around one, and discover new riches and enigmas. For this makes it seem as though history were sufficient to reveal knowledge of man, of his ultimate origins and nature, and ultimately to reveal knowledge of Being. This is *not* Nietzsche’s position, nor out it to be the position of any sensible person. Did Nietzsche establish that these origins as we have laid them out are the, if not *known*, then likely and even most likely origins in his capacity as a mere armchair historian? Can Nietzsche really ground his arguments against morality and religion in his historical accounts of these things? Surely not, unless he is not nearly as serious a thinker as later thinkers deemed him to be. Indeed, in our analysis I might have pursued the question of the origins of man’s morality all the way back to the *animal*, but we must exercise some economy in our discussion, and given the nature of our topic and its seriousness, we should not waste time on such arguments as must ultimately be considered conjectural and irrelevant in the absence of some *superior* argument which might firmly ground them. For in the end, merely historical accounts of such matters *must* remain fundamentally conjectural, and no amount of imagination or dialectics or comprehensiveness (etc.) could allow one to seriously claim to have knowledge of such matters on the basis of history alone, with its presentation of so-called “facts,” i.e., subjectively selected events – already an *interpretation* – subjected to further interpretation. Indeed matters are even worse for the

“objectivity” of the science of human history, and for more on this we might look here to aphorism three-hundred and seven of *Daybreak*:

Facta! Yes, Facta ficta! – A historian has to do, not with what actually happened, but only with events supposed to have happened: for only the later have *produced an effect*. Likewise only with supposed heroes. His theme, so-called world history, is opinions about supposed actions and their supposed motives, which in turn give rise to further opinions and actions, the reality of which is however at once vaporized again and produces an *effect* only as vapour – a continual generation and pregnancy of phantoms over the impenetrable mist of unfathomable reality. All historians speak of things which have never existed except in imagination.

Still worse, Nietzsche’s historical accounts of these most serious matters seem to *presuppose* the denial of other alternative accounts in these same matters. Is a moral-religious man supposed to be *persuaded* by these arguments? Surely not, nor does Nietzsche himself believe that they ought to. This is clear from aphorism five-hundred forty-five:

But we do not believe you! – You would dearly like to pass as being well versed in the ways of men, but we shall not let you do so! Do we not notice that you represent yourselves as being more experienced, profounder, more passionate, more complete than you are? Just as well as we feel the presumptuousness of that painter even in the way he wields his brush: just as well as we hear how that composer wants to make his theme appear more elevated than it is by the way he introduces it. Have you experienced *history* in yourselves, convulsions, earthquakes, and sadness wide and protracted, happiness that strikes like lightning? Have you been foolish with fools great and small? Have you really borne the delusion and the burden of good men? And the burden and singular happiness of the most evil as well? If so, speak of morality: but not otherwise!

It is only on the basis of this primary investigation into his own soul and *its history*, this piece of *self-knowledge* that Nietzsche can plausibly suggest that he has correctly inferred the general character of the origins of such matters as morality and religion. It is Nietzsche’s psycho-historical account of *himself* that grounds his psycho-historical account of mankind’s morality and religion over time. Those originally shameful seeming origins then become more and more insignificant (and less and less shameful) proportional to the increasing significance and riches and enigmas of the present, with its splendid array of powers which reveal man’s past accomplishments and future possibilities: man’s plastic powers, his ever so clever and artistic drives, his conquests

over every kind of hardship, his cunning, his adaptations and continual recreations of himself, with all this he has already accomplished so much – who knows what we *are* or what our future may be (that is, what we may *be* in the future)?

Indeed, though we will only get a fuller picture of Nietzsche's self-knowledge and the manner in which it gives him his fundamental reasons for denying the Biblical God in chapter six, the truth is that we have already been given a sample in this chapter. Recall that Nietzsche, upon concluding his account in aphorism eighteen of the history of "those tremendous eras of 'morality of custom' which precede 'world history' as the *actual and decisive eras of history which determined the character of mankind*", asks further in comparing the character of morality in these 'pre-historic' eras to the character of modern moralities (products, chiefly, of Platonism and Christianity, and which all claim to be in the interest of the individual): "Do you think all this has altered and that mankind must therefore have changed its character? O observers of mankind, learn better to observe yourselves!" Nietzsche, then, has learned to observe himself and his fellow man quite well, as he believes, and on the basis of this knowledge he has concluded that we too, we moderns, also derive our morality from our fear and impotence, we too follow moral precepts as the commands of an ambiguous voice, we too take our *moods* for *arguments* and the expression of the higher rationality of God, we too believe in suprahuman or divine passions (such as love and pity), we too take our moral precepts as unconditional commands to be *obeyed* because *commanded* as an attestation to the total authority of the commanding Deity, we too believe that to act for private utility deprives an act of moral value, we too believe in the *efficacy* of the will, as also providence and destiny—we too take pride in voluntary suffering (sacrifice) and above all in the sacrifice for the sake of

higher principles from a profounder world of truth from which, high above, we can look down on the existing world, we too have the highest adoration for those who make great sacrifices for the good of the whole (be it the family, the community, the nation, or humanity), we too exercise spiritualized cruelty towards ourselves with our morality (if only in the *will to truth* by which we destroy all our reverences), we too take our evaluations and construct our ego from *the herd*, we too shun the expression of *genuine* individuality (which does not mean to simply dye one's hair orange or to wear one's pants around one's knees), we too appeal to our moral reasonings despite the worthlessness of their form and material, and we too believe, lastly, in the ethical significance of the entire universe. — It is, indeed, only by seeing the meaning and character of morality in *ourselves* that we can attempt, armed with the modern “knowledge” of historical “facts,” to reconstruct the history by which we have gotten here.

Now, in order to see very clearly that it is Nietzsche's teaching that historical knowledge, all confidence of historical knowledge, can only be attained through *self-knowledge* we can look to Nietzsche's untimely work, *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*. There, Nietzsche addresses the illusion of historical objectivity, the illusion of the possibility of that objectivity that is understood as a mere mirroring of events. The illusion has become rampant in Europe with its new obsession with history and the newly acquired ‘historical sense’ of which it is so proud. They believe that in doing history, and that objectively, they are being pre-eminently *just* to everything that ever was. In denying the possibility of such justice and demanding the primacy of self-

knowledge Nietzsche says the following (*On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, section 6, end; cf. section 10, end):

You can interpret the past only on the basis of the highest power of the present. Only in the strongest tension of your noblest characteristics will you surmise what from the past is great and worth knowing and preserving. Like by like! Otherwise you reduce the past down to your level. Do not believe a piece of historical writing if it does not spring out of the head of the rarest of spirits. . . . No person can be simultaneously a great historian, an artistic person, and a numskull. On the other hand, people should not rate as insignificant the workers who go around with a cart, piling things up and sifting through them, because they will certainly not be able to become great historians. Even less should we exchange them for numskulls. . . . These workers should gradually become very learned men, but for that reason cannot ever become masters. An eminently learned man and a great numskull—those go together very easily under a single hat.

Thus, the person of experience and reflection writes history. Anyone who has not experienced life on a greater and higher level than everyone else will not know how to interpret the greatness and loftiness of the past. The utterance of the past is always an oracular pronouncement. You will understand it only as builders of the future and as people who know about the present. . . .

Consider lastly the end of aphorism forty-four of *Daybreak* in light of aphorism one-hundred seventeen (*In prison*). Past thinkers were in a cage, it is true, but present thinkers are no better off in this respect. All thinking occurs and must occur within the domain of the thinkers' perspective (his prison), and this essential perspectivity of thought cannot be severed from one's historicity. But whereas past thinkers ignored what was nearest to them, looked angrily upon their horizontal imprisonment, and attempted to smash through it in the hope of an eschatological leap into some absolute insight into the origins, Nietzsche examines the history of his own soul and *its* eschatological hopes, *its* claims to the *divine origins* of psychic phenomenon. Only in so doing can he too look between the bars of his prison and hypothesize as to what is distant and beyond, and to his mind with better success than previous thinkers. Holding that neither his origin nor his future is 'other-worldly,' and having collapsed his moral judgments with the insights into their "immoral" origins in himself (thus restoring homogeneity to the world's events), he is liberated from shame and now able, unlike past thinkers who were perhaps

one and all 'backworldsmen,' to embrace his imprisonment, explore it, and attempt to fathom and harness the inner, now better known but ultimately unknowable possibilities of the human soul, and this for the sake of the present and future.

Chapter V

Preliminary Investigations into Providence, Free-Will, Teleology, Chance, Self-Knowledge, and the Origin of Action

The understanding of the world that Nietzsche lays out as corresponding to the belief in providence, with its gold-balance (sustained by morality) between man's will and God's will, has at its core the conception of human will as free-will, for it is only free-will that can make us morally culpable or responsible and thus deserving of punishment or reward. Free-will seems to make our suffering truly voluntary and thus meritorious. To endure self-inflicted, voluntary harm, pains and losses, in a word *sacrifices* for the *sake of morality*, and to be avenged or pay the price for 'bad gains', voluntary hubris, indulgence, and shameful pleasures, however removed from the eyes of men, as *deserved* punishment, these are or seem to be guaranteed by free-will. And although one could imagine an order of the universe in which an all-powerful non-moral God granted Hell to some and Heaven to others, and this, to repeat, on the basis of his will as all-powerful and not in any way on the basis of his will as moral, in such an arrangement we could never conceive of hell as a punishment and heaven as a reward. Rather, those in Hell would be deemed the unfortunate recipients of a perhaps cruel and surely miserable fate, and those in Heaven as recipients of pure grace: the ones would suffer but not be punished, the others would rejoice but would not be rewarded. Our

ideas or notions of “punishment” and “reward” are essentially related to one another and to the idea of moral desert and thus to the idea of free-will. In sum, then, Nietzsche’s denial of providence as an elaborate web of rewards and punishments is related to his denial of free-will: each, as we shall see, are denied together, for the belief in and evidence for both are grounded, according to Nietzsche, in the same phenomena of erroneous thinking.

Nietzsche openly states his denial of free-will on several occasions. In aphorism fifty-six, for example, Nietzsche says that the free-spirited philosopher “counts the theory of the *innocence of all opinions* as being as well-founded as the innocence of all actions.” In aphorism one-hundred forty-eight, the closing aphorism of Book II, Nietzsche states:

Distant prospect. – If only those actions are moral which are performed for the sake of another and only for his sake as one definition has it, then there are no moral actions! If only those actions are moral which are performed out of freedom of will, as another definition says, then there are likewise no moral actions! -- What is it then which is so *named* and which in any event exists and wants explaining? It is the effects of certain intellectual mistakes. – And supposing one freed oneself from these errors, what would become of ‘moral actions’? –

Clearly, moral actions would cease to exist for him as *moral* actions, as the very idea of a “moral” action will have become incomprehensible, indeed unimaginable and by all experience impossible.

Now, Nietzsche’s works are replete with the most incisive and thoroughgoing analyses of free-will and its metaphysical and psychological suppositions and presuppositions⁵⁹. That said, Nietzsche does not engage in this typical and hundred times repeated refutation of free-will in *Daybreak*. He seems content, rather, merely to state his

⁵⁹ If one is interested in a sample of such arguments, one might see for example *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, aphorism 11 and 12 with 13; aphorisms 9 and 10 with 13; *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, aphorism 33; *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, aphorism 39, 99-107; all references are from *Human, all too Human*.

own alternative hypothesis as to the origin of action and the character of our conscious thoughts, our “self-knowledge”. It is to this account that we must now turn.

But as we shall see in our discussion, Nietzsche only *seems* complacent in his failing to give reasons for his open denial of free-will (that is, his failing to give the arguments he elaborates upon at great length in works other than *Daybreak*). In fact, however, Nietzsche’s *most persuasive* reasons or grounds for denying free-will and providence are advanced in *Daybreak*, and *this* refutation is not one found in books upon books in the philosophy section of every library. Now, essential to Nietzsche’s arguments are aphorisms 115-130 in Book II, which give Nietzsche’s alternative understanding of the origin of action and the character of our self-knowledge. The argument of *Daybreak* is of a different kind, however, from those metaphysical arguments advanced by Nietzsche concerning the absurdity of an effect without a cause, a perpetual “something from nothing” and miracle which is supposed to guarantee *freedom* but which entails by its own logic the most radical *unfreedom*. Indeed, Nietzsche himself cannot consider such arguments definitive, since he holds the senses to be the causes of the inferences – erroneous inferences, on his *own* understanding – of unity, things, motions or action, equality, agency, sequence, and so forth in the world⁶⁰. Thus, ultimately it is on Nietzsche’s understanding only fictitious logical constructs that cause the absurdity or contradiction of free-will as *radically or fundamentally unfree*. This is hardly a refutation.

Such arguments, at any rate, only persuade the intellectually or psychologically *lazy*, who really *want* to believe that free-will is a fiction. In the end, the believer may always have recourse to an argument that makes inconsequential all the philosophers

⁶⁰ Cf., for example, *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 111.

metaphysical reasonings in such matters: by God, I know that I have free-will. It is mysterious and yet I know it. And how could things be otherwise? God is mysterious and unknowable by our merely human reasonings; and his breath is the *soul* – not the senses – of man: thus man's soul participates in the mysterious nature of God. You ask me to state my understanding of free-will in speech, and then tangle me in knots, and then believe that I should be persuaded that free-will does not exist. Yet you have only asked me to describe and define in speech what is mysterious and thus unsayable.

At this point, Nietzsche can grant the believer his point and desist from all metaphysical arguments along the track outlined. However, Nietzsche has *another* and far more *interesting* entry point by which to access and investigate the phenomena of free-will (which seems essential to the possibility of moral action), and here his method involves initially allowing the believer in free-will all of his own premises. What are those premises? Nietzsche provides us, in one aphorism, with two statements of them that say the same thing (aphorism 115; cf. *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 338):

The unknown world of the 'subject'. – That which, from the earliest times to the present moment, men have found so hard to understand is their ignorance of themselves! Not only in regard to good and evil, but in regard to what is much more essential! The primeval delusion still lives on that one knows, and knows quite precisely in every case, *how human action is brought about*. Not only 'God, who sees, into the heart', not only the doer who premeditates his deed – no, everyone else too is in no doubt that he understands what is essentially involved in the process of action in every other person. 'I know what I want, what I have done, I am free and responsible for it, I hold others responsible, I can call by its name every moral possibility and every inner motion which precedes action; you may act as you will – in this matter I understand myself and understand you all!' – that is how everyone formerly thought, that is how almost everyone still thinks. . . .

. . . (In re-reading these words a very express passage of Schopenhauer occurs to me which I shall here adduce as evidence that he too remained an adherent of this moral realism, and did so without the slightest compunction: 'Each one of us is truly a competent and perfectly moral judge, with an exact knowledge of good and evil, holy in loving good and abhorring evil – each of us is all this insofar as it is not our actions but those of others which are under investigation and we have merely to approve or disapprove, while the burden of performance rests on others' shoulders. Consequently, everyone can, as a confessor, wholly and completely deputize for God.') . . .

In the concept of “will” in “free-will” the concepts of knowledge, desire, and power (both as choice and as efficacy, though with God’s free-will the former is questionable) are conjoined. Thus, in order for one to act morally, according to the moral man’s own self-understanding, one must know what good and evil are, be able to choose between doing the one or the other, love or desire the one and hate the other, and also to enact the will itself. And if the believer defends himself with the reply: I do know what good and evil are and I do hate the one and love the other and I am able to choose to do either at my discretion and to accomplish my end (and you do injustice to me, by the way, when you liken my passionate soul to a shopkeeper’s); but how am I to convincingly articulate my understanding of good and evil in logical speech, since I know this in a manner related to, if not equivalent to, my mysterious knowledge of my mysterious free-will, which is my true self, my conscience, my soul, my “I” or “ego”? Nietzsche can respond: Very well! Then you surely will not object to my asking you a few questions concerning your opinions on this matter and others related, to the extent that, as opinions, they are thoughts and thus you can think them; what harm is there in a dissection of your ego’s ornamentation? Why should your *a-priori* knowledge, your intuitive knowledge, your ground or inner sanctum not remain standing, proud and strong, after a tour through the halls of the edifice? – At this point, if the believer replies that he has no opinions on these matters, he is clearly being eristic (i.e., dishonest), and if he refuses to examine himself for fear that upon a tour through the edifice the inner sanctum or adytum might *vanish*, that is, that he may be led to doubt his inner-truth and thus lose it, by this very suspicion he expresses a doubt as to the strength of his conviction, and thus, as a doubter of his own claim to mysterious knowledge, he not only

calls his own claim to knowledge into question but also reveals himself as a secret sinner (under the Christian conception, that is).

According to Nietzsche, the believer or moral man lacks self-knowledge; he has not reflected seriously and sufficiently on his own opinions and experiences. But the coming to know of our ignorance of ourselves is perhaps the hardest of all things to come to know, for this knowledge has the most obstructive of all obstructions working against its realization, namely, our most firmly held conviction that we *do* know ourselves: one can hardly be spurred to the vehement pursuit of self-knowledge if one believes oneself to already have safely attained it. Nietzsche himself, however, claims to have attained a measure of self-knowledge, to have reflected with the utmost honesty and rigor upon his own opinions and experiences. Indeed, Nietzsche gives us a sample of the fruits of his self-knowledge in his *alternative* account of the origin of actions and it is there that we see that, according to Nietzsche, *he* does *not* know what good and evil are nor does he *know* how action is brought about, which is not to say that he is utterly ignorant and thus uselessly considered in these matters.

The Hidden Power Politics of the Soul:

Nietzsche's Drive-Psychology

Nietzsche begins his sustained account of the origin of action and the character of our self-knowledge in aphorism one-hundred fifteen. There, Nietzsche says that language and “the prejudices upon which it is based are a manifold hindrance to us when we want to explain inner processes and drives”, which is to say, when we attempt to

understand ourselves and the origins of our actions. The problem is that “words only exist for *superlative* degrees of these processes and drives”, and man involuntarily concludes that “where the realm of words” ceases “the realm of existence” ceases also. These superlative degrees of inner processes and drives constitute what appear to us as most manifest concerning our actions and drives: these constitute our *conscious* thoughts of ourselves, and likewise the conscious thoughts whereby we understand others. The sub-conscious workings of the soul are like a tremendous web that eludes us, and yet it is these that produce the conscious states, which are *extreme* states, extreme outbursts (cf. aphorism 371). These extreme outbursts include, for example, “anger, hatred, love, pity, desire, knowledge, joy, pain”. These states rise more or less to consciousness in proportion to the extremity of the explosions consequent upon “built-up congestions”. Indeed, Nietzsche goes so far as to question seriously whether *all* conscious states are, rightly understood, extreme outbursts.

Our drives desire to *feed*, they wait in prey in order to “explode” upon the right opportunity. The sub-conscious workings of our soul “weave the web of our character and destiny” while the conscious, extreme outbursts such as love, hate, anger, etc., “often render the web apart” inasmuch as they constitute the sudden and violent takeover of the entire organism by a single drive or group of drives⁶¹. These outbursts “mislead the observer” as he observes both himself and others with his conscious thoughts and the words employed in them. He thus mistakes the surface for the depths, the exceptional states for the rule; he does not realize that the realm of his thought is merely a realm “of

⁶¹ Over time, and perhaps in the best case – that is, in the case of the most perfected human animality – a single dominant drive or collection of drives can impose order on the whole organism, thus bringing about that “personification” of a single drive or a few drives, which, when “worked through to the end with perfect consistency”, constituted the Greek ideal of man and which should be contrasted with the dissolute soul of modern man; aphorism 245; for more on this one might see aphorisms 191 and 272.

surfaces and self-satisfaction” but instead takes pride in his thinking as being something free, powerful, and incisive (aphorism 125; i.e., penetrating of reality). On this basis we *misunderstand* ourselves and others, “we misread ourselves in this apparently most intelligible of handwriting on the nature of ourselves”. That said, it must be noted that, “*our opinion of ourself*, however, which we have arrived at by this erroneous path, the so-called ‘ego’, is thenceforth a fellow worker [i.e., with the inner processes and drives] in the construction of our character and our destiny –” (aphorism 115).

To understand this psychic underworld of hungry, competing and cooperating drives, this phenomenon of “power politics in the soul”, we do best to turn to aphorism 119. Nietzsche begins by again noting the enormity (but by no means complete vacuousness) of our self-ignorance, saying:

However far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing however can be more incomplete than his image of the *totality of drives* which constitute his being. He can scarcely name even the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counter play among one another.

These drives have “laws” of “*nutriment*” that remain “wholly unknown to us”. As a consequence of this ignorance, their:

... nutriment is therefore a work of chance: our daily experiences throw some prey in the way of now this, now that drive, and the drive seizes it eagerly; but the coming and going of these events as a whole stands in no rational relationship to the nutritional requirements of the totality of the drives: so that the outcome will always be twofold -- the starvation and stunting of some and the overfeeding of others.

Following this logic through, Nietzsche concludes that the whole of a human being, the present being of any human being, will be something just as accidental as the conditions or reasons whereby he came into being. Chance has weaved the web of our character and destiny inasmuch as chance is the cause both of the soul and its underworld of processes and drives (which constitute the origins of our actions and conscious thoughts) and the

“outer-world”, the phenomena of the universe to which our soul reacts or upon which our drives feed. That said, we are now positioned to understand aphorism three-hundred twenty-six:

Knowing one’s circumstances. – We can estimate our powers but not our *power*. Our circumstances do not only conceal and reveal it to us – no! They magnify and diminish it. One should regard oneself as a variable quantity whose capacity for achievement can under favorable circumstances equal the highest ever known: one should thus reflect on one’s circumstances and spare no effort in observing them.

A given drive desires to feed, it “desires gratification – or exercise of its strength, or discharge of its strength, or the saturation of an emptiness – these are all metaphors” (aphorism 119). According to Nietzsche, knowledge is also a drive but it is *not* the primary or fundamental drive; the drive for utmost power, for utmost happiness or the utmost feeling of power is the fundamental drive. The intellect is itself merely the “blind instrument” of some drive or collection of drives in their perpetual combat with other drives or another drive (aphorism 109; the fully mature Nietzsche teaches that behind our “intellect” or reason is the greater and higher Reason which is the innermost will to power of the organism as a whole, an intellect “hidden” behind our conscious intellect), though it also enters the fray and brings other drives into its service. This combat continues in our sleep and constitutes the content of our dreams (aphorism 119). This ‘conflict of drives’ is, inasmuch as every drive in its desire to feed is (for lack of better words) its own self-interested motion, the root of the conflict of motives experienced by all men perpetually as they choose how to act. But this “conflict of motives” is no straightforward matter: what we typically do is to “confuse conflict of motives with comparison of the possible consequences of different actions” (aphorism 119, end). In deliberating upon several courses of action, we seek to do that action which is best, that

action which is most advantageous. We weigh the several possible courses of actions in the scales and decide upon what we perceive as the best course of action thus giving us one motive for the action. And yet, when the time of action comes, one rarely acts from the single motive put forth in advance, but rather, the totality of the organism (including the more or less erroneous opinions of itself, of its ego, which have entered the interplay of the psychic web) acts and reacts in the *immediacy* of whatever state it happens to be in and the state of the environment or circumstances. We see, then, why according to Nietzsche, “No amount of knowledge about an act *ever* suffices to ensure its performance”, and thus the reasons for his teaching that “the space between knowledge and action has never yet been bridged even in one single instance” (aphorism 116; cf., aphorism 444). The entire underworld or under-webbing of our soul is at play here in the very moment or nanosecond of action *as always*, and it is in this underworld that the “actual ‘conflict of motives’” arises:

...something quite invisible to us of which we would be quite unconscious...but we are *accustomed to exclude* all these unconscious processes from the accounting and to reflect on the preparation for an act only to the extent that it is conscious: and we thus confuse conflict of motives with comparison of the possible consequences of different actions – a confusion itself very rich in consequences and one highly fateful for the evolution of morality!⁶²

Digression on the Will to Power as the Origin of All Action in the Universe

Now, from this point in Nietzsche’s thinking from which he wrote *Daybreak*, only the slightest move from where we have gotten to in our discussion is necessary in order to

⁶² Fateful for morality because the false interpretation opens the door to a never-ending stream of guilt by continually exploiting the gap between our actual actions and the motives we believe we must be harboring in order to bring them about.

show the manner in which the “drive-psychology” that Nietzsche here puts forth turns into his doctrine of the *will to power* as the essence of the world. We need only look to the decisive aphorism thirty-six of *Beyond Good and Evil*, perhaps the most important aphorism in all Nietzsche’s works for an understanding of the reasoning behind the will to power (cf. aphorism nineteen of the same):

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

We see that Nietzsche takes the reality of our world of drives and translates that reality into the whole of nature, thus providing an explanatory principle that can bridge the gap or chasm now existing between the *physical* and *biological* sciences, for there is today no unifying principle by which to understand both the non-living (or inorganic) and the living (or organic). Indeed, in his fully mature philosophy Nietzsche says that *everything* is in fact, essentially, *living*. Thus the dichotomy between non-living and living is an error, and the principle of life that animates each is the *will to power*. Here we can see *The Will to Power*, aphorism six-hundred ninety:

What has been the relation of the total organic process to the rest of nature?—That is where its fundamental will stands revealed.

But why make such a move? What could legitimate such a move? Before answering this, however, it must be noted that by conceiving of the essence of the world as *will to power*, Nietzsche attributes perception to all that exist, for according to Nietzsche, “in every act of the will there is a commandeering thought—let us not imagine

it possible to sever this thought from the “willing,” as if any will would then remain over!” By attributing *ideation* to all beings, Nietzsche avoids the pitfalls of materialistic conceptions such as those of the Darwinians and others who refuse to allow that *mind* or *intellect* may have any reality in the fundamental or essential constitution of the universe. But lest us hasten back to Nietzsche’s answer to our questions.

Essentially, Nietzsche says: we *cannot* have knowledge of the outside world, indeed we simply have no access to any “real” world. Since we have no access to it or to what it might actually be, the “true text” of the outer world, unaffected by our interpretations, *cannot possibly be of any true concern to us*, for it cannot be in our nature, in the constitution of our wills, to have a concern for what is utterly inaccessible. Thus the concern we have for it is an unnatural concern that we have taken upon ourselves with our *customs* or *morals* (here the true text of the world is read mythically, creatively, or imaginatively). Our true concern is with the world of our own making, the anthropomorphized world demanded by our physiological constitution: the so-called “true world,” the metaphysical world of the moralist (i.e., pessimists) has now become for untimely men like Nietzsche a myth (and not for that reason to be dispelled, but rather, because it is the myth of sickly creators, sickly physicians).

Nietzsche proceeds to argue that we do, however, have access to *ourselves*, and from ourselves we get our only access to *reality*, the “text” and essence. We see that the reality *we are* is the reality of our drives, the reality, in sum (since for Nietzsche they are equitable), of *the will* (however, as aphorism nineteen of *Beyond Good and Evil* indicates, our concept of “will” must be highly refined, and above all we must not give it the false *metaphysical unity* of the old “soul” concept). No matter what transfigurations human

beings undergo, they cannot but believe in the efficacy of the will, indeed it is only on the basis of that faith that human beings have faith in causality at all, which is the faith that something (namely, a will-force) *acts* or wills and in acting *effects* something. For had we not from out of ourselves *this* idea of the kind of cause that *we* are, by what inference could we have thought there to be causality, causes and effects, in the world at all? More, even if we reduce our conscience experience and understanding of ourselves as *will* to a sub-conscious underworld of competing and hungry drives, we can still only conceive of these as *more wills at work*, though ones we are not conscious of but whose affects we feel; (consider, moreover, how the most scientific explanations of things fundamental cannot avoid anthropomorphic language; this is not a mere coincidence). We have, according to Nietzsche, being the beings that we are, no other possible way of understanding causality itself than as *will*, and we have no access to the reality of the “external” or “materialistic” world or to any other reality other than that provided by the reality of our own being as will. But if we are in our being *will*, and we, being a part of nature and having emerged from nature, participate in *being* by the very same reason by which *all* beings are *beings*, than that by which *all* things *are* or have *being*, existence, or life must be *will*. The essence of the part must by definition be the essence of the whole if the relationship between them is truly one of part and whole: this condition is guaranteed by the elimination of the premise of the Biblical God who inserted something of the “otherworld” in man, thus forcing man to see himself as entirely at home in the existing, material universe, having emerged in it and for it, which is to say, having become *natural* again.

From here, it is best to let Nietzsche give his own reply to the question as to whether it is permitted on the basis of our understanding of the inner world to go on to infer thereby the character of the rest of the world. But note the following, namely, that the ironical reference to “nonsense” must be understood with the emphasis on “sense” as in *the senses* and *the sensory*; the irony becomes evident later in the aphorism with the reference to ‘matter,’ and ‘nerves’ and the total collapse of the purely *materialistic worldview*:

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

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

From here, it is an easy step to seeing the manner in which “truth” becomes, as a product of the will to power that is our particular historically assembled *physiology*, a “value,” and likewise how the idea of the soul itself, the idea of the “I” or “ego” or “subject” to which actions “belong,” is itself but a fiction, the very *idea* of ourselves as an essential unity itself being a falsification produced from out of the subconscious underworld that is *will to power* (as we shall take up in the next section immediately following). All this is captured in the following portion of *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism thirty-four:

. . . Indeed what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of “true” and “false”? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance—different “values,” to use the language of painters? Why is it not permitted that the world *that concerns us*—be a fiction? And if somebody asked, “but to a fiction there surely belongs an author?”—couldn’t one answer simply: *why*? Doesn’t this “belongs” perhaps belong to the fiction, too? Is it not permitted to be a bit ironical about the subject no less than the predicate and object? Shouldn’t philosophers be permitted to rise above faith in grammar? All due respect for governesses—but hasn’t the time come for philosophy to renounce the faith of governesses?

The Grammatical Blunder in the “I Will”: Confusing Active and Passive

To return from our digression with this perfect set-up, Nietzsche continues in *Daybreak* with the topic of man’s self-ignorance in aphorism one-hundred twenty, noting that man’s ignorance extends even to the confusion of what is passive and what is active in all his actions. There he says:

To reassure the sceptic. – ‘I have no idea how I am acting! I have no idea how I ought to act!’ – You are right, but be sure of this: you will be acted upon! At every moment! Mankind has in all ages confused the active and the passive: it is their everlasting grammatical blunder.”

The skeptic is skeptical of his knowledge. He claims to have no idea how he is acting, and also no idea as to the best course of action or the morally right way to act. Nietzsche reassures the skeptic in his skepticism concerning moral knowledge while giving him something he may be certain or “sure” of, namely, that in the “I act” or “I will”, it is not the “I” or “ego” that is the thing-itself, the subject and ground of the action or willing which is predicated of it or belongs to it, the idea of the “I” is rather itself the *effect* or *consequence* of a prior action or willing (namely, the prior actions involved in our inner processes). When we have the idea of the “I”, our having that idea is the result of our being acted upon: the idea of the “I” is itself the passive act, having the unknown action

of the psychic underworld as its cause⁶³. We say “I will” after things have already been willed for us or upon us; as Nietzsche says, making clear the connection between action and will in aphorism one-hundred twenty, (aphorism 124):

What is willing! – We laugh at him who steps out of his room at the moment when the sun steps out of its room and then says: ‘*I will* that the sun shall rise’; and at him who cannot stop a wheel, and says: ‘*I will* that it shall roll’; and at him who is thrown down in wrestling, and says: ‘Here I lie, but *I will* lie here!’ But, all laughter aside, are we ourselves ever acting any differently whenever we employ the expression: ‘*I will*’?

Nietzsche’s Denial of Purposes in Nature

The actions which we consciously *will* are those we do for a purpose. Human action is always purposeful action, and we consider our purposeful actions to be the best understood things in the world. On this Nietzsche comments (aphorism 127):

For a purpose. – Of all actions, those performed for a purpose have been least understood, no doubt because they have always been counted the most understandable and are to our consciousness the most commonplace. The great problems are to be encountered in the street.

We might also look here to *The Joyous Science*, aphorism three-hundred sixty:

Two kinds of causes that are often confounded. – This seems to me to be one of my most essential steps and advances: I have learned to distinguish the cause of acting from the cause of acting in a particular way, in a particular direction, with a particular goal. The first kind of cause is a quantum of dammed-up energy that is waiting to be used up somehow, for something, while the second is, compared to this energy, something quite insignificant, for the most part a little accident in accordance with which this quantum “discharges” itself in one particular way—a match versus a ton of powder. Among these little accidents and “matches” I include so-called “purposes” as well as the even much more so-called “vocations”: They are relatively random, arbitrary, almost indifferent in relation to the tremendous quantum of energy that presses, as I have said, to be used up somehow. The usual view is different: People are accustomed to consider the goal (purposes, vocations, etc.) as the *driving force*, in keeping with a very ancient error; but it is merely the *directing force* – one has mistaken the helmsman for the steam. And not even always the helmsman, the directing force.

Is the “goal,” the “purpose” not often enough a beautifying pretext, a self-deception of vanity after the event that does not want to acknowledge that the ship is *following* the current into which it has entered accidentally? That it “wills” to go that way *because it—must?* That it has a direction, to be sure, but—no helmsman at all?

⁶³ And one should note that Nietzsche here participates in the attempt of all modern philosophy to assassinate the Christian concept of the soul; recall aphorism 54 of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

We still need a critique of the concept of “purpose.”

We have seen that we do not know the origins of our actions, that we have, through language, invented words for the superlative degrees of our psychic experiences, words which, although we take them for *truth*, in truth only fill in a gap or summarize an absence of knowledge and thus express not only our knowledge of some power (in a summary or representative form) but also our absence of knowledge of our power. Nietzsche says this while playfully taking to task the idea that we have a power or faculty of “forgetting”. In aphorism one-hundred twenty-six we read:

Forgetting. – It is not yet been proved that there is any such thing as forgetting; all we know is that the act of recollection does not lie within our power. We have provisionally set into this gap in our power that word ‘forgetting’, as if it were one more addition to our faculties. But what, after all, does lie within our power! – If that word stands in a gap in our power, ought the other words not to stand in a gap in our *knowledge of our power*?

The vanity of man seems to be endless: he invents for himself a power out of his absence of a power. But laughter aside, we see above that Nietzsche confirms again his teaching that we are not the ground of ourselves, that we are not first-cause and continual miracle worker, but rather, that we are recipients of a fate that it is not in our power to alter, for nothing “lies within our power”⁶⁴.

Our purposeful actions, then, are themselves born of a psychic underworld which we do not control, but rather, which controls us, so to speak. Nietzsche discusses this origin of purposeful action in what is without purpose, in what is irrational and abysmally or chaotically dark, in aphorism two-hundred sixty-three while describing the genius.

There he says:

Contradiction in body and soul. – There exists a physiological contradiction in the so called genius: on the one hand he is informed by much wild, disorderly, involuntary agitation, and on the other with much purposiveness in this agitation – at the same time he represents a mirror which reflects both kinds of agitation side by side and intertwined, but also often enough in

⁶⁴ Aphorism 126; and this despite our belief that our intellect in its freedom is the most powerful thing in the world; cf. aphorism 125.

conflict. As a consequence of this spectacle he is often unhappy, and when he is feeling at his best, when he is creating, he does so because he forgets that he is at precisely this time doing – and is bound to be doing – something fantastic and irrational (which is what all art is) but with the highest degree of purposiveness.

Nietzsche directly addresses the origin of our purposefulness in action in aphorisms one-hundred twenty-two and one-hundred twenty-three. In aphorism one-hundred twenty-two he intimates that with the peeling away of the scales or erroneous suppositions concerning the presence of purposes in nature, the intellect will come to see the origin of purposeful (human) actions and useful faculties with new and better eyes. There he says⁶⁵:

Purposes in nature. – The impartial investigator who pursues the history of the eye and the forms it has assumed among the lowest creatures, who demonstrates the whole step-by-step evolution of the eye, must arrive at the great conclusion that vision was *not* the intention behind the creation of the eye, but that vision appeared, rather, after *chance* had put the apparatus together. A single instance of this kind – and ‘purposes’ fall away like scales from the eyes.

Human rationality, therefore, the mental vision of the mind’s eye, likewise originated without being itself the purpose of its own origination, for chance is the true origin of rationality, and chance is precisely that which is without purpose but wholly necessary. Chance does not act rationally, that is, according to a rational plan that works towards an end, nor is it moral but entirely non-moral. Nietzsche addresses this in aphorism one-hundred twenty-three, saying (cf. *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 111):

Rationality. – How did rationality arrive in the world? Irrationally, as might be expected: by a chance accident. If we want to know what that chance accident was, we shall have to guess it, as one guesses the answer to a riddle.

We should see here above all the *Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay, section twelve, bearing in mind the move from *chance* in the earlier work (*Daybreak*) to the *will to power* in the later:

⁶⁵ It should be noted that in the 150 some odd years since Darwin, nobody yet has demonstrated the step by step evolution of anything, let alone anything as complex as the eye.

. . . [t]he cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master*, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous "meaning" and "purpose" are necessarily obscured or even obliterated. However well one has understood the utility of any physiological organ (or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political usage, a form in art or in a religious cult), this means nothing regarding its origin: however uncomfortable and disagreeable this may sound to older ears—for one had always believed that to understand the demonstrable purpose, the *utility* of a thing, a form, or an institution, was also to understand the reason why it originated—the eye being made for seeing, the hand being made for grasping.

Thus one also imagined that punishment was devised for punishing. But purposes and utilities are only signs that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function; and the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternated with one another in a purely chance fashion. The "evolution" of a thing, a custom, an organ is thus by no means its *progressus* toward a goal, even less a logical *progressus* by the shortest route and with the smallest expenditure of force—but a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at transformation for the purpose of defense and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions. The form is fluid, but the "meaning" is even more so.

The case is the same even within each individual organism: with every real growth in the whole, the "meaning" of the individual organs also changes; in certain circumstances their partial destruction, a reduction in their numbers (for example, through the disappearance of intermediary members) can be a sign of increasing strength and perfection. It is not too much to say that even a partial *diminution of utility*, and atrophying and degeneration, a loss of meaning and purposiveness—in short, death—is among the conditions of actual *progressus*, which always appears in the shape of a will and a way to *greater power* and is always carried through at the expense of numerous smaller powers. The magnitude of an "advance" can even be measured by the mass of things that had to be sacrificed to it; mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single *stronger* species of man—that *would* be an advance.

We said above that Nietzsche "denies teleology". The matter, however, is more complicated and subtle than appears. To be sure, Nietzsche denies that the universe might be pursuing any final end, claiming that if the world did have a goal it surely would have reached it, given the infinity of time which it has had to do so (*Will to Power*, aphorisms 55 and 1062). He also denies, of course, any conception of a god who creates all things with a purpose, and also any conception of an essential and prefixed perfection of the "species" or type to which individual beings strive. Yet for all that, the will to

power is itself, in a manner, a teleological principle. To see this, we can look at aphorism thirteen of *Beyond Good and Evil*.⁶⁶

Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength—life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*.

In short, here as elsewhere let us beware of *superfluous* teleological principles—one of which is the instinct of self-preservation (we owe it to Spinoza's inconsistency). Thus method, which must be essentially economy of principles, demands it.

The only “goal” or “purpose” – both ultimately anthropomorphisms, as is “will to power” – is ever-more-power, which is to say that the will to power, as the fundamental instinct of a being, is the only legitimate teleological principle from which all other phenomenon and instincts, such as the instinct of self-preservation, are derivative; such instincts are thus *superfluous* when conceived of as teleological principles⁶⁷.

The Origin of the Illusion of Free-Will

Now, according to Nietzsche we have mistaken our purposeful actions for freely-willed actions, for actions which are *definitively* in *our power*: we have failed to see that they have their origin in the chance workings of our psychic underworld. But how did we come to perceive ourselves as having this free-will? We get a clue in aphorism three-hundred eleven:

The so-called soul. – The sum of the inner movements which a man *finds easy*, and as a consequence performs gracefully and with pleasure, one calls his soul; -- if these inner movements are plainly difficult and an effort for him, he is considered soulless.

With this we are easily drawn to certain aphorisms already referenced from *The Wanderer and his Shadow*. Of the several arguments which Nietzsche provides in his

⁶⁶ See also *The Will to Power*, aphorisms 647, 675, 684-85, 688, and 690.

⁶⁷ Note that Nietzsche italicizes “superfluous” and not “teleological.”

writings concerning the origin of our belief in free-will, he makes the following argument (which is *not* a metaphysical argument) from the feeling of power, freedom, or living (aphorism 9):

Where the theory of freedom of will originated. – Over one man *necessity* stands in the shape of his passions, over another as the habit of hearing and obeying, over a third as a logical conscience, over a fourth as caprice and mischievous pleasure in escapades. These four will, however, seek the *freedom* of their will precisely where each of them is most firmly fettered: it is as if the silkworm sought the freedom of its will in spinning. How does this happen? Evidently because each considers himself most free where his *feeling of living* is greatest; thus, as we have said, in passion, in duty, in knowledge, in mischievousness respectively. That through which the individual human being is strong, wherein he feels himself animated, he involuntarily thinks must also be the element of his freedom: he accounts dependence and dullness, independence and the feeling of living as necessarily coupled. – Here an experience in the social-political domain has been falsely transferred to the farthest metaphysical domain: in the former the strong man is also the free man; the lively feeling of joy and sorrow, high hope, boldness in desire, powerfulness in hatred is the property of the rulers and the independent, while the subjected man, the slave, lives dull and oppressed. – The theory of freedom of will is an invention of *ruling* classes.

According, then, to Nietzsche's analysis the feeling of freedom attends one where one is most unfree, most fettered, and this due to the *feeling* of being most alive (which feeling is transferred from the social-political domain to the psychological, and is thus the origin of the metaphysical doctrine of "free-will"). As aphorism ten of *The Wanderer and his Shadow* indicates, it is here that we are most joyously fettered, even seeming to dance in our own chains:⁶⁸

Feeling no new chains. – So long as we do not *feel* that we are dependent on anything we regard ourselves as independent: a false conclusion that demonstrates how proud and lusting for power man is. For he assumes that as soon as he experiences dependence he must under all circumstances notice and recognize it, under the presupposition that he is *accustomed* to living in independence and if, exceptionally, he lost it, he would at once perceive a sensation antithetical to the one he is accustomed to. – But what if the opposite were true: that he is *always* living in manifold dependence but regards himself *as free* when, out of long habituation, he *no longer perceives* the weight of the chains? It is only from *new* chains that he now suffers: -- 'freedom of will' really means nothing more than feeling no new chains.

It is worth noting lastly with respect to this aphorism that we see here something of Nietzsche's argument in *Daybreak* that the doctrine of free-will has "human pride and feeling of power as its father and mother" (aphorism 128), saying here in aphorism 10 of

⁶⁸ Aphorism 19; recall also *Daybreak*, aphorism 263 and 311.

The Wanderer and his Shadow that the cause of one's erroneous inference from one's feeling of freedom to the fact of one's freedom is one's being "proud and lusting for power".

Chance and Will

Nietzsche concludes his discussion of the origin of action in aphorism one-hundred and thirty, a lengthy and climactic aphorism titled "*Purposes? Will?*" The questioning nature of the title is an indication of the questioning nature of the entire aphorism. He begins by drawing our attention to an earlier stage in human history in which men believed in two realms, the human realm of will or purpose and the non-human realm of chance. We humans, it was thought, are like dwarfs who are perpetually engaged in the net or webbing of our own purposes while being ever-threatened by the "great cosmic stupidity", by the "arch-stupid giants, chance accidents", which giants rend apart our spider's web of purposes. Prior to this stage in our thinking, it was believed that the whole of nature consisted in human-like wills (recall aphorism 17, 23 and 31); to this extent, then, the move from the myth of giants and dwarfs to the myth of the Christian providential god was in a manner a reversion to an earlier mythology. This time, however, the world consists not of a myriad of wills but of a single Will. But this myth too is becoming unbelievable for man: "—in more recent times men have in fact come seriously to doubt whether the slate that falls from the roof was really thrown down by 'divine love' — and have again begun to go back to the old romance of giants and dwarfs'." This reversion to the old romance is evident from our modern science, which is divided into a non-teleological natural science and a teleological social science that still

allows itself to entertain the absurdity and luxury of free-will. Man has not yet developed the courage to henceforth stand before man “as even today, hardened in the discipline of science, he stands before the *rest* of nature” (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 230). This dichotomy, in its strictest form, however, is unworkable on theoretical grounds, for without the god who grounds the existence of man, man becomes a cosmic anomaly, an unexplainable cosmic exception inasmuch as through his free-will he is ‘outside’ of natural causality: he appears to be homeless in this universe, he appears to have been dropped into this universe from an alternate universe that would seem to be his true home, and yet without the god this situation (i.e., the *fact* of man) is utterly inexplicable. Nor is it difficult to see how this conception of the sciences is problematic on practical grounds: a crisis in justice or natural right is inevitable if no other binding or legitimating ground for man’s actions presents itself upon disbelief in the God other than man’s radical freedom (which, being radical, is no binding or legitimating ground whatsoever). These things said, Nietzsche takes this entire understanding to task, suggesting that there is only *one* realm, that of chance. Or rather, and in his own words, Nietzsche states:

Let us therefore *learn*, because it is high time we did so: in our supposed favored realm of purposes and reason the giants are likewise the rulers! And our purposes and our reason are not dwarfs but giants! And our nets are just as often and just as roughly broken *by us ourselves* as they are by slates from the roof! And all is not purpose that is called purpose, and even less is all will that is called will! And if you want to conclude from this: ‘so there is only one realm, that of chance and accidents and stupidity?’ – one will have to add: yes, perhaps there is only one realm, perhaps there exists neither will nor purposes, and we have only imagined them. Those iron hands of necessity which shake the dice-box of chance play their game for an infinite length of time: so that there *have* to be throws which exactly resemble purposiveness and rationality of every degree. *Perhaps* our acts of will and our purposes are nothing but just such throws – and we are only too limited and too vain to comprehend our extreme limitedness: which consists in the fact that we ourselves shake the dice-box with iron hands, that we ourselves in our most intentional actions do no more than play the game of necessity. Perhaps! – To get out of this *perhaps* one would have to have been already a guest in the underworld and beyond all surfaces, sat at Persephone’s table and played dice with the goddess herself.

Despite Nietzsche’s evident hesitance to state unqualifiedly that he believes in the realm of chance as the sole realm, he has in fact stated the matter unqualifiedly on

previous occasions (as in aphorisms 13, 86 and 195, for example). Has Nietzsche been “beyond all surfaces”? Has Nietzsche “sat at Persephone’s table and played dice with the goddess herself”? According to the *Preface*, at least, Nietzsche does deem himself a “subterranean man”, someone who has dug his way to the depths and beyond the depths, a “seeming Trophonius” (*Preface*, section 1; Trophonius being a subterranean, oracular god who lived in a cave; cf., aphorism 446). Indeed, the reference to Persephone (literally, fruit-bearing), the goddess of death and rebirth (it being her fate to spend six months in the underworld and six months among the living), is in perfect keeping with a later climactic statement which Nietzsche makes concerning the origin of human action and adds a new dimension to Nietzsche’s analysis: “Towards every bringing-forth we have essentially no other relationship than that of pregnancy and ought to blow to the winds all presumptuous talk of ‘willing’ and ‘creating’” (aphorism 552). The world is according to Nietzsche the product of chance, but this is not the end of the story: the world is *erotic* at its core, an eternal pregnancy that brings forth what lives from what has lived but passed. The course of this eternal pregnancy has not been *pre-planned* in advance; rather, it is the spontaneous (or unplanned) and continuous flowing of its own explosive essence. And yet, we must be very hesitant of disregarding Nietzsche’s insistent employment of the qualifying “*perhaps*” which he appends to his statements in aphorism one-hundred thirty. This becomes especially clear when we look at aphorism one-hundred twenty-one:

‘*Cause and effect*’. – In this mirror -- and our intellect is a mirror -- something is taking place that exhibits regularity, a certain thing always succeeds another certain thing -- this we *call*, when we perceive it and want to call it something, cause and effect -- we fools! As though we have here understood something or other, or could understand it! For we have seen nothing but *pictures* of ‘causes and effects’! And it is precisely this *pictorialness* that makes impossible an insight into a more essential connection than that of mere succession.

It is “impossible” for one to *know* the essential connection between phenomena. As Nietzsche earlier said, “all actions are essentially unknown” (aphorism 116) and this is as true of human actions as of the non-human phenomena of the world as a whole: even the will to power remains a hypothesis, if the most reasonable hypothesis. If, then, the core or ground of man and world is in the strictest sense *unknowable*, how can Nietzsche be confident in denying Christian claims to free-will and providence, since they posit free-will to be our *mysterious* essence and the free-will of God to be the *mysterious* mover of the manifest world (i.e., the ultimate reason for the world’s being as it is and not otherwise)? How can Nietzsche be confident in his alternative *hypothesis* concerning chance and eternal pregnancy? On its own, Nietzsche’s move from our consciousness and its superficiality to our sub-conscious inner processes and drives, even if the move is granted, would still only *seem* to be an adequate reply to the adherents of free-will; in truth, we would only be pushing the problem of free-will back to a prior or more fundamental level of analysis (making it still more baffling and mysterious): we would not do away with the possibility itself. Nietzsche must, then, have other reasons for his decisively favoring the hypothesis of ‘chance eternal pregnancy’ (soon to become *Dionysius*) to the hypothesis of the free-willing God who has blown the freely-willing soul into man. The key lies, as always with Nietzsche, in his own *self-knowledge*, which can never be separated from his knowledge of his ignorance.

The Supremacy of Self-Knowledge

In order to attain greater clarity concerning our problem, it is helpful to look to aphorism one-hundred seventeen (*In prison.*) Despite the fact that aphorism one-hundred seventeen deals explicitly with the *senses*, we are meant to transfer the analysis from the body to the analysis of the soul, which becomes especially clear when one looks to the aphorism that immediately follows it, where Nietzsche employs the same cosmological metaphor to explain our psychic (in this case moral) evaluations as he did in aphorism one-hundred seventeen to explain our sensory evaluations. Every being is imprisoned in its viewing of the whole by its own perspective; all viewing is perspectival: “There is absolutely no escape, no backway or bypath into the *real world*! We sit within our net, we spiders, and whatever we may catch in it, we can catch nothing at all except that which allows itself to be caught in precisely *our* net” (aphorism 117). But as we earlier learned in aphorism seventeen, man is prone to reading his own nature, or his own “understanding” of his nature, into nature or the whole as such; he reads himself “into nature”, but so thoroughly misunderstands himself that he in truth reads himself “out of nature” (aphorism 17). With Christianity and its providential God, man reads his own nature as a spider’s web of purposes into the nature of the whole, the result being the Christian “fable of a loving God” who himself spins out “purposes and nets more refined even than those produced by our own understanding” (aphorism 130). In the end, in looking upon the manner in which man has inferred the character of the whole from the character of his inner world, what Nietzsche takes issue with above all is the *false interpretation* of that inner world that facilitates the inference or conviction of a God, or

rather, of a providential world-order along Christian lines (for more on this from *Beyond Good and Evil*, one might see aphorisms 47 and 51 with 53; also, aphorisms 34-37).

Consider, for example, the utter narrowness of judgment involved in our evaluations of others, which is the theme of aphorism one-hundred eighteen. There he says:

What is our neighbor! – What do we understand to be the boundaries of our neighbor: I mean that with which he as it were engraves and impresses himself into and upon us? We understand nothing of him except the *change in us* of which he is the cause – our knowledge of him is like hollow space *which has been shaped*. We attribute to him the sensations his actions evoke in us and thus bestow upon him a false, inverted positivity. According to our knowledge of ourself we make of him a satellite of our own system: and when he shines for us or grows dark and we are the ultimate cause in both cases – we nonetheless believe the opposite! World of phantoms in which we live! Inverted, upside-down, empty world, yet dreamed of as *full and upright*!

This aphorism is screaming for comparison with aphorism 102, where Nietzsche states:

The oldest moral judgments. – What really are our reactions to the behavior of someone in our presence? -- First of all, we see what there is in it for *us* – we regard it only from this point of view. We take *this* effect as the *intention* behind the behavior – and finally we ascribe the harboring of such intentions as a *permanent* quality of the person whose behavior we are observing and thenceforth call him, for instance, ‘a harmful person’. Three-fold error! Three-fold primeval blunder! Perhaps inherited from the animals and their power of judgment! Is the *origin of all morality* not to be sought in the detestable petty conclusions: ‘what harms *me* is something *evil* (harmful in itself): what is useful *to me* is something *good* (beneficent and advantageous in itself): what harms me *once or several times* is the inimical as such and in itself; what is useful to me *once or several times* is the friendly as such and in-itself’. *O pudenda origo!* Does that not mean; to imagine that the paltry, occasional, often chance *relationship* of another with ourself is his *essence* and most essential being, and to assert that with the whole world and with himself he is capable only of those relationships we have experienced with him once or several times? And does there not repose behind this veritable folly the most immodest of all secret thoughts: that, because good and evil are measured according to our reactions, we ourselves must constitute the principle of the good?

Our oldest and most *fundamental* moral judgments, then, are according to Nietzsche based on petty-souled, vain, exceedingly narrow and subjective judgments (indeed one treats oneself as the center of the world, as its center of gravity or fundamental point of reference). According to Nietzsche, our so-called “moral actions” are in truth “something other than that – more we cannot say” (aphorism 116), “We are *none of us* that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which alone we have words, and consequently praise and blame” (aphorism 115; cf. aphorism 2), and our so-called moral

drives are content merely to feed on “dreamfood” (aphorism 119), which food actually produces *intoxication* as opposed to *nourishment*. As we shall see, it is our erroneous moral judgments that hold the key to Nietzsche’s denial of providence.

To begin to see this, we must look again to aphorism one-hundred thirty. There, Nietzsche writes:

“Christianity, whose basic feeling is neither Indian nor Persian nor Greek nor Scandinavian, acted differently: it bade us to worship the *spirit of power* in the dust and even to kiss the dust itself – the sense of this being that that almighty ‘realm of stupidity’ was not as stupid as it looked, that it was *we*, rather, who were stupid in failing to see that behind it there stood our dear God who, though his ways were dark, strange and crooked, would in the end ‘bring all to glory’. This new fable of a loving God who had hitherto been mistaken for a race of giants or for Moira and who himself span out purposes and nets more refined even than those produced by our own understanding – so that they *had* to seem incomprehensible, indeed unreasonable to it – this fable represented so bold an inversion and so daring a paradox that the ancient world, grown over-refined, could not resist it, no matter how mad and *contradictory* the thing might sound; for, between ourselves, there was a contradiction in it: if our understanding cannot divine the understanding and the purposes of God, whence did it divine this quality of its understanding? And this quality of God’s understanding?

What is the contradiction that Nietzsche will point to only with the utmost secrecy? It is this: the believer says of the order of the world, “It is moral; it is incomprehensible” (“Our understanding cannot divine the understanding and the purposes of God”; the understanding and the purposes of God are *moral* or inseparable from love of the holy). But if it is incomprehensible, how do you know that it is moral? This is the question that must be asked. The underlying conviction of the believer is that they know what the moral is, and thus that the world is *in a manner* comprehensible, *morally* comprehensible. The believer’s position boils down to this: he believes he *knows* what good and evil are and that he knows that God is moral, but he does not know or understand *how* the actual phenomena of the world is in accordance with God’s righteous plan, although he is sure that there is a plan and that it is of the utmost righteousness. Alternatively, we know what good and evil are and on the basis of that understanding when we observe the world, when we observe nature and history, we conclude that things do not ‘match-up’

with what we know (the good suffer at the hands of the wicked, the unjust rejoice, and so forth) and so conclude further: it *must* 'match-up' but we just do not know *how*. In sum, what is incomprehensible in God's will is such *only in light of something we already believe ourselves to have comprehended about it*, namely, its morality, which requires that we *already know* good and evil). Nietzsche, however, denies that we know what good and evil are, claiming rather that it is only our erroneous *belief* that we know what they are that causes us to infer a providential order and to find the certainty for that order in the experiences of our own soul.

But cannot the believer reply: 'Yes, I know that the order of the world is moral. And I know what the moral is, and I know that God is moral but I know these things, to repeat, in a mysterious way'? He certainly may. But Nietzsche denies that the believer believes himself to know the moral *only* in a mysterious way, (he merely "feels happy" – and this against the voice of his own intellectual conscience – in believing in the *incomprehensibility* of moral things and thus can hardly be sincerely interested in "acquiring a knowledge of them", to say nothing of his possible sense of shame at such a pursuit of knowledge; aphorism 142), and perhaps more decisively he denies that moral experiences as a whole *must* be mysterious. Though they may remain essentially unknown, Nietzsche has acquired some knowledge of them. We certainly *do* have opinions about these experiences, and an investigator of oneself *can* analyze these opinions and thus perhaps come to understand their origins in the soul. Here we ought to look to *The Religious Life*, in *Human all-too-Human*, V.I, aphorism 136:

Of Christian asceticism and holiness. – However much individual thinkers have exerted themselves to represent those strange phenomena of morality usually called asceticism and holiness as a marvel and miracle to attempt a rational explanation of which is almost a sacrilege and profanation: the urge to commit this sacrilege is, on the other hand, every bit as strong. A mighty drive of *nature* has at all times prompted a protest against these phenomena as such;

science, insofar as it is, as aforesaid, an imitation of nature, permits itself at least to register a protest against the alleged inexplicability, indeed inapproachability, of the said phenomena. So far, to be sure, it has done so in vain: they are still unexplained, a fact that gives great satisfaction to the above-mentioned votaries of the morally miraculous. For, speaking quite generally, the unexplained is to be altogether inexplicable, the inexplicable altogether unnatural, supernatural, miraculous – thus sounds the demand in the souls of all religious people and metaphysicians (in those of the artists, too, when they are also thinkers); while the scientific man sees in this demand the 'evil principle'. –

The whole of *Daybreak* may be said to be Nietzsche's testimony to his own moral vivisection, his account of the personal history of his own soul or rather his account of the *examination* of that history whereby he acquired a knowledge as to the origins of his moral-theological convictions.

According to Nietzsche the believer in providence believes in two realms: not the human realm of will or purpose and the non-human realm of chance, but rather the realm of human will and the realm of divine Will. Everything, all causation, is will; the will is efficient. According to Nietzsche's arguments hitherto man reads his own moral will into nature as God, and these two wills lie in a delicate gold-balance, with each will in a manner pervading the universe from the center through to the extremities. The essential connection between the two wills is morality (which morality requires free-will and thus a certain kind of knowledge, as well as a certain love of what is known): morality is the means of traffic. Through loving obedience to morality, which is obedience to divine command, man may manipulate or affect the gold-balance in order to realize his own will, or realize the hopes with which he is pregnant (for security, for future success, for happiness, and so forth). Thus man affects the gold-balance in the following way: he obeys the divine will – primarily in the form of self-cruelty (sacrifices) – in order to realize his own will. In this manner he takes possession of the God by being possessed by him (*The Case of Wagner*, section two):

... on the average, artists do what all the world does ... they misunderstand love. Wagner, too, misunderstood it. They believe one becomes selfless in love because one desires the advantage of another human being, often against one's own advantage. But in return for that they want to possess the other person. – Even God does not constitute an exception at this point. He is far from thinking, "What is it to you if I love you?" – he becomes terrible when one does not love him in return. *L'amour* – this saying remains true among gods and men – *est de tous les sentiments le plus egoiste, et par consequent, lorsqu'il est blesse, le moins genereux.* (B. Constant.)

This makes man something of an organon, for he is an instrument of divine will, though in the end he does realize his own will; thus, he is only *in a manner* reduced to an organon.

The mysterious soul receives mysterious directions, signs, and pieces of evidence from the commanding or providential God, and these are all of a decidedly *moral* character. It is good here to look to *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, aphorism 100. There, Nietzsche says:⁶⁹

Shame.— Shame exists wherever there is a "*mysterium*"; this is a religious concept that was widely prevalent in the older period of human culture. Everywhere there were circumscribed areas, to which divine right forbade entrance, except under certain conditions: at first these were spatial areas, in that certain places were not to be trodden upon by the foot of the unconsecrated, who were seized with fear and trembling when they approached them. ... In the same way, that whole world of inner states, the so-called "soul," is still a *mysterium* to all nonphilosophers since through endless ages it has been believed that the 'soul' was of divine origin and worthy of traffic with the gods: consequently, it is an adytum and evokes shame.

According to Nietzsche's personal testimony, however, upon examining himself rigorously and with the utmost honesty, his own oracular communications and heartfelt assurances from the moral god – even those which motivated his own philosophizing – desisted. Nietzsche's self-knowledge brought him to the knowledge that he does not know what good and evil are, though he formerly, in his vanity, believed that he did (whether he admitted this to himself or not). If we were to say that it is Nietzsche's opinion that revelations from the moral god are only believed in by men who believe

⁶⁹ And here, the translator and scholar Richard Hollingdale informs us that an adytum is the innermost chamber of a temple where oracles are delivered. Cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 352.

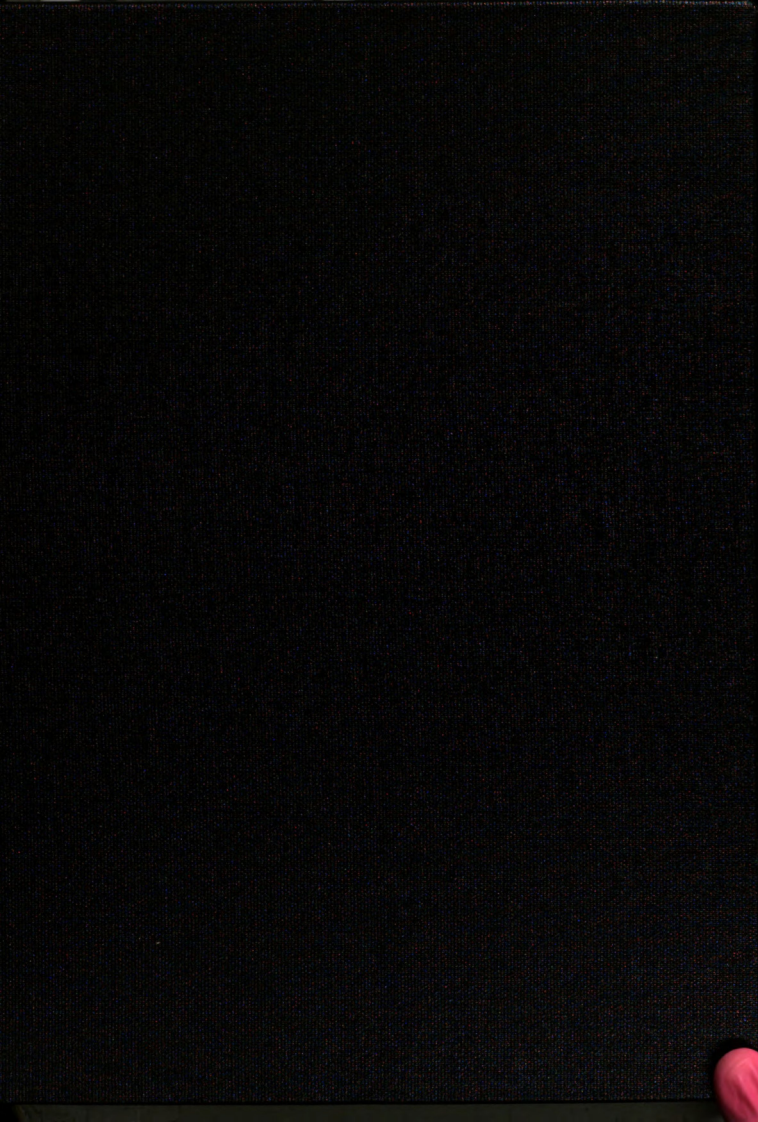
themselves to know good and evil, this would be true but misleading. It is more precise to say that it is Nietzsche's opinion that phenomenon— both the phenomenon of ourselves and the world – are interpreted according to our opinions (prejudices, convictions) of good and evil as revelations: the opinions produce the rapturous experiences that are interpreted as revelatory. The opinions in question are erroneous, vain opinions that produce the feeling of power, and when they are uncovered as such, they cease to be held by the investigator and consequently, the revelatory experiences produced by them are no longer experienced⁷⁰. This is, as we have said in summary many times, Nietzsche's most serious argument for the denial of providence and free-will. With that said, a far more detailed explication of that argument must wait until Chapter Six this work.

⁷⁰ And even were one never to attain such perfect consistency with oneself, one would still no longer interpret such experiences as revelatory or the opinions on which they are based as true opinions; cf. aphorism 33, end.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02956 4014



THESIS

5

2002

V.2

140

689

THS

LIBRARY
Michigan State
University

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

NIETZSCHE'S MORAL-THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AND DAYBREAK

VOLUME II

By

Anas Walid Abu-Muwais

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Political Science

2007

Chapter VI

Nietzsche's Medicinal Project for the Future:

From Man to Überman

It may seem strange to some that we should speak of philosophers as having “projects” by which they hope to pilot the human race and its destiny. Is this not the behavior of a politically and wildly ambitious person and not that of a speculative philosopher? Yet, at least since Plato, it is a fact that many philosophers have been political philosophers not only in the sense that they seek essential knowledge of that domain of existence covered by the idea of “the political,” but also inasmuch as their philosophic writings constituted *political acts*, indeed, very often the grandest political acts. Nor have those acts or attempts been ineffectual. Arguably, Nietzsche's project for humanity is the most ambitious ever yet conceived (though Francis Bacon also comes to mind). For Nietzsche seeks to unite humanity under the sway of the ultimate world historical coincidence of *philosophy* (reason) and *political power*, one that not only guarantees the future, but also integrates and redeems the entirety of the human past. Nietzsche's goal is thus the actualization and enlargement of Plato's dream of the philosopher-kingship. Plato thought the actualization of perfect justice could not occur on earth without the direct kingship of a God; Nietzsche hopes to make humankind into a

god that *rules* itself and thus *frees* itself into the realm of authentic or *genuine history*, for this is how humankind will wipe the blood off their hands from the murder of the Biblical God, namely, by becoming gods and thus becoming *worthy of the deed* (recall *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 125: *The madman*).

Indeed, Nietzsche speaks openly of his hopes to govern the future course of mankind, and not least in aphorism forty-five of *Daybreak*, which is the aphorism with which Nietzsche turns his attention chiefly from the past (aphorisms 1-44) to the future. Aphorism forty-five is as follows:

A tragic ending for knowledge. – Of all the means of producing exaltation, it has been human sacrifice which has at all times most exalted and elevated man. And perhaps every other endeavor could still be thrown down by *one* tremendous idea, so that it would achieve victory over the most victorious – the idea of *self-sacrificing mankind*. But to whom should mankind sacrifice itself? One could already take one's oath that, if ever the constellation of this idea appears above the horizon, the knowledge of truth would remain as the one tremendous goal commensurate with such a sacrifice, because for this goal no sacrifice is too great. In the meantime, the problem of the extent to which mankind can as a whole take steps towards the advancement of knowledge has never yet been posed; not to speak of what drive to knowledge could drive mankind to the point of dying with the light of an anticipatory wisdom in its eyes. Perhaps, if one day an alliance has been established with the inhabitants of other stars for the purpose of knowledge, and knowledge has been communicated from star to star for a few millennia: perhaps enthusiasm for knowledge may then rise to such a high-water mark!

We shall be returning to this aphorism again and again in our forthcoming analysis. For now it suffices to note that Nietzsche intends, in collusion with future philosophers around the world (other “stars”), to make the experiment of mankind’s advancing in knowledge. Knowledge or truth is to serve as the new ideal, the new source of pride which will remove the “brake” that stands in the way of man’s prosperity, namely, his present pride in the ideal constituted by the morality of suffering which rejects the real world for an imaginary ‘higher world’ (aphorism 32). That said, the past, including the general feeling of exaltation that follows from voluntary suffering, is *not rejected* by Nietzsche outright, it is to be *integrated*. To see this we can look to aphorism forty-nine:

The new fundamental feeling: Our conclusive transitoriness. – Formerly, one sought the feeling of the grandeur of man by pointing to his divine *origin*: this has now become a forbidden way for at its portal stands the ape together with other gruesome beasts, grinning knowingly as if to say: no further in this direction! One therefore now tries the opposite direction: the way mankind is *going* shall serve as proof of his grandeur and kinship with God. Alas this, too, is vain! At the end of this way stands the funeral urn of the last man and gravedigger (with the inscription ‘*Nihil humani a me alienum puto*’). However high mankind may have evolved – a perhaps at the end it will stand even lower than at the beginning! – it cannot pass over into a higher order, as little as the ant and the earwig can at the end of its ‘earthly course’ rise up to kinship with god and eternal life. The becoming drags the has-been along behind it: why should an exception to this eternal spectacle be made on account of some little star or for any little species upon it! Away with such sentimentalities!

Nietzsche does not seek any permanent, essential, and divine quality in man, neither in his origin nor in his end. For Nietzsche, the *fundamental* feeling or pathos of his *being* is his *transitoriness*: all things change, all things are in flux, and man is no exception to this. There is no eternal form of man. But however much man may change in the future, he cannot leap out of his past and present nature into an entirely new nature: whatever man is to become, he shall necessarily emerge from out of what he is and was. Nor are any ‘short cuts’ to a better future state possible (aphorism 55; cf., aphorism 59, 462):

‘*Ways*’. – The supposed ‘shorter ways’ have always put mankind into great danger; at the glad tidings that such a shorter way has been found, they always desert their way – and *lose their way*.

Nietzsche clearly alludes to Christianity as one such disastrous ‘shorter way’. Yet mankind should not, for that reason, seek a short-cut from out of the Christian-moral worldview by which man has come to lose his way. Indeed, as aphorism five-hundred thirty-four teaches, the Christian moral horizon, however late the hour, will continue to exist for a long time yet:

Small doses. – If a change is to be as profound as it can be, the means to it must be given in the smallest doses but unremittingly over long periods of time. Can what is great be created at a *single stroke*? So let us take care not to exchange the state of morality to which we are accustomed for a new evaluation of things head over heels and amid acts of violence – no, let us continue to live in it for a long, long time yet – until, probably a long while hence, we become aware that *the new evaluation* has acquired predominance within us and that the little doses of it to which we must from now on accustom ourselves have laid down a new nature in us. ...

We see, then, that Christian feelings will persist for a long time yet, and Nietzsche seeks to slowly purify mankind from these feelings, as he says at the end of aphorism thirty-three:

Wherever a man's feelings are exalted, that imaginary world is involved in some way. It is a sad fact, but for the moment the man of knowledge has to be suspicious of all higher feelings, so greatly are they nourished by delusion and nonsense. It is not that they are thus in themselves. or must always remain thus: but of all the gradual purifications awaiting mankind, the purification of the higher feelings will certainly be one of the most gradual.

Mankind's Physicians: Past, Present, and Future

Having noted the general character of Nietzsche's hopes for man, it is clear that the enemy and obstructor of his project is *Christianity* (i.e., the Christian judgments and feelings that presently reign in the souls of men). Above all, *intoxication* is the enemy; i.e., the imaginations of men whereby they experience themselves as being above reality and participating in a higher world. Intoxication has served to diminish the value of the earth, to diminish the value of the real world in which we live, with all its danger, incalculable fortune, fleetingness and endless motion towards power. "*Faith in intoxication*" has led to hatred of reality, and the chief culprits in this have been the *revered* contemplative men, the "half-crazy people of genius" that makeup the intellectuals, moralists, religious and artistic men (aphorism 50; cf., aphorism 51).

According to Nietzsche, this faith in intoxication has been a dreadful faith:

Just as savages are quickly ruined and then perish through 'firewater', so mankind as a whole has been slowly and thoroughly ruined through the feelings made drunk by *spiritual* firewaters and by those who have kept alive the desire for them: perhaps it will go on to perish by them.

It has been mankind's *physicians*, then, who have implanted the faith in intoxication into men. In the face of these physicians Nietzsche seeks new physicians,

physicians of the future who will promote rationality or healthier taste as opposed to the philosophers of the past who have promoted illusion or the taste for intoxication as flight from reality (cf., aphorism 505). For this we can look to aphorism 52:

Where are the new physicians of the soul? – It has been the means of comfort which have bestowed upon life that fundamental character of suffering it is now believed to possess; the worst sickness of mankind originated in the way in which they have combated their sicknesses, and what seemed to cure has in the long run produced something worse than that which it was supposed to overcome. The means which worked immediately, anesthetizing and intoxicating, the so-called consolations, were ignorantly supposed to be actually cures; the fact was not even noticed, indeed, that these instantaneous alleviations often had to be paid for with a general and profound worsening of the complaint, that the invalid had to suffer from the after-effect from intoxication, later from the withdrawal of intoxication and later still from an oppressive general feeling of restlessness, nervous agitation and ill health. Past a certain degree of sickness one never recovered – the physicians of the soul, those universally believed in and worshipped, saw to that. – It is said of Schopenhauer, and with justice, that after they had been neglected for so long he again took seriously the sufferings of mankind: where is he who, after they have been neglected for so long, will again take seriously the antidotes to these sufferings and put in the pillory the unheard-of quack doctoring with which, under the most glorious names, mankind has hitherto been accustomed to treat the sicknesses of its soul?

Clearly, the physicians of the past increased human suffering in the name of alleviating it, and Nietzsche addresses this in aphorism fifty-four:

Thinking about illness! – To calm the imagination of the invalid, so that at least he should not, as hitherto, have to suffer *more* from thinking about his illness than from the illness itself – that, I think, would be something! It would be a great deal! Do you now understand our task?

One might think, then, that Nietzsche simply seeks to alleviate the amount of suffering in the world, not to increase it (see aphorism 134, beginning). This might even appear to be confirmed by aphorism 525, where Nietzsche says:

Men have become suffering creatures as a consequence of their moralities: what they have purchased with them is, all in all, a feeling that at bottom they are too good and too significant for the earth and are paying it only a passing visit. For the present, the 'proud sufferer' is still the highest type of man.

However, it is not suffering as such that Nietzsche opposes, it is suffering in the name of attaining an illusory health that he opposes: all great things are necessarily purchased through suffering (cf., aphorism 114), but the intoxicated man exchanges the true greatness or health of which he is capable for an illusory greatness that is, in reality, a

diminution of his being. We would do well to embark on a more penetrating treatment of medicine in *Daybreak*, for an understanding of this is necessary if we are to understand Nietzsche's project. Above all we must understand the character of popular morality as pseudo-medicine or quack-doctoring (recall aphorism 11) and the origin of this pseudo-medicine to be man's fearfulness and impotence.

According to Nietzsche "the longest human age there has ever been" was "the age of timidity" (aphorism 250). Men lived fearfully in caves and forests, and with the darkness of night they trembled in the face of the unknown (aphorism 250). Our fear, even to this day, is related to our ignorance, and likewise to our impotence, for we fear future harm, and to be harmed a being must be vulnerable to harm: an omnipotent or otherwise invulnerable being could not feel fear. This fear of harm in the face of our impotence is the main root of morality, (and morality has often served to *increase* the painful sickness of frightful impotence under the guise of alleviating it). To see very clearly the role of fear and impotence in morality we can look again to aphorism twenty-three:

What we are most subtle in. – Because for many thousands of years it was thought that things (nature, tools, property of all kinds) were also alive and animate, with the power to cause harm and to evade human purposes, the feeling of impotence has been much greater and much more common among men than it would otherwise have been: for one needed to secure oneself against things, just as against men and animals, by force, constraint, flattery, treaties, sacrifices – and here is the origin of most superstitious practices, that is to say, of a considerable, perhaps *preponderant* and yet wasted and useless constituent of all the activity hitherto pursued by man! – But because the feeling of impotence and fear was in a state of almost continuous stimulation so strongly and for so long, the *feeling of power* has evolved to such a degree of *subtlety* that in this respect man is now a match for the most delicate gold-balance. It has become his strongest propensity; the means discovered for creating this feeling almost constitute the history of culture."

From here, we might recall aphorism one-hundred and seven: precisely in the realm of the most weighty questions as to how, and to what end, one is to act, "arbitrariness of decision is to be excluded! – thus commands the authority of morality:

an obscure and fear and awe are at once to direct mankind”, for in these matters it is deemed “dangerous to think falsely”. Indeed, we are not only fearful of and awestruck by the God, we also have unconditional trust in the God, which is essentially the faith or conviction that God loves us, and thus seeks to benefit us, in an unwavering manner *once we have lovingly fulfilled the condition of unconditional obedience*, and this unconditional trust involves an erotic, ecstatic and exceptional state in a soul that is, as a rule, fearful and mistrustful (aphorism 216; cf., aphorism 309). So far as conventional morality and piety are concerned, then, the love of God presupposes first and foremost the fear of God.

According to Nietzsche, strict adherence to morality conceals fear. For example, it is *weak* people who are most given to “withdraw behind stern customs and demanding ‘life tasks’” so as to create for themselves a kind of strength (aphorism 238). Similarly, Nietzsche notes that those who “lay the most stress on the strictest conscientiousness” are those who suffer from painful sensations, anxiety, and fear, and thus seek to conceal themselves from themselves and others so as “*to impress themselves*” (and to be sure, to impress others as well; aphorism 233). And again in a similar vein Nietzsche notes (aphorism 220):

Ceremonies, garb of rank and office, earnest deportment, solemn stare, slow pace of walking, convoluted speech and everything else that is called dignity is the form of disguise adopted by those who are at bottom timid – their purpose is to make people afraid (of them themselves or of that which they represent).

Indeed, Nietzsche even attributes good-naturedness and hospitality to fearfulness, albeit a sub-conscious fearfulness that must be set against the pleasurable sensation of the habitual action itself⁷¹.

⁷¹ Aphorism 310 and 319; cf., aphorism 389; cf., aphorism 30, end.

If we can tentatively define psychological sickness as the painful and fear-inducing affliction of the feeling of impotence, then it would follow that health is the pleasurable and confidence-inspiring gift of the feeling of power. Of course, morality, through its ecstatic or intoxicating sensation of the feeling of power, would also lay claim to making us healthy. But according to Nietzsche this feeling of enhanced power has little relation to any true enhancement of power, and is purchased at the price of all rationality, all self-seriousness, all genuine self-love and all joy in reality and thus the real human goods. The moral man, then, must be set against the philosopher, the truly healthy man who is “equipped with a handful of knowledge and a bagful of experience, as it were a poor-doctor of the spirit aiding those whose head is *confused by opinions*” (aphorism 449; cf., aphorism 390, 335).

The philosopher is his own physician (aphorism 322: *If possible live without a physician*)⁷². His happiness is neither grave, which is to say, weighed down with concern and fearfulness for the potential benefit and harm consequent upon the ethical significance of all things and chiefly of all actions), nor dumb (aphorism 216). He does not have unconditional trust of any kind, but rather, he keeps in the last recess of his heart “a little skepticism for all and everything, whether God or man or concept”⁷³. Because he is a genuine *individual*, his actions *truly* possess value for good and bad⁷⁴. His goals are preeminently *internal*, he breathes freely or without gravity, he possesses power over himself, he rarely (if ever) grows weary of himself and he lives more “cheaply” than anyone inasmuch as he needs only what others “despise and throw away” (above all, their

⁷² Cf., aphorism 462

⁷³ Aphorism 207; cf., aphorism 167, end.

⁷⁴ Aphorism 529; cf. aphorism 104.

minds)⁷⁵, his pleasures are inexpensive, his work is a joy, his soul is without guilt, his body is tuned to the needs of his soul and is a pleasure to him, and his need of company is circumscribed by his joy in solitude (aphorism 206 and 566). The philosopher has “love for all that exists”, for he finds the greater part of reality beautiful and derives his happiness from the discovery of this reality, both beautiful and ugly (aphorism 43 and 550). By knowing things and above all by knowing himself he embraces both and thus makes himself lovable (aphorism 567). His life is “*consecrated* to knowledge”, and he is driven towards it through the terrible need or hunger consequent upon his knowledge of his ignorance and his hope of the future. He reveres knowledge and delights in its absolute consistency (aphorism 195), though he is surely no dogmatist or unconditional reverer of knowledge as such. He forgoes the world not out of ignorance of it (like a nun) but “because he knows it, because he knows himself”, and in doing so he leaps into “*his* element”, “he gains *his* cheerfulness” (aphorism 440 and 339). He is “forever in a kind of love and forever in a kind of selfishness and self-enjoyment,” lying “continually in the sunshine and gentleness of grace” while knowing “that the paths that rise-up to the sublime are close by”⁷⁶. His suffering is harnessed by his pride, and penultimately, it is transformed into a gentle and even pleasant sadness, albeit one born of a certain weariness⁷⁷. Ultimately, however, suffering itself is *embraced* and conjoined with joy in the perpetual birth and pregnancy that constitutes the creative-destructive movements of the philosopher’s exceedingly animated Dionysian soul. The philosopher takes pleasure in divesting himself, he gives of his property and his rights out of great wealth (aphorism 315). This magnanimity is born of superfluity and a certain immoderation, for the

⁷⁵ Aphorism 179; cf., aphorism 572 and 573.

⁷⁶ Aphorism 449; cf., aphorism 482.

⁷⁷ Aphorism 114, end; cf.; aphorism 531.

inclination for luxury extends into his depths, and in freely giving joy to others he takes joy in himself:⁷⁸

Making others joyful. -- Why is making joyful the greatest of all joys? – Because we thereby give joy to our fifty separate drives all at once. Individually they may be very little joys: but if we take them all into one hand, our hand is fuller than at any other time – and our heart too! –

Now, according to Nietzsche, “the strongest cure” is “victory” (aphorism 571).

The philosopher has the strongest of all such cures, namely, “victorious wisdom”, which is in a manner a “victory over strength” (aphorism 548; and here we see an obvious denial of any brutish conception and glorification of sheer or raw “*power*,” of which there is no such thing: power is a *selective* principle; as will it is inseparable from thought or intelligence, also inseparable from *taste*). But not everyone is capable of such a victory, nor is everyone able to live without any other physician but themselves. Indeed there is a relativity to happiness: Nietzsche derives his happiness from his truths, whereas others are more likely to be destroyed by truths. Concerning this Nietzsche asks (aphorism 424; cf., aphorism 345):

Would this then constitute an objection to truths? What have they in common with the inner states of suffering, stunted, sick human beings that they must necessarily be of use to them? For to determine that a plant makes no contribution to the treatment of sick human beings is no argument against the *truth* of the plant”

Nietzsche’s project, however, involves the slow breeding of a people who are more and more capable of *enduring* truth and even of *flourishing* through subjection to such an ideal. Nietzsche’s medicinal project seeks “to bestow upon mankind the highest degree of rationality”, which would be, in a manner, the greatest “de-animalization of mankind” (really, the highest sublimation of animality; aphorism 107) and which will require a specific practical morality, one of self-control, severity, obedience, duty, and rationality (aphorism 215). Men will no longer “feel pathetically” and “flee into the dark precisely

⁷⁸ Aphorism 422; cf. aphorisms 405 and 566, end.

when reason ought to be taking as clear and cold a view as possible! That is to say, in the case of all our higher and weightier affairs” (aphorism 107). At present, however, (aphorism 106):

The goal of morality is defined in approximately the following way: it is the preservation and advancement of mankind; but this definition is an expression of a desire for a formula, and nothing more. Preservation *of what?* Is the question one immediately has to ask. Advancement *to what?* Is the essential thing – the answer to this *of what?* And *to what?* – not precisely what is left out of the formula? So what, then, can it contribute to any teaching of what our duty is that is not already if tacitly and thoughtlessly, regarded in advanced as fixed?

Indeed, as concerns the idea of mankind’s highest happiness, it is not clear whether we mean by this “the highest degree of happiness that individual men could gradually attain to” or whether we mean “a – necessarily incalculable – average-happiness which could finally be obtained to by all” (aphorism 106). Indeed, as concerns this stated goal of morality, namely, the “highest happiness of mankind”, according to Nietzsche this is “a phrase to which it is in any case impossible to attach any distinct concepts, let alone employ them as guiding stars on the dark ocean of moral aspirations” (aphorism 108). In this same aphorism Nietzsche says the following:

Only if mankind possessed a universally recognized *goal* would it be possible to propose thus and thus is the *right* course of action’: for the present there exists no such goal. It is thus irrational and trivial to impose the demands of morality on mankind. – To *recommend* a goal to mankind is something quite different: the goal is then thought-of as something that *lies in our own discretion*; supposing the recommendation appealed to mankind, it could in pursuit of it also *impose* upon itself a moral law, likewise at its own discretion. But up to now the moral law has been supposed to stand *above* our own likes and dislikes: one did not want actually to *impose* this law upon oneself, one wanted to *take* it from somewhere or *discover* it somewhere or *have it commanded to one* from somewhere.

Led by the natural nobility (cf., 179), mankind will raise its eyes “to the ideal of victorious wisdom which no previous age has been free to perfect for itself with so good a conscience as the age now about to arrive” (aphorism 201). At present, however, we, or rather, the free-minded, are in a moral *interregnum*, for they are *lawless* to the extent that the old moral laws have died for them without new *laws of life* having yet been put in their

place (which will not happen, according to Nietzsche, if the philosophers of the present to not act as forerunners and heralds to the future overman). Nietzsche elaborates upon this as follows (aphorism 453):

Moral interregnum. – Who would now be in a position to describe that which will one day *do away with* moral feelings and judgments! – However sure one may be that the foundations of the latter are all defective and their superstructure is beyond repair: their obligatory force must diminish from day to day, so long as the obligatory force of reason does not diminish! To construct anew the laws of life and action – for this task our sciences of physiology, medicine, sociology and solitude are not yet sufficiently sure of themselves: and it is from them that the foundation stones of new ideals (if not the new ideals themselves) must come. So it is that, according to our taste and talent, we live an existence which is either a *prelude* or a *postlude*, and the best we can do in this *interregnum* is to be as far as possible our own *reges* and found little *experimental states*. We are experiments: let us also want to be them!

This experiment in which “mankind can as a whole take steps towards the advancement of knowledge”, which experiment parallels the solitary’s experiment with knowledge, is greatly benefited by the fact that science has reconquered the idea of “definitive death” (aphorism 45 and 72). Indeed we should not underestimate such an achievement, as Nietzsche makes clear in aphorism 501:⁷⁹

Mortal Souls. – So far as the promotion of knowledge is concerned, mankind’s most useful achievement is perhaps the abandonment of its belief in an immortal soul. Now mankind can wait, now it no longer needs to rush precipitately forward or gulp down ideas only half tasted, as it formerly had to do. For in the past the salvation of the ‘eternal soul’ depended on knowledge acquired during a brief lifetime, men had to *come to a decision* overnight – ‘knowledge’ possessed a frightful importance. We have reconquered our courage for error, for experimentation, for accepting provisionally – none of it is so very important! And it is for precisely this reason that individuals and generations can now fix their eyes on tasks of a vastness that would to earlier ages have seemed madness and a trifling with Heaven and Hell. We may experiment with ourselves! Yes, mankind now has a right to do that! The greatest sacrifices have not yet been offered to knowledge -- indeed, merely to *have an inkling* of such ideas as nowadays determine our actions would in earlier times have been blasphemy and the loss of one’s eternal salvation.

⁷⁹ Cf. aphorism 547; cf. aphorism 82.

Crime and Punishment in the Future

Now, it is of decisive importance to Nietzsche's project, as we have already discussed on a prior occasion, that he restore to the wholly chance character of events their "innocence" (aphorism 13). That this is *decisive* is evident from aphorism 208:

Question of conscience. – 'And in *summa*: what is it you really want changed?'—We want to cease making causes into sinners and consequences into executioners.

What, then, will the consequences of this be for questions of crime and punishment in the future? Paramount to Nietzsche's analysis is the ideal of *self-legislation*, both the self-legislation of society over itself and the self-legislation of the individual over himself. For this we can look to aphorisms one-hundred eighty-seven and four-hundred thirty-seven:⁸⁰

From a possible future. – Is a state of affairs unthinkable in which the malefactor calls himself to account and publicly dictates his own punishment, in the proud feeling that he is thus honoring the law which he himself has made, that by punishing himself he is exercising his power, the power of the law-giving; he may have committed an offense, but by voluntarily accepting punishment he raises himself above his offense, he does not only obliterate his offense through free-heartedness, greatness and imperturbability, he performs a public service as well. – Such would be the criminal of a possible future, who, to be sure, also presupposes a future law-giving – one founded on the idea 'I submit only to the law which I myself have given, in great things and in small.' There are so many experiments still to make! There are so many futures still to dawn!

Privileges. – He who really posesses himself, that is to say, he who has definitively *conquered himself*, henceforth regards it as his own privilege to punish himself, to pardon himself, to take pity on himself: he does not need to concede this to anyone else, but he can freely relinquish it to another, to a friend for example -- but he knows that he therewith confers a *right* and that one can confer rights only out of the possession of *power*.

Nietzsche aims in the future at an ideal of self-mastery, of self-possession, of heightened power. But not everyone will be able to conquer themselves. From aphorism four-hundred and thirty-seven above we can infer that those who have not conquered themselves *need* to concede to others the right to punish, pardon, or pity them and this from a position of weakness, of lack of self-possession: they do not *confer* or *freely give*

⁸⁰ Cf. aphorisms 108, end, and aphorisms 184 and 251.

away rights over themselves to others, but rather, they need to give this power to another so as to possess in return reciprocal rights, which is the reciprocal recognition or concession of a power. Thus it is a trade of rights for rights or powers for powers inasmuch as a right, a claim as to what one deserves for oneself from “another”, whether from men, “the universe” (as one says), or God, is a kind of power. For according to Nietzsche this is the origin of rights: “Recognized and guaranteed degrees of power”, and related, “our duties – are the rights of others over us” (aphorism 112, *On the natural history of rights and duties*; and here, one should remember the gold balance between the wills on the scales of Providence).

In the phenomena of punishment we see very clearly that through the exchange of rights we exchange not only the power to do good to others so as to have good done unto us, we also exchange with others the power to harm us so as to be able to harm others in turn (though *this* reciprocity is certainly not at work in the Christian relation to the God; that said, many would demand on the basis of their integrity as moral beings that the wicked, and certainly those who have harmed them most terribly and criminally, be punished; cf. aphorism 130). But Nietzsche denies the goodness, value, or worth of punishment that is essentially revenge with a *good (and bad) conscience*. The true physician never aims at harming his patients (whom he helps out of generosity, not duty) but always at aiding them (cf., aphorism 202). The true judge is the man of knowledge who helps others whose heads are “*confused by opinions*” (aphorism 449); for example, those who punish others from the belief that these others have been unlawfully benefited by their injustice and thus must be paid back with harm for acting on their desires for unjust gain, for in doing so they recognize injustice as good in itself and bad for its

consequent punishment, and thus they often (not always) punish the criminal for his acting on desires that they share in common with him but resist acting upon from fear of the punishment. In these cases the criminal is punished for his daring, his license, his *hubris*: he is not punished out of the punisher's hatred of sin or vice, but rather for *allowing* himself to sin, for acting freely where he ought to have been subject to *reasons* (as is argued in *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, aphorism 33). Thus it is ultimately this *freedom itself*, this *willfulness* itself that is punished, and yet all too often we punish under the *pretense* that we deem the criminal's desires to be sinful, detestable desires that are not only the basis for our punishment, inasmuch as we hate those desires, but ought also to be the basis of their *guilt* (cf., aphorism 366). In punishing the criminal for his desire we thus in a manner punish ourselves inasmuch as we share the desire: in this sense punishment is revenge with a bad conscience side-by-side with a good conscience, for our righteous punishment of the criminal *reflects* back as a punishment of our unrighteous selves. I believe it is in this manner that aphorism 252 is to be understood (one might also see aphorism 236):

Reflect! – He who is punished is never he who performed the deed. He is always the scapegoat.

Nietzsche's Ideal of Divine Cannibalism

From the theme of crime and punishment we are naturally led to the topic of cruelty and pity in the future, or more simply, Nietzsche's ideal of divine cannibalism. Contrary to our modern morality of pity, with which "we let ourselves be made gloomy by the lamentation and suffering of others", Nietzsche suggests that we acquire the art of

the “Olympians” and *edify* ourselves by the misfortunes of mankind. At present, this is “somewhat too Olympian for us: even though we have, with our enjoyment of tragedy, already taken a step in the direction of this ideal divine cannibalism”⁸¹. At present, we fail to grasp what Plato and the Greeks grasped, namely, the *harmfulness* of pity, and thus we take *pleasure* in pitying. But according to Nietzsche pity is an obstruction to the will to rationality and all in all a *weakening* affect, and whoever desires “to serve mankind as a physician *in any sense whatever* will have to be very much on his guard against that sensation – it will paralyze him at every decisive moment and apply a ligature to his knowledge and his subtle helpful hand” (aphorism 144). Indeed, according to Nietzsche modern man is well on the way to a diminution of himself, a “de-evolving” into the last man due to his morality of pity. For this we can look to aphorism one-hundred seventy-four:⁸²

Moral fashion of a commercial society. – Behind the basic principle of the current moral fashion: ‘moral actions are actions performed out of sympathy for others’, I see the social effect of timidity hiding behind an intellectual mask: it desires, first and foremost, that *all the dangers* which life once held should be removed from it, and that *everyone* should assist in this with all his might: hence only those actions which tend toward the common security and society’s sense of security are to be accorded the predicate ‘good’. – How little pleasure men must nowadays take in themselves when such a tyranny of timidity prescribes to them their supreme moral law, when they so uncontradictingly allow themselves to be ordered to look away from themselves but to have lynx eyes for all the distress and suffering that exists elsewhere! Are we not, with this tremendous objective of obliterating all the sharp edges of life, well on the way to turning mankind into *sand*? Sand! Small, soft, round, unending sand! Is that your ideal, you heralds of the sympathetic affections? – In the meantime, the question itself remains unanswered whether one is of *more use* to another by leaping to his side and *helping* him – which help can in any case only be superficial where it does not become a tyrannical seizing and transforming – or by *creating* something out of oneself that the other can behold with pleasure: a beautiful, restful, self-enclosed garden perhaps, with high walls against storms and the dust of a roadway but also a hospitable gate.

⁸¹ Aphorism 144: cf., aphorism 172.

⁸² Cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 163, with *Joyous Science*, aphorism 130.

Divine cannibalism involves above all the triumph over one's pity and thus over oneself. To understand the character of this triumph we need to return again to aphorism 113 (*The striving for distinction*). There, Nietzsche says:

The striving for distinction brings with it *for the next man* -- to name only a few steps on the ladder: torment, then blows, then terror, then fearful astonishment, then wonderment, then envy, then admiration, then elevation, then joy, then cheerfulness, then laughter, then derision, then mockery, then ridicule, then giving blows, then imposing torment: -- Here at the end of the ladder stands the ascetic and martyr, who feels the highest enjoyment by himself enduring, as a consequence of his drive for distinction, precisely that which, on the first step of the ladder, his counterpart the *barbarian* imposes on other on whom and before whom he wants to distinguish himself.

According to Nietzsche, in the face of such souls we may ask:

Is the circle of striving for distinction really at an end with the ascetic? Could this circle not be run through again from the beginning, holding fast to the basic disposition of the ascetic and at the same time that of the pitying God?

At the beginning we had the barbarian's cruelty to others, the basic disposition of the ascetic is self-cruelty, and the basic disposition of the pitying God is his being pained by the suffering of others. Thus Nietzsche goes on to explain that through this divine cannibalism one will run through the circle of striving for distinction – which is the striving for domination – by doing “hurt to others in order thereby to hurt *oneself*, in order then to triumph over oneself and one's pity and to revel in an extremity of power!” (aphorism 113). For more on this we can look to *Joyous Science*, aphorism 325:

What belongs to greatness.—Who will attain anything great if he does not find in himself the strength and the will to *inflict* great suffering? Being able to suffer is the least thing; weak women and even slaves often achieve virtuosity in that. But not to perish of internal distress and uncertainty when one inflicts great suffering and hears the cry of this suffering—that is great, that belongs to greatness.

The greatness attached to this reveling in an extremity of power constitutes the Olympian aspect of the Olympian-like edification.

Nietzsche, then, is not averse to suffering and the inflicting of suffering and this side-by-side with the great pity he experiences in himself. Nietzsche does not promote some brutish conception of suffering for suffering's sake or for the sake of sheer power (recall aphorism 548); on the contrary, suffering is the for the sake of increasing one's power or feeling of power, *and this through the pursuit of higher ideals*⁸³. Nietzsche claims that our modern morality is a petty, narrow, slavish and bourgeois morality that looks only to the *immediate* consequences of our acts for others:

A higher and freer viewpoint, it seems to me, is to *look beyond* these immediate consequences to others and under certain circumstances to pursue more distant goals *even at the cost of the suffering of others* – for example, to pursue knowledge even though one realizes that our free-spiritedness will at first and as an immediate consequence plunge others into doubt, grief and even worse things (aphorism 146; such worse things, for example, as suicide).

Nietzsche would certainly *prefer* that in making his neighbor sacrifice and thus suffer for the idea of the future he become *happier* (cf., aphorism 402), but if push comes to shove Nietzsche is not averse to simply sacrificing present men to future men (aphorism 146, end). We see here a practical application of Nietzsche's "anti-teleological" understanding of physiology as spelled out in the *Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay, section twelve when discussing the evolutionary advancement of species by way of the will to power (previously quoted in chapter IV):

The magnitude of an "advance" can even be measured by the mass of things that had to be sacrificed to it; mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single *stronger* species of man—that *would* be an advance.

Nietzsche aims, then, for man to overcome his altruistic morality in the name of a more rational, self-imposed morality, thus putting a new pride as a brake to our existing pride (aphorism 32). The greater rationality that leads to the denial or rather sacrificing

⁸³ Contrary, for example, to the ideals we follow when we cruelly punish the scapegoat.

of our present morality is itself attended by great pain and suffering, as any experience of applying critical reason to one's beloved moral convictions (which honor above all degree of sacrifice) will attest. This is addressed in aphorism two-hundred twenty-one:

Morality of sacrifice. – The morality which assesses itself according to degrees of sacrifice is morality at the half savage stage. Reason here gains only a hard and bloody victory within the soul, powerful counter-drives have to be subdued; without such cruelties as the sacrifices demanded by cannibal gods this victory will not be won.

The cannibal gods edify themselves by our (or their?) suffering, through the greater will to life exhibited through the self-enhancement that revels in itself and in its victories over hardship. The cannibal god takes nourishment from man's flesh (i.e., enhances his power through man's sacrifices or self-inflicted sufferings), and Nietzsche aims towards the enhancement and rationalization of this ideal in mankind, which will now be in the service of, or for the sake of, "knowledge of truth" (aphorism 45).

Breeding the Future Human Race

If mankind is to move towards Nietzsche's stated goal, a great deal will be required, including "Asiatic *perseverance*" (aphorism 206, end). Indeed, Nietzsche intends to breed a *human race of unified culture* out of the present motley of peoples and cultures, which cultures will continually decay with increased knowledge (and thus the people likewise will become ever more sickly). The laws of life must be written anew, towards which end the more rational man must commit more and more deviant acts, acts that deny the old morality and hearken toward the new, more rational morality (see aphorism 149). The new laws of life will require new customs with respect to marriage, which shall not be based on the mad and fleeting passion of love but rather on the ideal of

the future man (aphorism 150 and 151). A “grand rational progress of mankind” (aphorism 150) will require that a race be *bred* in the utmost seriousness (cf., aphorism 286). Nietzsche looks to Europe to lead the way to this future, and looks to European Jews, who are distinguished among Europeans for, among other things, “the rationality of their marriages and marriage customs” (aphorism 205) to be of aid in this matter (through continual integration and interbreeding with the European aristocracy). For this entire topic of breeding, aphorism two-hundred seventy-two is invaluable and not least for its clear usage of blood and race and such as *metaphors* and signposts for an *essentially psychological* argument about culture (cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 200):

The purification of the race. – There are probably no pure races but only races that have become pure, even these being extremely rare. What is normal is crossed races, in which, together with a disharmony of physical features (when eye and mouth do not correspond to one another, for example) there must always go a disharmony of habits and value concepts. (Livingstone heard someone say: ‘God created white and black men but the devil created the half-breeds.’) Crossed-races always mean at the same time crossed cultures, crossed moralities: they are usually more evil, crueler, more restless. Purity is the final result of countless adaptations, absorptions and secretions, and progress towards purity is evidenced in the fact that the energy available to a race is increasingly *restricted* to individually selected functions, while previously it was applied to too many and often contradictory things: such a restriction will always seem to be an *impoverishment* and should be assessed with consideration and caution. In the end, however, if the process of purification is successful, all that energy formerly expended in the struggle of the dissonant qualities with one another will stand at the command of the total organism: which is why races that have become pure have always also become *stronger* and *more beautiful*. -- The Greeks offer us the model of a race and culture that has become pure: and hopefully we shall one day also achieve a pure European race and culture.

The chief ill of modern man, who is not pure-bred or pure-blooded but rather, cross-cultured, is the dissoluteness of his will. Consider his nourishment:⁸⁴

Against bad diet. – To the devil with the meals people make nowadays – in hotels just as much as where the wealthy classes of society live! Even when eminent scholars foregather they load their table in the same way the banker loads his: on the principle of ‘much too much’ and ‘lots of different things’ – from which it follows that the food is prepared to a view of its effectiveness rather than its genuine effect, and stimulating drinks are needed to help banish the heaviness of brain and stomach which relates. To the devil with the dissoluteness and over-excitability which must generally follow from this! To the devil with the dreams which must also follow! To the devil with the arts and books which will be the dessert to such meals! And let them do as they

⁸⁴ Aphorism 203; cf. aphorism 171.

will: pepper and contradiction or world-weariness will reign in all that they do! (The wealthy class in England has need of its Christianity in order to endure its indigestion and headaches.)

Consider, for example, the ‘beer drenched’ Germans of aphorism one-hundred sixty-seven, the very people who Nietzsche anticipates shall lead the way in *command* of Europe. This “nation of *unconditional* feelings” is, according to the later Nineteenth Century philosopher Nietzsche, “much imposed upon nowadays, and by their own great men”. Despite the fact that Bismarck, Schopenhauer and Wagner are each “glorious spectacles”, each one “a stream in its own, self-agitated bed, and so mightily agitated it can often seem as though it wanted to flow uphill”, each contradicted himself and one another: “Schopenhauer is an enemy of Wagner’s music, Wagner an enemy of Bismarck’s politics, and Bismarck an enemy of everything Wagnerian and Schopenhauerian!” The Germans are much put upon because, being a people of unconditional feelings, they can find no place to satisfy their “thirst for wholesale homage” (aphorism 167). But these things said, as the very untimely person of *Nietzsche himself* gives testimony, the German holds the greatest potential for *command* due to the tremendous strength of will harnessed and bred through the centuries into their northern souls by way of “unconditional trust,” or the will to unconditional “*obedience*”.⁸⁵

The practical morality Nietzsche endorses for the promotion of rationality, itself being more rational, shall liberate the *individual* from slavish obedience to the herd. The promotion of “actions stamped with genuine *individuality*”, which are precisely those actions alone that “*possess value* for good and bad” (aphorism 529), must be contrasted to the morality of custom and the war against individuality contained in its attempt to breed

⁸⁵ Aphorism 207; cf., aphorisms 231 and 232.

mankind as a *herd animal*, which is still evident in our modern morality of pity. Indeed, according to Nietzsche (aphorism 132):

What is wanted – whether this is admitted or not – is nothing less than a fundamental remolding, indeed weakening and abolition of the *individual*: one never tires of enumerating and indicating all that is evil and inimical, prodigal, costly, extravagant in the form individual existence has assumed hitherto, one hopes to manage more cheaply, more safely, more equitably, more uniformly if there exist only *large bodies and their members*. Everything that in any way corresponds to this body-and-membership-building drive and its ancillary drives is felt to be good, this is the *moral undercurrent* of our age; individual empathy and social feeling here play into one another's hands.

But henceforth, Nietzsche hopes (aphorism 164; recall aphorism 149):

Men who deviate from the usual path and are so often the inventive and productive men shall no longer be sacrificed: it shall not even be considered disgraceful to deviate from morality either in deed or thought; numerous novel experiments shall be made in ways of life and modes of society; a tremendous burden of bad conscience shall be expelled from the world – these most universal goals ought to be recognized and furthered by all men who are honest and seek the truth!

It is clear, then, that Nietzsche aims at a new *egoistic* morality, a morality that claims and likely more than claims to be advantageous for the individual (or at least for most individuals). Modern altruistic morality, aside from its being designed to promote herd behavior under the guise of psychological health, still takes pride in the belief that moral actions are both freely-willed and un-egoistic, and as this belief decays, as “God’s corpse” decays more and more, the actions hitherto counted as praiseworthy shall lose their luster. Reason will more and more show our “free” and “unegoistic” actions to be very unfree and egoistic actions (deceptions, above all self-deceptions) grounded in “intellectual mistakes”. On this Nietzsche comments (aphorism 148: *Distant prospect*):

Will they from then on be performed less often because they are now valued less highly? -- Inevitably! At least for a good length of time, as long as the balance of value feelings continue to be affected by the reaction of former errors! But our counter-reckoning is that we shall restore to men their goodwill towards the actions decried as egoistic and restore to these actions their *value* - - *we shall deprive them of their bad conscience!* And since they have hitherto been by far the most frequent actions, and will continue to be so for all future time, we thus remove from the entire aspect of action and life its *evil appearance!* This is a very significant result! When man no longer regards himself as evil he ceases to be so!

Mankind's Tragic Love for Knowledge

Our discussion of Nietzsche's "medicinal project" cannot end without a discussion of the element of the tragic in mankind's future. Recall that the aphorism with which we began this entire discussion was entitled "*A tragic ending for knowledge*" (aphorism 45). But why must Nietzsche's project for the advancement for knowledge be a tragedy? And what exactly is the tragic element? In sum, the tragedy is this: man, with his increasing truthfulness, will attain to a position in which he is left with a knowledge he cannot endure and a possibility of happiness (namely, that found in comforting illusions) that he can no longer accept. Yet in order to give an adequate treatment of this tragedy we must return first to a discussion of pessimism, and this time with an eye to the approaching pessimism of the future, and then to a discussion of a certain modern love-story.

According to Nietzsche, pessimism has been promoted most by morality: the "most moral man" hitherto has entertained the belief "that the only justified condition of mankind in the face of morality" is the "profoundest misery" (aphorism 106, end). The world as we know it has been condemned in the name of a higher world or moral realm, and this above all by those half-crazy and action-weary men of genius of the *vita contemplativa* who spread the faith in intoxication⁸⁶. Indeed this very thing is pessimism, i.e., "the contempt for that existence which is knowable by *us*" (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 346), and pessimism is inseparable from weariness of action (or, oldness), on the one

⁸⁶ Recall aphorism 50; cf. aphorisms 41-43.

hand, and the exercise of one's spiritual organs of defense and attack (or, ugliness) on the other (recall aphorism 25). These three together constitute sickness (aphorism 409):

"Sickness. – 'Sickness' is: the premature approach of old age, ugliness and pessimism: which things go together.

The sick darken the sky and make life gloomy, and their sickness is contagious too, even for the philosopher, who must therefore choose solitude if he is to become bright again. For this we can look to aphorism 323:

*Darkening of the sky. – Do you know the revenge of shy people who behave in society as though they had stolen their limbs? The revenge of humble, Christian-like souls who can do no more than creep through the world? The revenge of those who always judge quickly and are always quickly judged wrong? The revenge of the drunkards of every species for whom the morning is the most dismal time of day? That of the invalids of every species, the sickly and depressed, who no longer possess the courage to get well? The number of these revengeful little people is tremendous, not to speak of that of their little revengeful acts; the whole air is continually whizzing with the arrows of their malice so that the sun and the sky of life are darkened by them. – Not only their sky but ours too: which is worse than the scratches they often make on our heart and skin. Do we not sometimes *deny* that there is such a thing as sun and sky, simply because we have not seen them for so long? – Therefore, solitude! Solitude for this reason too!*

The sick slander all cheerfulness, they "discover under every rose a disguised and hidden grave", but according to Nietzsche "this judgment of cheerfulness is nothing other than its refraction on the dark background of sickness and weariness" (aphorism 329).

Nietzsche himself has overcome this pessimism by *passing through it and coming out the other side*, and for this we can begin by looking to *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 378:

*"And become bright again." – We, openhanded and rich in spirit, standing by the road like open wells with no intention to fend-off anyone who feels like drawing from us – we unfortunately do not know how to defend ourselves where we want to: we have no way of preventing people from *darkening* us: the time in which we live throws into us what is most time-bound; it's dirty birds drop their filth into us; boys their gew-gaws; and exhausted wanderers who come to us to rest, their little and large miseries. But we shall do what we have always done: whatever one casts into us, we take down into our depth – for we are deep, we do not forget – *and become bright again.**

But what is the meaning of this cheerfulness? Nietzsche addresses this in the opening aphorism of Book V of *The Joyous Science* (aphorism 343: "*The meaning of our cheerfulness*"). Nietzsche is cheerful because for him "God is dead", that is, "the belief

in the Christian God has become unbelievable” (aphorism 343). The Christian God, which has been the sun lighting up our entire horizon of being, has been eclipsed, and a new dawn has arisen for Nietzsche in its wake. Nietzsche, the untimely man who is most timely, has lived through the contradictions and tensions of his time and come out the other side: as such he has become a forerunner of our future. The death of the Christian God has left Nietzsche, not “sad and gloomy”, but rather (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 343):

We philosophers and “free spirits” feel, when we hear the news that “the old god is dead” as if a new dawn shone on us; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, premonitions, expectation. At long last the horizon appears free to us 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.” –

Such is the case for Nietzsche, but what about Europe? The long protracted illness of pessimism must run its course in the European soul as it has in Nietzsche’s soul, and likewise the slow cures that Nietzsche has administered to himself. Although some souls at present have indeed experienced something of the pessimism or the darkening of the sky that follows from the death of the Christian God, “in the main”, according to Nietzsche, one may say:

The event itself is far too great, too distant, too remote from the multitude’s capacity for comprehension even for the tidings of it to be thought of as having *arrived* as yet. Much less may one suppose that many people know as yet *what* this event really means – and how much must collapse now that this faith has been undermined because it was built upon this faith, propped up by it, grown into it; for example, the whole of our European morality. This long plenitude and sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin, and cataclysm that is now impending – who could guess enough of it today to be compelled to play the teacher and advance proclaimer of this monstrous logic of terror, the prophet of a gloom and an eclipse of the sun whose like has never yet occurred on earth?

In order to understand this “monstrous logic of terror” we shall have to turn to a love story, namely, the story of modern man’s love of knowledge or will to truth. As with all good love stories, this one too is a tragedy, and as with all good tragedies, this one too

ends in death, for love and death are brothers. But to say that love and death are brothers is as much as to say that life and death are brothers, for the will of life is the will to power (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 349), which will to power is equivalent to nature, and “love, thought of in its eternity as great and full, is nature, and being nature it is in all eternity something ‘immoral’” (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 363). These things said, though death be the brother of *life* it is life that is *fundamental*, for the hidden Yes in things is the motive force for all No’s: prior to all destruction and will to destruction is the will to life which destroys because in its “overflowing of energy” it is “pregnant with future” (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 370). As Nietzsche says elsewhere, “if we say no, we still do what we *are*” (*Will to Power*, aphorism 675). Thus, even the modern pessimist is at bottom a Yes-sayer, and his pessimism, his attack on life, only the defense of a sick and wearied being against a pain-inducing and threatening world, an attempt to salvage some joy in willing, even if it be the joy in willing the nothingness: truly a monstrous logic of terror.

In aphorism forty-five, Nietzsche spoke of a “drive to knowledge” which “could drive mankind to the point of dying with the light of an anticipatory wisdom in its eyes”. Indeed, according to Nietzsche, for the goal of knowledge of truth “no sacrifice is too great”, thus including the sacrificing of life itself. Accompanying this drive to knowledge and its demanded sacrifices will be “exaltation” and “enthusiasm”. To understand this better we need to look to aphorism four-hundred twenty-nine:

The new passion. – Why do we fear and hate a possible reversion to barbarism? Because it would make people unhappier than they are? Oh no! The barbarians of every age were *happier*: let us not deceive ourselves! – The reason is that our *drive to knowledge* has become too strong for us to be able to want happiness without knowledge or the happiness of a strong, firmly rooted delusion; even to imagine such a state of things is painful to us! Restless discovering and divining has such an attraction for us, and has grown as indispensable to us as is to the lover his unrequited love, which he would at no price relinquish for a state of indifference – perhaps, indeed, we too are *unrequited* lovers! Knowledge has in us been transformed into a passion which shrinks at no

sacrifice and at bottom fears nothing but its own extinction; we believe in all honesty that all mankind must believe itself more exalted and comforted under the compulsion and suffering of *this* passion than it did formerly, when envy of the coarser contentment that follows in the train of barbarism had not yet been overcome. Perhaps mankind will even perish of this passion for knowledge! -- Even this thought has no power over us! But did Christianity ever shun such a thought? Are love and death not brothers? Yes, we hate barbarism -- we would all prefer the destruction of mankind to a regression of knowledge! And finally: if mankind does not perish of a *passion* it will perish of a *weakness*: which do you prefer? This is the main question. Do we desire for mankind an end in fire and light or one in the sand? --

Sand is precisely what men are becoming due to their security-loving modern herd morality of pity, which is deemed to be *the* true morality. As Nietzsche says in aphorism one-hundred seventy-four, "are we not, with this tremendous objective of obliterating all the sharp edges of life, well on the way to turning mankind into *sand*? Sand! Small, soft, round, un-ending sand! Is that your ideal, you heralds of the sympathetic affections? --

We see from aphorism four-hundred twenty-nine above that Nietzsche wonders whether we (i.e., we rational men of the present and future) are *unrequited lovers*.

Nietzsche explains this in aphorism three-hundred twenty-seven:

A fable. -- The Don Juan of knowledge: no philosopher or poet has yet discovered him. He does not love the things he knows, but has spirit and appetite for and enjoyment of the chase and intrigues of knowledge -- up to the highest and remotest starts of knowledge! -- Until at last there remains to him nothing of knowledge left to hunt down except the absolutely *detrimental*; he is like the drunkard who ends by drinking absinthe and *aqua fortis*. Thus in the end he lusts after Hell -- it is the last knowledge that *seduces* him. Perhaps it too proves disillusionment, like all knowledge! And then he would have to stand to all eternity transfixed to disillusionment and himself become a stone-guest, with a longing for a supper of knowledge which he will never get! -- For the whole universe has not a single morsel left to give to this hungry man.

Clearly, the knowledge attained by these men of the future will not satisfy them: the *promise* of satisfying their hunger will seduce them into pursuit after pursuit, but once attained the knower suffers disillusionment. That the pursuit of knowledge by man will be fueled by an optimistic hope that through it one will defeat suffering is clear from aphorism four-hundred fifty (cf., 433):

The allurement of knowledge. -- A glance through the portals of science affects passionate spirits as the magic of all magic; and it will probably turn them into fantasists and, in the most favorable case, into poets: so vehement is their craving for the happiness of those with knowledge. Does it not thrill through all your senses -- this sound of sweet allurements with which science has

proclaimed its glad tidings, in a hundred phrases and in the hundred-and-first and fairest: 'let delusion vanish! Then "woe is me!" will vanish too; and with "woe is me!" woe itself will be gone.' (Marcus Aurelius)

But as we see from aphorism three-hundred twenty-seven, were we to come to know everything, we would proceed to die of hunger: the satisfaction is in the chase that anticipates satisfaction (or consolation), but not in the supper: "Woe is me" will not be gone. But does this constitute an objection to knowledge? Nietzsche addresses this in aphorism four-hundred twenty-four:

For whom truth exists. – Up to now errors have been forces of *consolation*: now we expect the same effect from known truths, and have been waiting for it for some little time. How if this effect – the effect of consolation – were precisely what truths are incapable of? -- Would this then constitute an objection to truths? What have they in common with the inner states of suffering, stunted, sick human beings that they must necessarily be of use to them? For to determine that a plant makes no contribution to the treatment of sick human beings is no argument against the *truth* of the plant.

But must this be the case for everyone? Nietzsche goes on in the same aphorism to address this too (cf., aphorism 550):

Perhaps all this leads to the proposition that truth, *as a whole* and interconnectedly, exists only for souls which are at once powerful and harmless, and full of joyfulness and peace (as was the soul of Aristotle), just as it will no doubt be only such souls as these that will be capable of *seeking* it: for, no matter how proud they may be of their intellect and their freedom, the others are seeking *cures* for themselves – they are *not* seeking truth. This is why these others take so little real pleasure in science, and make of the coldness, dryness and inhumanity of science a reproach to it: it is the sick passing judgment on the games of the healthy.

The Don Juan of knowledge is *sick*, he is seeking a cure for himself: he will *suffer* from his knowledge, but will receive as consolation increased pride (aphorism 32; cf., aphorism 18, towards the end) or exaltation (aphorism 45). Although the *pursuit* of truth will elevate most men, truth itself does not exist *for them* (i.e., is not what is most appropriate to them for their flourishing, it is not to their *taste*), for they lack the *great health* which is required if one is to take joy in the game of science. For more on this we can look briefly to the opening paragraph of aphorism three-hundred eighty-two in *The Joyous Science* and its description of the "Argonauts of the ideal":

The great health. – Being new, nameless, hard to understand, we premature births of an as-yet unproven future need for a new goal also a new means – namely, a new health, stronger, more seasoned, tougher, more audacious, and more joyful than any previous health. Whoever has a soul that craves to have experienced the whole range of values and desiderata to date, and to have sailed around all the coasts of this ideal “Mediterranean”; whoever wants to know from the adventures of his own most authentic experience how a discoverer and conqueror of the ideal feels, and also an artist, a saint, a legislator, a sage, a scholar, a pious man, a sooth-sayer, and one who stands divinely apart in the old style – needs one thing above everything else: the *great health* – that one does not merely have but also acquires continually, and must acquire because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up.

Despite the fact that the men of the less distant future are essentially sick they shall have their virtues, and as opposed to the medicine of Christianity, the medicine of rationality will not leave them in a condition wherein they shall suffer more from imaginative thinking about the illness than from the illness itself. Nietzsche speaks of the future virtues of such men—preeminently, their courage in thinking—as well the virtues of still more distant men in this respect, as follows:⁸⁷

Of future virtues. – How comes it that the more comprehensible the world has grown the more solemnities have decreased? Is it that fear was so much the basic element of that reverence which overcame us in the presence of everything unknown and mysterious and taught us to fall down before the incompressible and plead for mercy? And has the world not lost some of its charm for us because we have grown less fearful? With this diminution of our fearfulness has our own dignity and solemnity, our own *fearsomeness*, not also diminished? Perhaps we have less respect for the world and for ourselves since we have come to think of it and of ourselves more courageously? Perhaps there will come a time when this courage in thinking will have grown so great that, as a supreme form of arrogance, it will feel itself *above* man and things – when the sage will, as the most courageous man, also be the man who sees himself and existence farthest beneath him? -- This species of courage, which is not far from being an extravagant generosity, has hitherto been *lacking* in mankind. -- Oh if the poets would only be again what they were once supposed to have been: -- *seers* who tell us something of the *possible*! Now that actuality and the past are and have to be taken more and more out of their hands – for the age of harmless false-coinage is at an end! If only they would let us feel in advance something of the *virtues of the future*! Or of virtues that will never exist on earth, though they could exist somewhere in the universe – of purple-glowing galaxies and whole Milky Ways of beauty! Astronomers of the ideal, where are you?

⁸⁷ Aphorism 551; cf. aphorism 456; also, aphorism 497.

Overcoming Nihilism: The Joyous Knowledge

Now, it was claimed earlier that Nietzsche has lived through the contradictions and tensions of his time and come out the other side; this is as much as to say that Nietzsche lived through the whole of pessimism or world-denial, thought it through and experienced it to its depths, and emerged as the ultimate Yes-sayer or world-affirmer. To show something of this emergence we relied on passages from *Book V* of *The Joyous Science*. This was necessitated by the fact that Nietzsche had *not yet fully attained* this new Dionysian posture at the time in which he wrote *Daybreak*. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche is on the very brink of his fully developed philosophy: he has, perhaps, taken an arm and a leg over to the “other side” (i.e., the ideal of total affirmation of the world as a human world created by the almost extravagant generosity of man as a Dionysian creator-god), but his entire body or being has not yet been fully thrust-over to this “other side”. In order to see just how close Nietzsche is to his fully developed philosophy, we shall have to turn again to a discussion of knowledge in *Daybreak*.

We begin with aphorism forty-seven. There, Nietzsche says “wherever primitive mankind setup a word, they believed they had made a discovery”. With the setting-up of a word, men believed they had hit upon “the truth” of a thing, the essence or essential being of the thing, the thing-in-itself, standing forth as what it *is* in itself with no essential relation to the cognizing human being except in the fact that it is *capable* of being intellected by such a one and can even be conceived of as *longing* to be intellected by such a one, who frees the object into its *being*. But according to Nietzsche, “how different the truth is! – They had touched on a problem”, namely, the being of a being,

“and by supposing they had *solved* it they had created a hindrance to its solution. – Now with every piece of knowledge one has to stumble over dead, petrified words, and one will sooner break a leg than word” (aphorism 47). Nietzsche, then, has reached the conclusion that a “tree”, for example, is a “tree” *to or for him*, that he is a creative artist in all his cognitions of the so-called “essences” of beings, and yet he continually has to stumble over the word “tree” and the illusions inherited with this cold, dead, bloodless abstraction. And yet, *so necessary* are the illusions of language and thought to *human life*⁸⁸, that we need our precious words, and would gladly incur the inconvenience of breaking a leg in the getting over of their illusory quality than to do without them or away with them (i.e., to “break” *them*). Indeed, so pervasive is this dominance of language over our thinking that Nietzsche later puts forth a terrible suspicion with regard to it (aphorism 257):

Words present in us. – We always express our thoughts with the words that lie to hand. Or, to express my whole suspicion: we have at any moment only the thought for which we have to hand the words.

But that said, the very recognition of this likelihood is the first step in Nietzsche’s (*partial*) overcoming of it, his bone-breaking stumbling over of it.

From aphorism forty-seven Nietzsche moves to aphorism forty-eight. Of further interest to this topic are aphorisms two-hundred forty-three and four-hundred thirty-eight, all of which are worth quoting:

‘Know yourself’ is the whole of science. – Only when he has attained a final knowledge of all things will man have come to know himself. For things are only the boundaries of man (aphorism 48).

The two directions. – When we try to examine the mirror in itself we discover in the end nothing but things upon it. If we want to grasp the things we finally get hold of nothing but the mirror. – This, in the most general terms, is the history of knowledge (aphorism 243).

⁸⁸ See for example, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 4.

Man and things. – Why does man not see things? He is himself standing in the way: he conceals things (aphorism 438).

All human knowing is an anthropomorphisizing of the world, a perspectival or imprisoned viewing in which we *interpret ourselves into things*: “There is absolutely no escape, no backway or bypath into the *real world*. We sit within our net, we spiders, and whatever we may catch in it we can catch nothing at all except that which allows itself to be caught in precisely *our* net.” (aphorism 117) The idea of coming to know of a thing-in-itself has been denied by Nietzsche, as is further evident from aphorism 210:

The ‘in-itself’. – Formerly we asked: What is the laughable? As though there were things external to us to which the laughable adhered as a quality, and we exhausted ourselves in suggestions (one theologian even opined that it was ‘The naiveté of sin’.) Now we ask: What is laughter? How does laughter originate? We have thought the matter over and finally decided that there is nothing good, nothing beautiful, nothing sublime, nothing evil-in-itself, but that there are states of soul in which we impose such words upon things external to and within us. We have again *taken back* the predicates of things, or at least remembered that it was we who *lent* them to them: -- Let us take care that this insight does not deprive of us of the *capacity* to lend, and that we have not become at the same time *richer* and *greedier*.

According to Nietzsche, then, there simply is no such thing as an objective or un-egoistic viewing of the world (aphorism 539; cf., 432):

Are warmth and enthusiasm not needed if a thing of thought is to have *justice* done to it? – *And that precisely is seeing!* As though you *were able* to traffic with things of thought any differently from the way you do with men! In this traffic too there is the same morality, the same honorableness, the same reservations, the same slackness, the same timidity -- your whole loveable and hateful ego!

But these things said, Nietzsche does not *resent* the anthropomorphic character of all knowing, on the contrary, he revels in it and seeks to dive into it, even to bathe in it as a bird might do in the open waters of the sea (cf. aphorism 426).

Other seekers and inherited possessors of knowledge, however, will not take joy in this knowledge, or at least, it will be much harder for them to come to the point of taking such joy in this knowledge. Nietzsche addresses these men at the end of aphorism five-hundred thirty-nine, asking them:

Do you not fear to re-encounter in the cave of every kind of knowledge your own ghost – the ghost which is the veil behind which truth has hidden itself from you? Is it not a horrible comedy in which you so thoughtlessly want to play a role? --

Indeed, in aphorism four-hundred eighty-three, Nietzsche (person “B”) addresses these men again (person “A”), this time offering them encouragement as to the value of the entire endeavor of seeking knowledge:

Satiety with mankind. – A: Learn to know! Yes! But always as a man! What? Always to sit before the same comedy, act in the same comedy? Never to be able to see into things out of any other eyes than *these*? And what unaccountable kinds of beings may there not be whose organs are better equipped for knowledge! What will mankind have come to know at the end of all their knowledge? -- Their organs! And that perhaps means: the impossibility of knowledge! Misery and disgust! – B: This is a serious attack – *reason* is attacking you! But tomorrow you will be again in the midst of knowledge and therewith also in the midst of unreason, which is to say in *delight* in the human. Let us go down to the sea! --

Knowledge, as we have seen, has never been what the seeker’s after knowledge believed it to be, namely, the pure intellection of things knowable in-themselves or the perfect reflection of things in a pure mind or pure mirror. As we saw in the previous chapter, Nietzsche denies utterly the possibility of “objective” knowledge concerning the essence of phenomena:

‘Cause and effect’. – In this mirror – and our intellect is a mirror – something is taking place that exhibits regularity, a certain thing always succeeds another certain thing – this we *call*, when we perceive it and want to call it something, cause and effect – we fools! As though we had here understood something or other, or could understand it! For we have seen nothing but *pictures* of ‘causes and effects’! And it is precisely this *pictorialness* that makes impossible an insight into a more essential connection than that of mere succession.

Given this fact we can understand aphorism four-hundred twenty-eight:

Two kinds of moralists. -- To perceive for the first time a law of nature and to perceive it whole, that is to say to *demonstrate* it (for example that of gravity, of the reflection of light and sound), is something different from *explaining* such a law, and is a matter of a different kind of mind. In the same way, those moralists who perceive and exhibit the laws and habits of mankind – men with subtle eyes, ears and noses – differ altogether from those who explain what has been observed. The latter have to be above all *inventive* and possess an imagination *unchained* by acuteness and knowledge.

In order to *explain* the world we must imaginatively interpret it, and this interpretation will be not only hypothetical but essentially anthropomorphic. And here we should recall the end of aphorism two-hundred and ten: Yes, we have given all things their predicates, but in the interest of human flourishing – which *requires* the perpetual ‘errors’ of anthropomorphisizing – “let us take care that this insight does not deprive us of the *capacity* to lend, and that we have not become at the same time *richer* and *greedier*.” To lose the capacity to give meaning or value to the world is pessimism or nihilism, but to give value to things in the knowledge that it is only *your will* – and not God’s will – that gives them the meaning or value they have for you requires a level of health greater than any attained by men hitherto, for it involves an affirmation of the human and thereby of the (human or anthropomorphisized) world greater than any yet conceived by man. On his deathbed the physician Socrates sought to heal his Athenians with an honest and salutary lie (which also concealed a *joke*), a lie intended to be mistaken for a truth, but the man of the future must be taught the truth that their truths are lies and thus must be bred so as to be strong enough to endure this weighty insight into the truth of “truth”. That is, Nietzsche seeks a humanity that will ground itself in the truth that all truths are anthropomorphic and thus, in a sense, lies. He hopes to help breed a humanity strong enough to endure the consciousness of their “truth” as lies. Nietzsche’s project for the advancement of truth, Nietzsche’s advancement of the ideal of truth and the will to truth, is itself in the service of creating a stronger, healthier humanity that will ultimately overcome “truth” and “truthfulness”, thus redeeming the *lie* and thereby providing the human tragedy with a comic solution (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 153):

Homo poeta.—“I myself, having made this tragedy of tragedies all by myself, insofar as it is finished—I, having first tied the knot of morality into existence before I drew it so tight that only a god could untie it (which is what Horace demands)—I myself have now slain all gods in the

fourth act, for the sake of morality. Now, what is to become of the fifth act? From where am I to take the tragic solution?—Should I begin to think about a comic solution?”

Once again we have gone beyond *Daybreak* and into Nietzsche’s slightly more mature thought. Let us then delineate clearly what Nietzsche puts forth in *Daybreak*, so as to see the manner in which Nietzsche’s fully mature philosophy (reached within approximately two years after writing *Daybreak*) emerges therefrom.

We see in *Daybreak*, that Nietzsche attacks all forms of world-denial or pessimism as forms of sickness, whereas the healthy man loves the (real) world, finds it beautiful and derives *his* happiness therefrom. In a word, he affirms the world knowable by us, whereas the sick man, the man degenerate in body and soul (i.e., the moral man) denies and holds in contempt the real world for the so-called “higher world” that is “moral truth”. In attacking world-denial, in taking a position *against* world-denial, Nietzsche has gone beyond the skepticism that can neither deny nor affirm (cf. *Genealogy of Morals*, 3.24); for by his own principle, adhered to consistently, the skeptic must be equally skeptical of both his negative judgments and his affirmative judgments. Nietzsche is a skeptic and *more* than a skeptic: his skepticism of skepticism has revealed to him that this stone-like posture of intellectual stoicism is but another form of sickness, of degenerating or declining instincts. For this we can see aphorism four-hundred seventy-seven (Nietzsche is person “A”; cf., aphorism 120):

Redeemed from skepticism. – A: Others emerge out of a general moral skepticism ill humored and feeble, gnawed at and worm-eaten, indeed half-consumed – but I do so braver and healthier than ever, again in possession of my instincts. Where a sharp wind blows, the sea rises high and there is no little danger to be faced, that is where I feel best. I have not become a worm, even though I have often had to work and tunnel like a worm. – B: You have just *ceased* to be a skeptic! For you *deny*! -- A: And in doing so I have again learned to *affirm*.

We see in *Daybreak* that Nietzsche is a world-affirmer, that he is healthy. As such he is cheerful. For this we can see aphorism five-hundred sixty-seven:

In the field. – ‘We must take things more cheerfully than they deserve; especially since we have for a long time taken them more seriously than they deserve.’ -- So speak brave soldiers of knowledge.

“Deserve” here must be interpreted somewhat generously: for a time we shall have to treat things with more lightness than is appropriate and this to counter-balance the effects of having for so long treated things – due to morality – with more gravity than is appropriate. This occurs “in the field”, that is, during the interim battle against morality and by the soldiers: the goal or end that is to be won is the attainment of the correct amount of seriousness and play with respect to all things, that is, the *measured* amount (whatever that be) or the amount whereby the greatest health or power of the human being is at work (cf. aphorism 571). Nietzsche’s own cheerfulness is evident from the work as a whole: the whole work basks in sunshine, in the light feet and most tender shudders of a happiness that has un-learned silence (cf., *Preface*, aphorism 1). This, at least, is Nietzsche’s own judgment of this “Yes saying” book. That Nietzsche not only relates painful sufferings in *Daybreak* but also his experience of joy or happiness, can also be seen from aphorism five-hundred sixty-one.⁸⁹

Let your happiness too shine out. – As painters, being quite unable to reproduce the radiant color of the real sky, are obliged to employ in their landscapes all the colors they need a couple of tones deeper than they are in nature: as by means of this artifice they do then attain a similarity of texture and harmony of tones corresponding to those in nature: so poets and philosophers too have to resort to a similar expedient when they are unable to reproduce the radiance of real happiness; by painting all things a couple of degrees darker than they are, they can make their lighter touches seem almost sunny and, by contrast, similar to actual happiness. – The pessimist, who gives to all things the blackest and gloomiest colors, employs only flames and flashes of lightening, celestial radiance, and anything whose light is glaring and confuses the eyes; with him the function of brightness is only to enhance terror and to make us feel there is more horror in things than there really is.

⁸⁹ Cf. 558; cf. aphorisms 570-572; cf. *Ecce Homo*, “Dawn”, section one.

We have also seen in *Daybreak* that Nietzsche holds “reason” to be a piece of “unreason”, a reflection of the balance of power relations of our drives, a servant of the instincts or an instrument of life, and thus nothing pure or autonomous. Reason is perspectival and essentially artistic; indeed the philosopher, that “species in which religious and artistic powers exist together but in such a fashion that a third thing, dialectics, love of demonstrating has a place beside them” (aphorism 41), may be described as the highest musician, something Nietzsche explains in the context of contrasting Wagner to Bizet (*The Case of Wagner*, sec. 1, last paragraph):

Has it been noticed that music liberates the spirit? Gives wings to thought? That one becomes more of a philosopher the more one becomes a musician? – The grey sky of abstraction rent as if by lightening; the light strong enough for the filigree of things; the great problems near enough to grasp; the world surveyed as from a mountain. – I have just defined the pathos of philosophy. – And unexpectedly answers drop into my lap, a little hail of ice and wisdom, of *solved* problems. – Where am I? – Bizet makes me fertile. Whatever is good makes me fertile. I have no other gratitude, nor do I have any other proof for what is good.

Philosophy as a kind of high music also entails high, empowering, or ecstatic feelings (a divine madness, as Plato and not only Plato described it). The philosopher too “weaves” together “all his higher feelings (of reverence, of sublimity, of pride, of gratitude, of love)”, but he weaves them together in his experience of the real world and *not* “into an imaginary world”. As such, his higher feelings have been *purified* (aphorism 33), leaving him mature, rich, and knowledgeable (see aphorism 531). But to return to our main theme, we see in *Daybreak* that reason is perspectival, anthropomorphic, and in the service of life. We have also seen that according to Nietzsche complete self-knowledge is impossible and likewise complete knowledge of the ‘outside world.’ We have also seen that for Nietzsche self-knowledge and knowledge of the beings are related, indeed inseparable. In order to bring out some of the fuller implications of this last teaching, we

would do well to look again at aphorism forty-eight, this time with an eye especially for its relation to aphorism forty-nine. Aphorism forty-eight is as follows:

‘Know yourself’ is the whole of science. – Only when he has attained a final knowledge of all things will man have come to know himself. For things are only the boundaries of man.

We can rephrase the aphorism as follows: only when he has attained a final knowledge of his boundaries will man have come to know himself. As knowledge of boundaries, self-knowledge is inseparable from moderation (as a *psychical* and not a physical virtue). But can one ever accomplish such a complete or final knowledge? Surely not. Only a god could have such knowledge, and no man, I suppose, would make such a claim short of being insane. The impossibility of final knowledge is also guaranteed for Nietzsche by the fact that man himself is *no finality*, that is, he is conclusively transitory, as aphorism forty-nine argues. We simply *do not know* the boundaries or limits of the *humanly* possible, neither for ourselves nor for the humanity of the future. Indeed, as man changes, knowledge and truth change likewise, for knowledge of the beings is inseparable from the nature or being of man, and the nature of man is something transitory. As a consequence of this teaching, for Nietzsche philosophy and likewise history are unfinishable.

Truths, then, are perishable according to Nietzsche, and this insight is itself true and thus will certainly perish with the perishing of humankind (though in Nietzsche’s fully mature philosophy it refers to what is unperishable, namely, to the will to power as the essence of the world). In a certain strictly limited sense on Nietzsche fully mature understanding, there is self-knowledge and it consists precisely in the insight into its own character as an interpretation according to the power-needs of the whole organism: the character of the knowledge follows directly from the essence of man as power-seeking

interpreter. Reflexive application of this insight to the man making the insight does not refute the insight but rather, could be considered a step in the direction of its confirmation (cf., *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 22, end).

Nietzsche makes clear in *Daybreak* his awareness as to the necessary perishing of his own truths, the necessary 'time-boundedness' of his own philosophy, which nonetheless caresses the eternal in the manner addressed above. Nietzsche addresses the necessary perishing of what is time-bound in his thought at the very end of *Daybreak*, as it is again addressed at the very end of his fully mature *Beyond Good and Evil*. The last aphorism of the book (575) is anticipated most obviously by aphorism 568, which reads:

Poet and bird. – The phoenix showed the poet a scroll which was burning to ashes. 'Do not be dismayed!' it said, 'It is your work! It does not have the spirit of the age and even less the spirit of those who are against the age: consequently it must be burned. But this is a good sign. There are many kinds of daybreaks.'

Those against the age are still of the age, being defined by, or limited in their possibilities by, their posture *against* the age. Nietzsche is *beyond* the age having emerged from out of its 'for' and 'against'. His teaching may rise from the ashes, but this does not guarantee its permanence: as there are many kinds of sun-ups there are many kinds of sun-downs, and the sun will not only rise on Nietzsche's thoughts (as he hopes) but will also surely set on his thoughts. But suns do not rise from out of nothing anymore than historical man can emerge from out of nothing; there is continuity, a necessary and eternal "chain" amongst suns and men. History is never something *behind* us, but rather always something integrated *into* us (and, according to Nietzsche's most mature thinking, always something both ahead of us and behind us). For more on this we can look to the last aphorism of *Daybreak* (aphorism 575):

We aeronauts of the spirit! – All those brave birds which fly out into the distance, into the farthest distance – it is certain! Somewhere or other they will be unable to go on and will perch on a mast or a bare cliff-face – and they will even be thankful for this miserable accommodation! But who

could venture to infer from that, that there was *not* an immense open space before them, that they had flown as far as one *could* fly! All our great teachers and predecessors have at last come to a stop and it is not with the noblest or most graceful of gestures that weariness comes to a stop: it will be the same with you and me! But what does that matter to you and me! *Other birds will fly farther!* This insight and faith of ours vies with them in flying up and away; it rises above our heads and above our impotence into the heights and from there surveys the distance and sees before it the flocks of birds which, far stronger than we, still strive whither we have striven, and where everywhere is sea, sea, sea! – and whither then would we go? Would we *cross* the sea? Whither does this mighty longing draw us, this longing that is worth more to us than any pleasure? Why just in this direction, thither where all the suns of humanity have hitherto *gone down*? Will it perhaps be said of us one day that we too, *steering westward, hoped to reach an India* – but that it was our fate to be wrecked against infinity? Or, my brothers. Or? --

Every sun has sunk in the West: why does Nietzsche, who is seeking a new sun and not a sinking sun, sail west where the suns have all gone down and in particular where the sun is going down on the moral horizon of modern man, in the hope of getting to the East, to India? Because Nietzsche knows that the sun, like the phoenix, always arises from out of its own ashes. As he said earlier, “the becoming drags the has-been along behind it” (aphorism 49). There are infinite kinds of daybreaks (or at least, there are very many), and the sunrise that Nietzsche hopes for, which will illuminate the world with something of his wicked (innocent), beloved, beyond-moral thinking, is as necessarily transitory as all the others. Nietzsche’s philosophy is no final philosophy, not even in its final form, notwithstanding the fact that it names the eternal essence of the world, Being, as will to power. For it is on account of the very fact of the will to power that philosophy can have no final form.

Lastly with respect to our delineation of the teachings of *Daybreak* from Nietzsche’s later teachings, we see that in *Daybreak*, precisely where Nietzsche is most vocal in his desire to undertake an experiment with mankind for the purpose of the advancement of knowledge, he is also and simultaneously aware of the fact that his project must have a tragic ending, that man will exhaust his energies in the *pursuit* of

knowledge while finding no replenishment, no consolation from the knowledge itself that is acquired. Nietzsche is certainly aware of the fact that truth, for the great majority at least, is not life-giving but deadly; only the “enthusiasm” for truth is life-giving for the great majority who are sick and seeking a cure for themselves in knowledge. These still seek the “true-in-itself”, they seek certainty as an *anchor*, a prop, something to lean-upon because their feet are tottery. But as more and more knowledge is attained, it will become clearer and clearer that such knowledge is no consolation, and thus the seeking of knowledge will no longer have the same charm, for the promise of knowledge to expel woe from the world will have become more and more unbelievable. At this point, the ideal of truthfulness shall be abolished. Nietzsche suggests this in aphorism four-hundred twenty-three, with his comparison of the Ancient Greeks to future man:

For whom truth exists. – Up to now errors have been forces of *consolation*: now we expect the same effect from known truths, and have been waiting for it for some little time. How if this effect – the effect of consolation – were precisely what truths are incapable of? . . .
– The Greek gods, too, were unable to offer consolation; when Greek mankind at last one and all grew sick, this was a reason for the abolition of such gods.

As the Greek gods were abolished when they no longer offered Greek mankind consolation, so, Nietzsche suggests, future mankind’s ideal of truth will likely be abolished when he despairs of deriving consolation from it.

On this understanding, then, Nietzsche advances a project for mankind that he simultaneously realizes is only preliminary, something to be done away with eventually. We can begin to understand why he does this with the following consideration. Like a sculptor, Nietzsche must make use of the materials available to him, and modern man (the stone) has become intoxicated by science and the promises of science. Nor is the modern intoxication over science something spontaneous, but rather, it is the outgrowth of the history of man (certainly, at least, of European man). Natural science and its

mastery over nature *will almost surely continue*, the fundamental question is: *will it advance coeval with a Christian euthanasia and a last man? Or will it advance with a more rational morality that will expunge the imaginations of the past and advance a more health-promoting morality (in a manner, a more manly Christian suicide)?* It is in light of this fundamental question that Nietzsche chooses his implement of choice, the implement appropriate to the stone: *the hammer*. Nietzsche cannot effectively shape or sculpt man's future if he does not take into account the necessary relation between any possible future and the entirety of man's past and present. Seen in this light, Nietzsche understands the new intoxication with reason and truthfulness to be but a continuation of the basic pathos that has hitherto ruled man, namely, that pathos of feeling oneself *exalted* through *sacrifice*. The pathos named is the pathos of the *ascetic ideal* (explored above all in Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals*) now made terrible or monstrous with the breaking of idols (i.e., ideals or false gods).

Prior to *Daybreak*, in his "*Assorted Opinions and Maxims*", Nietzsche had already described man's future as heading toward a "Christianity stood on its head", this being the "final lunge in the struggle of the theory of unconditional morality with that of unconditional freedom" (aphorism 33). Here, God (the world, the wave-play of becoming) is held to be the sinner, "*and man his redeemer*" (ibid). The new unconditional morality will be that of truthfulness, and truthfulness will expose the lies inherent in all the ideals of unconditional morality that have elevated man hitherto. This process constitutes a monstrous logic of terror wherein we sacrifice all our ideals to the single ideal of Truth. The process will be *exceedingly* painful, but this effect must be weighed against the pleasure involved in exaltation, from the feeling of power involved

in voluntary suffering. This stage, which Nietzsche intends to *advance*, is the last stage of a “ladder of religious cruelty” that began in barbarism and continues to this day (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 55). Of this last stage Nietzsche comments:

Finally – what remained to be sacrificed? At long last, did one not have to sacrifice for once whatever is comforting, holy, healing; all hope, all faith in hidden harmony, in future blisses and justices? Didn’t one have to sacrifice God himself and, from cruelty against oneself, worship the stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, the nothing? To sacrifice God for the nothing – this paradoxical mystery of the final cruelty was reserved for the generation that is now coming up: all of us already know something of this. –

The enthusiasm and exaltation of the ideal of knowledge, as is clear, is itself but a continuation of pessimism, if its’ final and most paradoxical stage.

Nietzsche outlines the dilemma facing modern man most decisively, perhaps, in aphorism one-hundred nine of *The Religious Life*:

Sorrow is knowledge. – How one would like to exchange the false assertions of the priests that there is a God who desires that we do good, is the guardian and witness of every action, every moment, every thought, who loves us and in every misfortune wants only what is best for us – how one would like to exchange these for truths that would be as salutary, pacifying and beneficial as those errors are! Yet such truths do not exist; the most philosophy can do is to set against them other metaphysical plausibilities (at bottom, likewise, untruths). The tragedy, however, lies in the fact that one cannot believe these dogmas of religion and metaphysics if one has in one’s heart and head the rigorous methods of acquiring truth, while on the other hand one has, through the development of humanity, grown so tender, sensitive and afflicted one has need of means of cure and comfort of the most potent description; from which there thus arises the danger that man may bleed to death from knowledge of truth.

What Nietzsche intends is for man to turn his eye of knowledge towards his inherited “humanity” (i.e., his morality of the sympathetic affections, itself the product of Christianity), thereby rejecting that morality for a stronger, more animating, more rational morality. The pursuers of knowledge must no longer *come to a stop* before morality, but rather, must pursue knowledge of morality with the most critical eye. In so doing, they shall surely inflict much pain upon themselves, but as aforementioned, they shall also enjoy the exalted state that attends such pain. Ultimately, Nietzsche intends to help

produce a humanity that will be strong enough to endure not only the process of greater truthfulness but also the conclusion of its own morality of truthfulness, namely, *the conclusion that this truthfulness is itself the last remnant of the morality being refuted by it*. That is, Nietzsche intends, penultimately, for men to grasp the truth that truthfulness is an expression of the same seeking-for-power that has underlied all prior illusory worldviews. This truth is itself guaranteed by the insight into the “irrationality” of “reason,” and it must come to power only at the *end* of the experiment with the ideal of truthfulness, for were it to come to power at the beginning, it would be practically impossible for the experiment even to begin⁹⁰. The quest for truth must in its inception be a quest for *certainty*, a quest for the luster of the true in itself, the knowledge of which is expected to put an end to all woe, for in no other way is it conceivable that modern man might be driven to endure so much sacrifice for knowledge, being far too sickly (i.e., pessimistic) to embrace knowledge while realizing the “merely” anthropomorphic character of all knowledge. Nietzsche intends to breed a type of man strong enough for *that* realization from out of the present men who are still too weak for it. That the insights into truth (as lie) and truthfulness (as moral) are to come last is also shown by the fact that the European future is to live-out what Nietzsche underwent in the personal history of his timely and untimely soul, and by Nietzsche’s account the insight into truthfulness comes last as the final ‘hide-out’ of the ascetic ideal in the soul. Here we might recall *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism sixty-four:

“Knowledge for its own sake” – that is the last snare of morality: with that one becomes completely entangled in it once more.

⁹⁰ We can see, then, at least one possible reason why Nietzsche refrained from publishing his 1873 essay *On Truth and Lie in an Extra Moral Sense*, which essay lays out ruthlessly the character of human thought as anthropomorphic.

Thus, when Nietzsche suggests in aphorism four-hundred twenty-three that mankind will abolish the ideal of truthfulness when it despairs of deriving consolation from the ideal, he *may* be suggesting that men will embrace lies again in the manner of past men, and this would represent a relapse into a less rational, less healthy stage; but, and more plausibly, he may mean to convey his hope that the abolition of the ideal of truthfulness be based on the liberating insight into the character of “truth” as “lie”: mankind would then lovingly *embrace* the lie, but this time from out of the highest rationality, health or instincts, and Nietzsche knows that this is possible because he knows of its reality in himself (and he will come to know it more and more in the years to follow). Here man pursues knowledge for *man’s* sake, as his highest *creative* achievement, his Heaven on earth born from out of his Hell on earth (that is, the entirety of the chaos and superstitious nonsense that has been mankind’s history to that point). On this understanding, then, one could say of *Daybreak* that it does not promote the precise ideal of the superman (which does not come to the forefront of Nietzsche’s thinking until *Zarathustra*) so much as it promotes the ideal of knowledge or truthfulness that is the superman’s necessary precursor.

This much, then, is present already in *Daybreak*. But what other than the ideal of the superman is missing in *Daybreak* that can be found in Nietzsche’s later writings? In the first place, as we have already discussed in our previous digression, Nietzsche does not extend his psychology of “subterranean drives” (soon to be his psychology or physiology of the will to power) from human beings to non-human beings, though, to be sure, he says nothing that would deny such an extension (cf. *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 127). On the contrary, once evolution is granted and man is placed back into

the whole of nature, one has no choice in this framework⁹¹ but to posit the ultimate ground of human being as being the same as that of all beings. This might have the consequence of making man more like what is other than man (perhaps reducing him to a vulgar materialism, for example), but it may also have the consequence of making what is not man more like man (perhaps positing will or drives to all things). A strict dichotomy between man and world is only thinkable where man is held to be the especially favored creation of a God who is likewise outside of nature: “Man against the world” ultimately means “God, and the demi-god Man, against the world”. But since Nietzsche rejects any such conception of God he rejects any strict dichotomy between the human and the non-human (recall aphorism 130). That said, in *Daybreak* Nietzsche does not resolve the question as to the relationship between the human and non-human world (i.e., the *rest* of nature). Yet, as discussed earlier, with his doctrine of the will to power, Nietzsche ultimately advances a theory that constitutes a humanization of the non-human as opposed to a dehumanization of the human⁹². The fundamental question becomes for Nietzsche that of what type of man it is that is interpreting (humanizing), how and to what extent he reads or misreads himself.

As a consequence of all this, in *Daybreak* we can say that Nietzsche does not explicitly collapse the distinction between the text of the world (i.e., the world as it is “in itself”) and the interpretation of the world (i.e., the text as viewed or interpreted from the perspective optics of life). That *Daybreak* is moving towards such a teaching is evident from its teaching concerning human cognition and the nonexistence of “things-in-themselves,” but without the transference from human nature as perspectival-ideating-

⁹¹ That is, the framework of western philosophy which Nietzsche still participates in and in a manner concludes, which framework seeks grounding knowledge in the being of beings.

⁹² Cf. *Joyous Science*, aphorism 109.

power-seeking to non-human nature as a pre-form of such power-seeking (including body or matter⁹³), Nietzsche does not yet have the grounding insight (albeit an interpretive insight based on self-knowledge) that abolishes the distinction between text and interpretation. In sum, then, whereas in *Daybreak* Nietzsche teaches that the human world is the only world accessible to man, he has not yet experimented with the hypothesis that the human world may be a sufficient ground for an insight into the whole of things or the non-human world as well (see above all, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism thirty-six, discussed earlier in chapter IV), thereby abolishing the distinction between the text and the interpretation through the hypothesis of the will to power.

Second, and intimately related to the previous, in *Daybreak* Nietzsche has not yet divinized the world⁹⁴. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche is his most “atheistic”, seeming to deny entirely any conception of a God as merely a consoling illusion or at best a playful hypothesis—or perhaps an inevitable and forgivable anthropomorphism. The further steps in Nietzsche’s thinking likewise require the insight into the will to power as the fundamental character of the world. That said, Nietzsche’s insight into the will to power is itself inseparable from his insight into the *impossibility* of thoroughgoing nihilism or pessimism: behind all world denial (including the world denial involved in the unconditional will to truth, to truth at all costs), there is a more fundamental world affirming, an exalting in the pleasure of the will that *denies* so as to give birth to its own ideal. When “truth” draws its greatest inference about *itself*, it necessarily draws the

⁹³ It is at this point in Nietzsche’s thinking that physiology moves to the forefront, though in fact Nietzsche’s mature thought collapses the distinction between physiology and psychology, having collapsed the distinction between “body” and “soul,” between “living” and “dead,” in a manner that is indebted to the metaphysics of Leibniz.

⁹⁴ See aphorism 378; cf., 463 and 518 with 464, which makes evident that this gracious, pregnant, and nameless God, if we can make such an inference from aphorisms 463 and 464, is not a *Personality*; cf. aphorism 497; cf. aphorism 35.

conclusion, concerning the unconditional will to truth that brought it into being, that that will was itself but a servant of the will to power and thus the *fundamental fact* is never our anthropomorphic “truth” but rather *the will to power that brings us into our truth*. Mankind’s “truths” are only truths according to the type of man that is beholding or creating them, and man will not always be what he is in any “present”. As man changes, truths change, and with the greater men of the future there will be new truths, truths illuminated by the sunny and cheerful nature of that man of the future who has the highest will to power ever attained: “the happiness of the man of knowledge enhances the beauty of the world and makes all things sunnier; knowledge casts its beauty not only over things but in the long run into things – may future mankind bear witness to the truth of this proposition!” (aphorism 550). Our modern quest for truth, our unconditional will to truth at all costs, is as willful as all the prior seekings for deception which it now detests, indeed our quest for “truth” still another quest for a deception, for something firm to grab onto, something permanent, solid, or divine, an anchor with which to secure ourselves from the *real world* (the world of semblance, appearance, the lie). The “*free mind par excellence*” on the other hand anchors himself with “insubstantial ropes and possibilities” and dances “even near abysses” (*Joyous Science*, aphorism 347).

Being grounded in the will to power, thoroughgoing nihilism or pessimism is thus impossible: the valuelessness of all things is refuted not by any argument, but by its psychological impossibility, for the will to nothing (the worship of the nothing, the stone, the stupidity) is still grounded in the will to power or the will to life, albeit a somewhat weary, somewhat descending form of life in which great possibilities of strength and ascension are gaining momentum (“gestating”). Nietzsche aims, then, at diverting the

present, descending kind of man that is the European from the almost exclusively descending path of the last man and towards the dangerous path of a pessimism of strength, a more Greek pessimism that affirms life in suffering and which, hopefully, will lead to the more-than-Greek-like-affirmation of the superman. Man's "truths", his ideas and ideals, are always and necessarily *revered* by him, and thus we make something sublime or *sublimate it* when we *give it meaning under the horizon of an ideal*. Indeed, and in clear and direct contrast to the famous Aristotelian definition of man as the "rational animal," according to Nietzsche "man is a reverent animal" (*The Joyous Science*, aphorism 346), and the ideal of truth, which slew all other ideals or idols, is no exception to this. Man has no choice but to be an idealist or to divinize the world, for the will to power is *precisely this divinizing of the world*: "Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the 'creation of the world,' to the *causa prima* [the First Cause; i.e., the traditional metaphysical designation of God]", and the God Dionysius, Being itself, *philosophizes*. Thus every being may be conceived essentially as divinizing the world from its own perspective, though the human being, so far as we know, is the *most* intellectual form of the will to power: ". . . every center of force—and not only man—construes [perceives] all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e., measures, feels, forms, according to its own force"⁹⁵. According to Nietzsche, this is "an ancient, eternal story"⁹⁶.

Man, according to Nietzsche, paints and beautifies the world with his reason (cf. aphorism 426), making it more orderly, more consistent, more *human* (because more *rational*). Truth will therefore always appear to man as conditioned by the nature of the

⁹⁵ *The Will to Power*, aphorism 636; cf. aphorism 638).

⁹⁶ *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 9 and 295; cf. *Joyous Science*, aphorism 374.

perceiver: as he is in his own soul, so shall he paint the world. This artistry is *not* pure invention and man is not solely and in himself the complete measure of things, for if this were so it would be impossible to aim at an interpretation under which the text does not utterly disappear⁹⁷. Nonetheless, truth for man is always primarily a *physiological* phenomenon, and man's nature is inseparable from history (origin, birth or extraction; *Daybreak*, aphorism 199; cf., aphorism 540). Thus everything, including the great man, is ultimately the work of nature as history or becoming. Likewise, Nietzsche's inspired insight concerning eternal recurrence (which inspiration came to him in 1881) must be understood as the fruit of his own eternity. That is, Nietzsche's Dionysian inspirations are not external gifts from the heart of being, but rather, internal birth-givings inseparable from history, creations of Being or Nature as the eternal ring of time⁹⁸.

All is flux or chaos, and man's thoughts and words a small island in the great sea. Indeed, man's island of thinking is itself that sea, the 'product' of that sea and the self-reflection of that sea; this entails that reason is unreason, that truth is lie. But to understand this one must grasp Nietzsche's contention that reason and the "rational" have never been what human beings have believed them to be. Reason is imposition of order onto flux, which flux or text is interpreted according to the needs of life of the interpreter, a perspectival viewing conditioned by the physiological demands for the preservation (and above all enhancement) of a certain type of life⁹⁹. As imposition or creative interpretation reason is other than Plato held it to be (or rather, as Nietzsche understands Plato to have held it to be, which may or may not be what Plato actually held it to be).

⁹⁷ See *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 3, 34, and 38.

⁹⁸ We can reconcile this with Nietzsche's conception of fate or chance in *Daybreak* by understanding the world as the God's play, as Dionysus' purposeless joy in himself.

⁹⁹ See *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 3, 4, and 13.

Human mind, according to Nietzsche, is never pure mind, neither in this life or in any other; mind or thinking is inseparable from will and as such is always conditioned by the particular requirements of the perspectival-willing being's self-enhancement or will to greatest will (or will to maximum will). This essentially perspectival viewing of the world by man is loving, creative, explosive, form-giving, birth-giving; it is not a faithful mirroring of beings in-themselves or of truths in-themselves with respect to beings and Being, of beings whose archetypal truths are able to be grasped by the human mind (giving birth to true thoughts, or simply, to truth, in the soul of man), thus revealing or illuminating a reality which the mind is naturally suited, with its love of truth or love of the true in itself, to make contact with. Nor are the "*a priori* principles" such as the principle of non-contradiction, for example, always known or remembered, nor grounded in the unity of Being as instantiated in the participating unity of beings (see again, for example, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 19). The reason for the principle of non-contradiction, its ground, is the will to power; it is, one might say, Dionysius' brush, and Dionysus always paints the world from or through the perspective of the beings in it, all of which are united in the essence of the world or will to power (Dionysius, the Eternal One) but none of which are any *unity in themselves*¹⁰⁰. As a tool of division, of specialization in perception and tasks, the law of non-contradiction is a tool in the service of the will of life that is the will to power, and human *geist* as a whole is something very blind, arbitrary, unjust, and entirely perspectival (merely perspectival, from the standpoint of our pride in being able to know the "truth"), something artful, something form-giving, and not simply and faithfully form-receiving, understood as a kind of *giving*

¹⁰⁰ In keeping with Nietzsche thought, only "processes" (i.e., the history of a being) remain to be grasped as "entities" or *essences*: "Die Prozesse als 'Wesen'" (The Will to Power, aphorism 655).

birth to truth from out of memory. In short, the mind does not receive and reflect the true impressions as in Plato, it bestows them. From this we also see, again contrary to Plato, that Being is conceived of not as Divine Mind but as Dionysius. Whereas the Divine Mind was conceived of as ‘outside’ or ‘other’ than the world, moving the world by virtue of the longings or Eros of the beings in it for the eternal patterns or archetypes contained in the Being, which guides or pilots them, the eternal creator-artist Dionysius is the sea, the ship, the steam, and the helmsman, or perhaps more clearly, he is the very longing of the beings for their own future, their perpetual longing to enhance themselves or to bring themselves as perspectival-ideating-power-maximizers into themselves and thus into their own heightened possibilities from out of themselves. To go further, he is the very longing of the beings for their own eternity, which is the most thoroughly non-pessimistic or life-affirming conception of Being that Nietzsche deems possible. This pregnancy is *ideal selfishness*; in its totality it is eternal, and enhancing itself perpetually through its own becoming, its own creative-destructive activity.

But having said all this in putting forth Nietzsche’s position, it is difficult (and perhaps impossible) to escape the consequence that Dionysius, in his willing, philosophizing, or eternal world-creating, contains in some manner eternal ideas and is thus closer to or not as far from Plato’s Divine Mind as one might think. Man imposes his ideas, he projects ideas as “the world” according to his “power needs”, he does not faithfully and lovingly reflect ideas, archetypes, or forms of beings that are capable of being reflected. But from whence does man derive his ideas, and all beings in turn their ideations? From free-will and its “something from nothing”? No, according to Nietzsche, but rather from the deep down, the unknowable essence, from Dionysius: thus

man is not the ground of man, Dionysius is the ground of man, the ground of all beings or willing. But what then are the status of these ideas or willings before their emergence from the womb of Dionysius? Can we simply say that they have no ontological status whatsoever prior to their emergence, neither as possibility or otherwise, and thus no eternal gestation in such an eternal womb? For were we to say so, would we not be positing a “something from nothing” of our own? In fact, Nietzsche does conceive of the eternity of ideas – not archetypes, for here there is only eternal repetition of the same, here nothing is first or last, there is only eternal Dionysus – as present in the eternity of all willing: will to power (Being), Dionysius (God), and eternal return (Time, the circle or ring of time) are a single idea in Nietzsche’s thought and the summit of his ‘piety’ as the actualization of truth. This is Nietzsche’s inverted Platonism (*Will to Power*, aphorism 617):

To impose upon becoming the character of being – that is the supreme will to power . . .

That *everything recurs* is the closest *approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being*: -- high point of the meditation.

But in order to understand this more fully, it must be explained, in as few words as possible, why *everything recurs*, which is to say, why time should be as a ring or circle. That time should be a ring follows from the following premises that Nietzsche holds (cf. *The Will to Power*, aphorisms 1061-1067; see also aphorisms 55, 638, and 708): there is a finite amount of total force (will) in the universe, thus there are a finite number of possibilities in existence. But time is infinite, the universe being eternal and without a final goal, since, if it did have a final goal or a final state to which it was heading it would, in infinite time, have already attained it. The process of becoming is itself *at every “moment”* the fulfillment of the goal, which goal is always *maximal*

power, force, or will. Thus, with finite possibilities and infinite time, not only is it the case that everything that *can* happen will happen, but everything that *does* happen necessarily happens again, and, indeed, an *infinite* number of times. Thought through, not only would everything recur an infinite number of times, but given the necessity that whatever comes before and after an “event” always be exactly the same as well, everything would be *cyclical*. Thus time for Nietzsche is an eternal *ring*. But what is still more, if we think of will or being as a *continuum* without any divisions *whatsoever* (since it is ultimately only the will to power of our *thinking* that introduces divisions into the world on Nietzsche’s understanding, and most especially the idea of sequential causality, which is only a sign language perceived by man for a deeper *continuum*), the entire universe becomes the cyclical reoccurrence of *One Will*. In sum, and paradoxically (though we have seen the solution to the paradox), Dionysus, as the will to power (i.e., the *pathos* of all *becoming*)¹⁰¹, is *the Eternal One, Being*, the One Will joyously willing itself eternally. Thus we see clearer now how it is that Dionysus, Will to Power, and Eternal Return all constitute one essential thought in Nietzsche’s thinking.

Now, as is clear, for Nietzsche the true God or “Dionysus” is *not* a moral God: He does not punish or reward on the basis of our deserving anything through free-will or otherwise, He is not angry or jealous, nor does He possess any of the human pathologies that attend our all-too-human conceptions of good and evil. Indeed, according to Nietzsche we must not conceive of “Him” as any particular being nor any kind of *Personality*. Dionysus is overabundant, eternally pregnant and necessitous chaos. He does not perform *miracles* as conventionally understood, for Nietzsche would agree with

¹⁰¹ See *The Will to Power*, aphorism 635.

Francis Bacon that “no force whatever can unfasten or break the chain of causes” (*The Great Instauration, The Plan of the Work*, 6th part, previously cited). But for Nietzsche, at least, God *is* the chain. Thus according to Nietzsche’s argument God cannot break his own chain, nor does he desire ought but himself (see *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 56). God thus acts necessarily, that is, out of the necessity that belongs to himself, his actions being sufficient for themselves or without any prior necessity: the God’s necessity is grounded in God’s being or the being of Being, and God as the ultimate reason is without a prior reason for his actions or existence. But even to refer to Being as the “chain” is to falsify it, for, as discussed above, there are no truly separable or individual links in the totality of existence: all divisions perceived in the world are man’s falsifications, thus including all divisions in time. In Dionysus necessity, freedom, and eternity *are one*, and the philosopher according to Nietzsche strives likewise for this freedom of the will. This freedom of the will and fullest actualization of human being, this supreme will to power, attains its summit in the thinking of eternal return, in the insatiable shouting of “*da capo!*” from the *deep down up through to the pinnacle of the spirit*, for in that moment the thinker that is thinking the thought (that is, *willing* the thought) *is* the thought, since *to be* is to think this thinking, or, to will this willing: the thinker thinks himself and is thus the self-conscious and joyous will of eternity or the ring of time. Here there is no distinction between text and interpretation; here man enacts the greatest event conceivable because it is the act of the greatest thought conceivable¹⁰².

¹⁰² For Nietzsche, “the greatest thoughts are the greatest events”; *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 285. See also *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 343, beginning: “The greatest recent event – that “God is dead,” that the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable – is already beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe.” For Nietzsche, even greater than the event of the death of God will be the affirmation of Dionysus.

Now, and backing off somewhat from the peaks of Nietzsche's thought (though keeping in mind the place from which we have come), if "truth" is always a physiological phenomena in the manner described, then a way of life, a given understanding of truth, including the Christian or moral understanding and also the modern nihilistic understanding that is its shadow, is never something refutable if by "refutable" we mean that there exists some necessary argument that denies it. The painting is true to the extent that it reflects the real condition of the painter; that said, it may be possible for the painter to discover that his painting is not what he believes it to be, namely, the true itself. We might consider here before elaborating on this a statement Nietzsche makes upon contrasting master morality with the morality of Christian value concepts (*The Case of Wagner, Epilogue*):

These opposite forms in the optics of value are *both* necessary: they are ways of seeing, immune to reasons and refutations. One cannot refute Christianity; one cannot refute a disease of the eye. That pessimism was fought like a philosophy was the height of scholarly idiocy. The concepts "true" and "untrue" have, as it seems to me, no meaning in optics. –

In light of this, when Nietzsche says in aphorism four-hundred twenty-four of *Daybreak* that "to determine that a plant makes no contribute to the treatment of sick human beings is no argument against the truth of the plant", we might also add, "nor to the truth of the sickness". The Christian, the moral man as *the* sick man (though surely, this is true in degrees) likewise is what he is, he is his own fact: such a one as Nietzsche who experienced himself as a plant born near a churchyard, who experienced himself as the truth of the plant (the medicine) and the sickness, may be able – by looking to nature – to demonstrate to himself that such a condition is sickly, but he certainly cannot deny his experience of himself nor ought he, to his mind, be so cynical and dogmatic as to deny others their experience of themselves. For the moral man *judges* himself as moral or

immoral, *feels* himself as moral or immoral, as one can gather from one's own self-knowledge; again, Nietzsche can only deny (and perhaps bring the moral man or believer himself to the point of denying, through greater self knowledge) that his moral experiences are or were what he takes or took them to be, namely manifest or self-evident experiences of the "real world", the "higher world". Indeed, the only possible "refutation", according to Nietzsche, of a religious world view is the experience of an alternative and perhaps brighter viewing of the world – especially and above all a less *dogmatic* view, or a view freed of all strict dogmatism – which latter view emerges from out of the shadows and tensions of the prior. We see, then, that self-knowledge is paramount, for as one *knows* or opines oneself one experiences oneself and thus, as one's knowledge changes (including above all one's knowledge of one's ignorance), one's experience of oneself changes likewise. As one learns "to think differently" one learns "to feel differently"¹⁰³.

So much, then, on the topic of Nietzsche's overcoming of pessimism, having seen what *Daybreak* attains and what it points to or moves towards in Nietzsche's later thought. We can now return to an analysis of a group of aphorisms that speak of the chief obstacle to Nietzsche's rational, medicinal-project for overcoming nihilism and 'naturalizing' human life, namely, the present and future existence of Christian judgments and feelings. The group of aphorisms to be discussed are aphorisms fifty-six through sixty-one, each of which, as with every other aphorism in the book, hearkens to the unified teaching of the book as a whole and thus to every other aphorism.

¹⁰³ It is in light of these preceding points that one can understand aphorism 103; cf. aphorism 148; cf. aphorism 7.

Setting the Stage: Philosophy versus Faith

Nietzsche sets the stage for his final showdown with faith in aphorism fifty-six by directly contrasting the philosopher with the person of faith. Nietzsche chooses to contrast the philosopher to a certain kind of believer, namely, a believer who was formerly a free-thinker, for this sudden reversal of perspective from more honest to more dishonest, from greater health to a predominance of sickness, serves to better demonstrate the contrast between the two modes of life (cf., aphorism 87). In this aphorism (aphorism 56) Nietzsche expresses his deep respect for “pious people strong in their faith”, and rejects all petty interpretations as to why it is that the sight of one who has turned from reason to faith strikes him as disgusting. Here we might look to aphorism 351 of *The Joyous Science* (end):

The common people attribute *wisdom* to such serious men of “faith” who have become quiet, meaning that they have acquired knowledge and are “certain” compared to ones own uncertainty. Who would want to deny them this word and this reverence? -- But it is also fair, conversely, when philosophers consider priests as still “common people” and *not* men of knowledge -- -- above all, because they simply do not believe in “men of knowledge”; in this belief, or rather superstition, they smell the “common people.” It was *modesty* that invented the word “philosopher” in Greece and left the magnificent over-weaning presumption in calling oneself wise to the actors of the spirit – the modesty of such monsters of pride and sovereignty as Pythagoras, as Plato --.

For Nietzsche the sight of such a one as the apostate of the free-spirit is as the sight of one with a repulsive disease to a doctor. Nietzsche is struck by “the tremendous *dishonesty* that must have prevailed in the apostate of the free-spirit”. Nietzsche sees in such dishonesty degeneration in the very foundation of the apostate’s character; having become “weak and forgetful”, the apostate cannot heal himself, and so he seeks to be healed by faith. Ultimately, the contrast between the believer and the philosopher boils

down to the contrast between the *dishonest* man and the *honest* man, and it is this emphasis on honesty that we must bear in mind as we advance in our analysis.

The next aphorism (aphorism 57) hearkens back to aphorism 7 (*Learning to feel differently about space.*). The limitless fears and securities of the Christian created a great space between his happiness and his misery. Indeed, this space *cannot* be created without a strong antithesis between two poles, and thus, when modern man attempts to maintain the one pole (i.e., Christian securities) without the other (Christian fears), he becomes flat, “worn-out and feeble”. We might also recall in this context aphorism 551: without the great fears of past men modern man lacks the fearsomeness of past men. Will not the men of the future require not only new joys but new perils too? At any rate, Nietzsche’s project for the advancement of knowledge will have to confront and attempt to expunge not only the inherited dishonesty of faith, but also the inherited hopes of Christianity, and as such the old habits of “Christian enjoyment, recreation, evaluation” that are based on these hopes.

Moving along to aphorism fifty-eight (*Christianity and the affects*), we would do well to relate it back to aphorism fifty-six (*On the apostate of the free spirit*). The degeneration of the apostate, whose reason has ruled over his affects (and precisely here lies the chief aspect of his freedom; cf., *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 87), occurs when the free mind allows his affects to rule over his reason (this entire dichotomy of “reason” and “affects” or “passions” is of course ultimately superficial). Now, as Nietzsche points out in the next aphorism (aphorism 59, *Error as comfort.*), this jumping into the sea of affects is supposed to be a short cut to perfection, but in the end the Christian only loses his way (cf., aphorism 55: *Ways.*); that said, this Christian bathing in

the affects has been “a great comfort to the exhausted and despairing in the wilderness”. But to return to aphorism fifty-eight, we see that Christianity denies virtue to the philosopher and condemns rationality in general. Christianity “challenges the affects to reveal themselves in their extremest grandeur and strength”: i.e., it incites the pride of the potential believer by persuading him that the greater his affects, the greater his virtue. The challenge for the Christian thus becomes: how entirely or *wholeheartedly* can I give myself over to my affects? For this very thing becomes the measure of piety, the living sign as to the power of God’s grace and the effects of his favor. The affects to be indulged in are, according to Nietzsche, “*love of God*,” “*fear of God*,” “*fanatical faith in God*,” and “*the blindest hope in God*”; that is, love, fear, unconditional or absolute conviction of opinion as to God’s truth, and hope for the greatest good (salvation or eternal bliss) despite the lack of reasons for such a hope, i.e., without any rational proofs or sign-posts that might validate such a hope: only the *power of the affect itself* is considered as *proof* of the attainability of the hoped-for thing. Nietzsche calls this Christian criterion of truth “*proof by potency*”. According to this proof, the wisdom of faith, the proof of faith, is always *the life itself*, the attained salvation by grace, the acts or works *in faith* (since with faith “works must necessarily proceed”; aphorism 22).

Two related aspects of the analysis above warrant further consideration before moving on. The first is the hostility to reason in Christianity and in morality in general. The second is the prescription that calls for the affects to have full reign over the soul. Let us begin with the first, and here we would do well to recall the end of aphorism eighteen, and also aphorism nineteen. Morality, in its very inception, counts “denial of reason” as a “virtue” and “desire for knowledge” as a vice or “danger”, and this fact is

still at work in our modern morality (aphorism 18, end). Indeed, the very sense for morality involves its “indiscussability”, as is stated in aphorism nineteen. Related, we might recall here that in precisely the weightiest human affairs, according to the logic of morality one is not to ask such questions as, “How is one to act? To what end is one to act?” but rather, “an obscure fear and awe are at once to direct mankind in the case of precisely those actions the aims and means of which are least *immediately* obvious!” (aphorism 107). Indeed, the moral and religious positively fear reason, according to Nietzsche, for they fear not only that reason will give proof as to the falseness of their premises and opinions, but perhaps above all that the eye of reason will spy-out the ‘petty deceptions’ involved in their loves or sacrificial devotions¹⁰⁴. One could well argue that this fear of reason reached its peak in Christianity, which not only “condemned rationality in general” (aphorism 58) but even declared all doubt in such matters to be *sin* (aphorism 89):

Doubt as sin. — Christianity has done its utmost to close the circle and declared even doubt to be sin. One is supposed to be cast into belief without reason, by a miracle, and from then on to swim in it as in the brightest and least ambiguous of elements: even a glance towards land, even the thought that one perhaps exists for something else as well as swimming, even the slightest impulse of our amphibious nature – is sin! And notice that all this means that the foundation of belief and all reflection on its origin is likewise excluded as sinful. What is wanted are blindness and intoxication and an eternal song over the waves in which reason has drowned!

The preceding aphorism provides us with a suitable entry into our second topic, namely, the Christian calling-upon of the affects to take full reign over the soul or the supremacy of feelings as opposed to judgments. Indeed, it is precisely in the face of ever-threatening reason that the mantra of faith takes on its full force: *trust your feelings*.

¹⁰⁴ Consider the fear of natural science and evolutionary biology, for example; cf., aphorism 93. See also aphorism 223: despite the fact that Nietzsche there addresses “artists, poets and writers”, the point is easily translatable to the explicitly moral or pious; cf., for example, aphorism 233, 264, 270, 321, 341, 343, 511, 527 and 543.

Nietzsche takes up this Christian mantra in aphorism two-hundred seventy-nine of his

Assorted Opinions and Maxims:

Trusting one's feelings.—The female expression that one ought to trust one's feelings means hardly more than that one ought to eat what one likes the taste of. This may be a good everyday rule, especially for sober natures. Other natures, however, have to live according to a different principle: 'you must eat, not only with your mouth, but also with your head, so that you shall not perish by the mouth's love of sweetmeats'.

But to understand this better it is necessary to bear in mind Nietzsche's teaching on "Christian medicine". The Christian physician promotes intoxication and implants the faith in intoxication as being "that which is actually living in life" (aphorism 50). In order to promote intoxication, the Christian uses "intellectual firewaters", for with these "feelings" are "made drunk" (aphorism 50). These intellectual spirits surely give pleasure and console, but as aphorism fifty-two makes clear "what seemed to cure has in the long run produced something worse than that which it was supposed to overcome". Be that as it may, by promoting errors, and more specifically errors that excite the imagination and the affects rather than calm them (see aphorism 54), the Christian teaching is able to take control over its patients or victims. Philosophy, on the other hand, constitutes a kind of *katharsis*: philosophy purifies the mind of imaginations and thus of the affects that attend them. We can see this kathartic element clearly when we look to aphorisms five-hundred fifty, five-hundred forty-eight, and thirty-three. In aphorism five-hundred fifty Nietzsche notes that at present "people as it were reserve their reverence and feeling of happiness for works of imagination and dissembling", whereas two aphorisms earlier, in aphorism five-hundred forty-eight, he spoke of the most beautiful spectacle in existence as the genius who employs his genius "*not for works but for itself as a work*"; that is, for its own constraint, for the purification of its

imagination, for the imposition of order and choice upon the influx of tasks and impressions". In light of this, we can recall the end of aphorism thirty-three:

Thus, under the spell of the morality of custom, man despises first the causes, secondly the consequences, thirdly reality, and weaves all his higher feelings (of reverence, of sublimity, of pride, of gratitude, of love) *into an imaginary world*: the so-called higher world. And the consequences are perceptible even today: wherever a man's feelings are *exalted*, that imaginary world is involved in some way. It is a sad fact, but for the moment the man of knowledge has to be suspicious of *all higher feelings*, so greatly are they nourished by delusion and nonsense. It is not that they are thus in themselves, or must always remain thus: but of all the gradual *purifications* awaiting mankind, the purification of the higher feelings will certainly be one of the most gradual.

Now, so important is this drunkenness of the feelings to Christianity that it constitutes, according to Nietzsche, Christianity's greatest proof of itself, its *proof by potency*. Nowhere is this more evident than in the greatest phenomenological puzzle and curiosity of the Christian life, namely, "that ecstatic moment when he experiences the 'breakthrough of grace' and the moral miracle" (aphorism 87: *The moral miracle*). But according to Nietzsche, this "miracle" is merely counted as such on the basis of a mistake in interpretation or a lack of philology¹⁰⁵. That is, according to Nietzsche, this "being cast into belief without reason", this total giving over of oneself to the affects "by a miracle" is only *misunderstood* as such by the Christian (aphorism 89). Rather, as we shall be laying out in considerable detail in the next chapter, the cause or origin of Christian exuberance is not God, it is the tremendous *dishonesty* of the believer, and specifically his dishonesty as concerns his good and evil. That is, it is the poorly examined, flattering, erroneous and even absurd moral judgments of the person and his ancestors that make possible the reversal in character produced by the breakthrough of grace, *not* the inspiration of a morally concerned deity or personality with whom we traffic and converse. And here we might do well to look to aphorism thirty-five:

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 47, end: "What? The 'miracle' merely a mistake of interpretation? a lack of philology?"

Feelings and their origination in judgements. – ‘Trust your feelings!’ – But feelings are nothing final or original; behind feelings there stand judgments and evaluations which we inherit in the form of feelings (inclinations, aversions). The inspiration born of a feeling is the grandchild of a judgment – and often of a false judgment! – and in any event not a child of your own! To trust one’s feelings – means to give more obedience to one’s grandfather and grandmother and their grandparents than to the god’s which are in us: our reason and our experience.

Nietzsche advises us not to trust our feelings, for to do so means as much as to give obedience to the reasoning and experiences of our ancestors as though they were gods or people who communicated with gods; Nietzsche thus advises us not to take the inspirations born of our own feelings as though they were similar communications that would thus confirm the wisdom of our ancestors (recall aphorism 28; cf. aphorism 99), but rather, to give obedience “to the gods which are in us: our reason and our experience” (aphorism 35; and thus, not the ancestors or personified gods).

The Christian criterion of proof by potency is again addressed in aphorism sixty. Over the course of generations the often-achieved state of exultation or exuberance has “chiseled out” according to Nietzsche, “Perhaps the most refined figures in human society that have ever yet existed: the figures of the higher and highest Catholic priesthood,” and this is especially so when they have descended from the aristocrats. Here, the body becomes beautiful in concert with the beautification of the soul, and one need only look to the recently deceased Pope John Paul II, a natural aristocrat, to see something of what Nietzsche is saying. For his tender eyes showed so much compassion, patience, and gentleness, the folds of his face so many resting places and shaded grounds for weary souls to lie on, his cloud-like skin so much grace, so much tender intimacy with things light, pure, soft, and divine, so much sunshine, that all in his presence would be warmed by the white-red radiance of his cheek and even the most skeptical skeptic would confess in his heart: If there is a God and if he does have a representative on earth, it

may very well be this beautiful man. This state, wherein the spirit becomes bodily visible, is brought about according to Nietzsche, “By the continual ebb and flow of the two species of happiness (the feeling of power and the feeling of surrender) after a well-considered mode of life has tamed the beast in man” (aphorism 60). We must understand this in light of aphorism twenty-five: when a people have, over generations, subjected themselves to Christian customs completely, they produce more and more beautiful persons on account of the fact that their “organs of attack and defense – both bodily and spiritual – degenerate” (aphorism 2; cf., aphorism 515). This subjection to custom creates beings who feel safer and thus more powerful, and who likewise draw power from the habituation of actions turned natural (i.e., as second nature), to the point that they attain mastery in these actions, find their “soul” in them and their delight in them (cf., aphorism 311, 339, 455, and 537). One might call this inherited degeneration which beautifies a *degeneration by hypnosis*, for according to Nietzsche faith is, “a sort of hypnotism of the whole system of the senses and the intellect for the benefit of an excessive nourishment (hypertrophy) of a single point of view and feeling that henceforth becomes dominant” (*The Joyous Science*, aphorism 347). It is not that the Christian no longer attacks or defends, but rather, that he has become so masterful in his attacks and defenses, so long-exercised in them, that his very figure takes on this inherited or acquired gracefulness of soul, which is a process that can be advanced over generations. What Nietzsche sees in such beautiful persons is “a harmony between figure, spirit, and task” (aphorism 60), and he considers a similar harmony – even if only as an imagined ideal – to be necessary for the men of the future if they are to excel in beauty the beautiful men of the past.

But leaving aside considerations of the future, Nietzsche says in aphorism sixty that “the surpassing beauty and refinement of the princes of the Church has always proved to the people the *truth* of the Church”. To this we must ask: why is this so? What did the people see in such beauty that it seemed to them proof of the church? Clearly – and taking a cue from Nietzsche’s understanding of beauty in art to be the imitation of happiness (aphorism 433) – the people saw in such figures, being especially pious or pious-seeming figures, the deep and continual effect of that joyful or ecstatic state wherein they experience their own happiness, wherein they experience themselves as most beautiful, and wherein they experience themselves in the light of *truth* (that is, moral truth as experienced when intoxicated or when bathing in the “higher world”). In sum, the proof by potency which they experience in themselves is seen reflected as a still-greater proof in those beautiful princes of the church in whom God’s grace appears most potent.

Turning to aphorism sixty-one we are forced to ask: What about this proof by potency (which we might also call proof by pleasure, feeling, intoxication, or ecstasy)? Can one really take one’s experience of oneself to be a reflection of truth, a reflection of the “true human experience” as such, when one has never even experienced oneself in any other way nor questioned oneself as to the truth of the experience (to say nothing of the fact that *so many others* amongst the human race have *not* experienced your experience of life and appear – perhaps merely *appear*? – to be getting along just fine without it)? Is not such a state of blissful ignorance actually one of *impiety* to the extent that one makes no serious or honest effort to discover the truth about this state and about the convictions that “explain” it? Is there any man for whom truth is so absolutely

manifest, so unconditionally known, so free of doubt, so bright and unambiguous, that he need not inquire into it? Is there any man so *impious* as to claim such a thing? For is not such absolute knowing the privilege of God? Or does he relate it to man through unambiguous revelation?

For the rest of us, and precisely for those “serious, excellent, upright, deeply sensitive people” (aphorism 61) who hold their faith in their very heart and mind, inasmuch as we lack such perfect knowledge in matters divine, must we not set out to perfect such knowledge, encouraged perhaps by the fact that “in the tremendous impossibility of one’s task lies one’s excuse and one’s ideal” (aphorism 60)? And if our inquiry is to be pious, must it not be first and last an *honest* inquiry? Is it not the utmost in piety to examine one’s piety? And thereby, at least for a term, to suspend that piety somewhat? Is not this sacrifice the one most needed by piety itself?

According to Nietzsche, it is indeed the case that Christians “owe it to themselves to try for once the experiment of living for some length of time without Christianity, they owe it to *their faith* in this way for once to sojourn ‘in the wilderness’” (aphorism 61; i.e., to dwell in the world of inquiry, struggle, ignorance, and doubt that is entered when one pursues knowledge of the nature of one’s own soul and the world; cf. aphorism 59). As for proof by potency, Nietzsche responds (aphorism 61):

“No, your evidence will be of no weight until you have lived for years on end without Christianity, with an honest, fervent zeal to endure life in the antithesis of Christianity: until you have wandered far, far away from it. Only if you are driven back, not by homesickness but by judgment on the basis of a rigorous comparison will your homecoming possess any significance!”

We might also look here to aphorism 343 of *Daybreak* (cf., aphorisms 97 and 101):

Supposedly moral.—You refuse ever to be dissatisfied with yourselves, ever to suffer from yourselves – and you call this being moral! Very well – another, however, might call it being cowardly. But one thing is certain: you will never travel round the world (which you yourself are!) but will remain an impenetrable enigma to yourselves! For do you imagine that it is out of

pure folly that we who think differently expose ourselves to our own deserts, swamps and icy mountains, and voluntarily choose pain and self-satiety, as the stylites did?

The die is now cast for the final and definitive stage of Nietzsche's confrontation with Christianity. Nietzsche, the plant born near the churchyard, has sojourned into the wilderness, seeking to understand himself and the world and perhaps above all his own Christian and moral experience of himself. On account of what he has learned and experienced he denies the truth of Christianity, and the reasons for that denial are laid-out here in *Daybreak*. But who would be so foolish as to trust Nietzsche or anyone else in such matters? Rather, every man *must* seek *his own truth* and sojourn in the wilderness that is his own soul if he is to earn the right even to speak of such weighty matters as faith and morality. Here we might recall aphorism five-hundred forty-five:

But we do not believe you! – You would dearly like to pass as well versed in the ways of men, but we shall not let you do so! Do we not notice that you represent yourselves as being more experienced, profounder, more passionate, more complete than you are? Just as well as we feel the presumptuousness of that painter even in the way he wields his brush: just as well as we hear how that composer wants to make his theme appear more elevated than it is by the way he introduces it. Have you experienced *history* in yourselves, convulsions, earthquakes, sadness wide and protracted, happiness that strikes like lightening? Have you been foolish with fools great and small? Have you really borne the delusion and the burden of good men? And the burden and singular happiness of the most evil as well? If so, speak of morality: but not otherwise!

We might also add to the discussion a momentous statement which Nietzsche makes in aphorism one-hundred and ninety-five, namely, that “the only possible critique of morality” is the “brave and rigorous attempt to *live* in this or that morality”. “Critique” here must not be equated with criticism or the negative judgment of a thing: the brave and rigorous attempt to live a morality is the only way to knowledgeably *affirm* or *deny* it. Nietzsche has lived through Christian morality, which very Christian morality demanded of him that he examine that morality. He has come to deny that morality. But again, this should say nothing or almost nothing to us, for we must do the same with our faith and morality, and there is no reason to believe from the outset that such an endeavor will

produce in us a denial rather than an affirmation of our morality and its attendant faith.

Be that as it may, in our concluding chapter we shall look to aphorisms sixty-two through ninety-six of *Daybreak* (the end of Book I) in light of the book and its themes as a whole in order to bring out the great philosopher's most powerful and most personal reasons for denying Biblical morality and the Biblical God who grounds it.

Chapter VII

Knowing and Loving Good and Evil

As Book One of *Daybreak* pushes inexorably towards its climactic finish, a change in direction or emphasis is sensed. Having discussed the origins of religion and morality in 'pre-Christian man' as well as the projected future which is free of Christian (moral) judgments and feelings, Nietzsche concludes Book I by addressing Christianity directly. The Christian is to be taken up as he is without presuppositions of any kind; the Christian life as such is to be *investigated*. Nietzsche's primary point of access into this investigation is his own life and more specifically his own experience of Christian judgments and feelings. According to Nietzsche the Christian experience is one of torment and elation, self-contempt and self-love (or rather, moral pride), self-doubt and blissful assurance, slavishness and outrageous arrogance (or vanity), selflessness and supreme selfishness; what is more, the Christian life occurs within the irresolvable span and tension of these pairings, all of which pairings are in a way synonymous with one another. By his own account, then, Nietzsche has experienced Christianity and its shadows, but through the experience of his self-investigation he has come to the conclusion that his Christian-colored experiences of life were based on erroneous thinking. From here he infers the character of those who claim likewise to have experienced Christianity and its judgments and feelings.

A Tale of Two Egos

In many ways it would not have been inappropriate to title this concluding chapter “A Tale of Two Egos” or “A Tale of Two Wills.” We have already seen one such way in our discussion of the origin of the belief in providence, where we noted that the gold-balance between human will and ‘exterior wills’ reaches what is perhaps its peak in Christianity with the gold-balance between man’s will and God’s Will. Another such way – and one related but now treating the occurrence of the phenomena in a single locus, which locus is perhaps the only ‘place’ in which the entire phenomena occurs at all – also emerged in our discussion, which we did not elaborate upon there but shall do so now.

The origin of morality, we saw, lies in a manner in cruelty, first exercised towards others and then later towards *ourselves* as the voluntary suffering of self-sacrifice. Cruelty is never for the sake of cruelty but rather, in all cases it is for the sake of what is attained through cruelty, namely, the consolation of being “conscious of the power” one “still possesses” (aphorism 15). This consolation is necessary due to the general fearfulness and impotence that attends man and especially early man, still so vulnerable to harm of all kinds and continually so. None of this, as we have already argued previously, is irrelevant to the Christian of *today* (see for example aphorisms 29 and 30). As Nietzsche says at the end of aphorism eighteen: “Do you think all this has altered and that mankind must therefore have changed its character? O observers of mankind, learn better to observe yourselves!”

With cruelty the perpetrator *dominates* the sufferer. Indeed, according to Nietzsche the drive to domination is one of the deepest and perhaps the very deepest lever in man's soul (domination being understood ultimately as appropriation, *nourishment*, or possession – i.e., the will to power). And here we would do well to quote from aphorism one-hundred thirteen, once again, and at length:

The striving for distinction is the striving for domination over the next man, even though it be a very indirect domination and only felt or even dreamed. There is a long scale of degrees of this secretly desired domination, and the complete catalogue of them would be almost the same thing as a history of culture, from the earliest, still grotesque barbarism up to the grotesqueries of over-refinement and morbid idealism ... Here at the end of the ladder stands the ascetic and martyr, who feels the highest enjoyment by himself enduring, as a consequence of his drive for distinction, precisely that which, on the first step of the ladder, his counterpart the *barbarian* imposes on others on whom and before whom he wants to distinguish himself. The triumph of the ascetic over himself, his glance turned inwards which beholds man split asunder into a sufferer and a spectator, and henceforth gazes out into the outer world only in order to gather wood as it were for his own pyre. This final tragedy of the drive for distinction in which there is only one character burning and consuming himself – this is a worthy conclusion and one appropriate to the commencement: in both cases an unspeakable happiness at the *sight of torment*! Indeed, happiness, conceived of as the liveliest feeling of power, has perhaps been nowhere greater on earth than in the souls of superstitious ascetics.

Man divides or splits himself into two egos, one a sufferer, and one a spectator; one inflicts suffering and thus dominates the other which suffers. These two selves, likewise, have also emerged in our discussion: they are the higher self, the real or actual self, the true self or the moral self (in Christianity, the divine or holy self) and the lower self, the illusory or imaginary self, the false self or the immoral self (in Christianity, the mortal or sinful self). Indeed, in much of Christian theology, which is the focus of our discussion here, the higher self is pure spirit and the lower self is body, nature, or matter. Thus according to Nietzsche, Christianity and its good God who is too good for this world, its Holy God, is arguably the religion of anti-nature par excellence (and thus, if nature is the sole reality, this concept of God would be a negation of existence, a concept hostile to life). Here we can look again to aphorism's thirty-nine and fifty:

'Pure spirit' a prejudice. – Wherever the teaching of *pure spirituality* has ruled, it has destroyed nervous energy with its excesses: it has taught deprecation, neglect or tormenting of the body and men to torment and deprecate themselves on account of the drives which fill them; it has produced gloomy, tense and oppressed souls – which believed, moreover, they knew the cause of their feeling of wretchedness and perhaps were able to abolish it. 'It must reside in the body! The body is still *flourishing* too well!' – thus they concluded, while in fact the body was, by means of the pains it registered, raising protest after protest against the mockery to which it was constantly being subjected. A general chronic over-excitability was finally the lot of these virtuous pure-spirits: the only *pleasure* they could still recognize was in the form of ecstasy and other precursors of madness – and their system attained its summit when it came to take ecstasy for the higher goal of life and the standard by which all earthly things stood *condemned*.

Faith in intoxication. – Men who enjoy moments of exaltation and ecstasy and who, on account of the contrast other states present and because of the way they have squandered their nervous energy, are ordinarily in a wretched and miserable condition, regard these moments as their real 'self' and their wretchedness and misery as the *effect of what is 'outside the self'*: and thus they harbour feelings of revengefulness towards their environment, their age, their entire world. Intoxication counts as their real life, as their actual ego: they see in everything else the opponent and obstructor of intoxication, no matter whether its nature be spiritual, moral, religious or artistic. Mankind owes much that is bad to these wild inebriates: for they are insatiable sowers of the weeds of dissatisfaction with oneself and one's neighbour, of contempt for the age and the world, and especially of world-weariness. . . . – In addition to all this, these enthusiasts seek with all their might to implant the faith in intoxication as being that which is actually living in life: a dreadful faith! Just as savages are quickly ruined and then perish through 'firewater', so mankind as a whole has been slowly and thoroughly ruined through the feelings made drunk by *spiritual* firewaters and by those who have kept alive the desire for them: perhaps it will go on to perish by them.

The Christian-Theological Understanding of Embodiment

In the traditional Christian understanding, God became flesh in Jesus Christ and redeemed humankind for the sins of the flesh by way of his suffering and dying for those sins. To be sure, from the temptation of Adam and Eve to their shamed concern for their nakedness upon succumbing to the temptation – for the whispers of the flesh, when they lead, are as poisons to the heart – by which humankind inherited sin to the life and death of Jesus Christ, Christian thought and spiritual life has been intensely concerned with the topic of *embodiment*. The bodily as such, the material, the natural or worldly (for these all say the same thing in Christianity, at least as Nietzsche understands Christianity), has been a matter of great concern and a heavy presence in the soul and existential

comportment of the Christian. To be sure, every human being as a *human being* (that is, as that self-conscious being that speaks or names the beings and dwells with them, always pursuing Being from out of his own being while led by Being) *has* an ontology, an understanding of Being and the beings – including one’s own being – by which he orients himself to the world and to himself. The ontological orientation of the Christian has been informed or colored by the understanding of the Biblical God as Being, which is to say, as the source and ultimate Reality by which the reality of everything else is measured. As we shall see, the Christian world view has on Nietzsche’s understanding put the body on the scale and found it wanting, or more precisely, perhaps, *evil* (which also means: unworthy of existence). According to Nietzsche this judgment is not only a tremendous triumph for *pessimism*, it is central for the most spiritual and ecstatic experiences of Christians generally and above all to the experiences of the highest exemplars of that faith (such as the *saints*). The Christian posture towards the body is taken up explicitly in aphorism 86:

Christian interpreters of the body. – Whatever proceeds from the stomach, from the intestines, the beating of the heart, the nerves, the bile, the semen – all those distempers, debilitations, excitations, the whole chance operation of the machine of which we still know so little! – Had to be seen by a Christian such as Pascal as a moral and religious phenomenon, and he had to ask whether God or Devil, good or evil, salvation or damnation was to be discovered in them! Oh what an unhappy interpreter! How he had to twist and torment his system! How he had to twist and torment himself so as to be in the right!

How did the self-tormentor Pascal discover “God or Devil, good or evil, salvation or damnation” in the functions of the body? By ‘twisting and tormenting’ himself. One twists something by creating opposing tensions between the ends of a thing (in this case, two ends). For Pascal, these two ends encompassed the whole of his soul in all its height and breadth, from his highest spiritual self to his lowest bodily or worldly self. Where the low dominates the high and makes it suffer the Devil, evil, or damnation is to be

found; where the high dominates the low and makes it suffer the pains of renunciation (and sometimes self-mortification) God, good, or salvation is to be found. Such a one as Pascal can only be in the right, can only be moral, to the extent that his domination over his body, his thwarting of its drives, his self-tyranny over his own nature, is exceedingly tormenting (thus requiring a nature full of active and powerful drives), for only then does his *sacrifice* of his lower self for love of God become potentially lovable (i.e., meritorious).

We learn in aphorism seventy-six of *Daybreak* that Christianity transformed Eros and Aphrodite “into diabolical kobolds and phantoms by means of the torments it introduces into the conscience of believers whenever they are excited sexually”. For Pascal as with all post-pubescent human beings, in accordance with our nature, the sexual passions are “necessary and regularly recurring sensations”. For the Christian such as Pascal, these are sources of inner misery and Christianity as a whole according to Nietzsche aims at making “inner misery a necessary and regularly recurring phenomena *in every human being!*” Not only the sex drives but the natural, “animal” or worldly as such is to be attended by a *bad conscience*. The good conscience, on the other hand, comes with the overcoming of sinful nature, including not only the body and its drives and passions for worldly goods, but also egoism itself. We can begin to see, then, how Pascal was able to search for “God or Devil, good or evil, salvation or damnation” in the chance operations of the machine of the body. For the conscience, according to Nietzsche, is understood as *the voice of God in man’s soul*, as “the consciousness that good and evil are permanent – that God himself speaks through it when it advises conformity with priestly concepts” (*Will to Power*, aphorism 141); whereas in truth it is

only the voice of the herd and its inherited morality¹⁰⁶. Thus, it was by listening to the manner in which God spoke to him through his conscience that Pascal was able to find God or the Devil in the operations of his body. So far as the Christian such as Pascal is concerned, the conscience is our heart's wisdom, our absolute knowledge of good and evil, and its source is God who thereby reveals his righteous will to us.

Leaving Pascal for now we must return to our main theme, namely, the Christian interpretation of the body as something to be dominated by the soul or spirit (*geist*), as something evil (something made evil by way of the Fall) for which we deserve to suffer. Here we would do well to look to aphorism seventy-six:

To think a thing evil means to make it evil. – The passions become evil and malicious if they are regarded as evil and malicious. Thus Christianity has succeeded in transforming Eros and Aphrodite – great powers capable of idealization – into diabolical kobolds and phantoms by means of the torments it introduces into the consciences of believers whenever they are excited sexually. Is it not dreadful to make necessary and regularly recurring sensations into a source of inner misery, and in this way to want to make inner misery a necessary and recurring phenomenon *in every human being*! In addition to which it remained a misery kept secret and thus more deeply rooted: for not everyone possesses the courage of Shakespeare to confess his Christian gloominess on this point in the way he did in his sonnets. – Must everything that one has to combat, that one has to keep within bounds or on occasion banish totally from one's mind, always have to be called *evil*! Is it not the way of *common* souls always to think an *enemy* must be *evil*! And ought one to call Eros an enemy? The sexual sensations have this in common with the sensations of sympathy and worship that one person, by doing what pleases him, gives pleasure to another person – such benevolent arrangements are not to be found so very often in nature! And to calumniate such an arrangement and to ruin it through associating it with a bad conscience! –

The Christian, as one who has an “unremitting hatred of sin” (aphorism 81), as common soul, loves and hates fanatically, unconditionally¹⁰⁷. For him his enemy must be *evil* and one such powerful enemy, one facet of his enemy in general, is his Eros (the goddess Aphrodite appears to be subsumed in Nietzsche's discussion above under the god Eros). According to Nietzsche, for the higher human being Eros is neither an enemy

¹⁰⁶ See *Will to Power*, aphorisms 275, 293 and 294, and *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, aphorism 52; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 199.

¹⁰⁷ And thus pathologically; *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 154: “everything unconditional belongs in pathology.”; for inasmuch as perspectivity is in the essence of man – as will to power – the unconditional judgment and the unconditional feeling constitute a kind of degeneration, a hypertrophy of a single viewpoint and a kind of hypnosis of the organism.

nor are enemies considered evil. In regard to the enemies and opponents of his thoughts, for example, the higher soul *honors* his enemy as one who, by his own height, always demands of him that he excel himself likewise. Nietzsche makes his posture concerning enemies clear in aphorisms three-hundred seventy *Daybreak* (cf. aphorism 431):

To what extent the thinker loves his enemy.— Never keep silent or hold back what may be thought against your thoughts! Praise it! It is part of the fundamental probity of thought. Every day you must conduct your campaign also against yourself. A victory and a conquered stronghold are no longer your concern, but truth is—however, your defeat is no longer your concern, either!

We might also see here aphorism 248 of Nietzsche's *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*:

Path to a Christian virtue. – To learn from one's enemies is the best path to loving them: for it puts us in a grateful mood towards them.

The thinker in his love of truth is able to be his own enemy and to excel himself as such, and as concerns his sexual passions, so far from being his enemies, he freely idealizes or sublimates them. That is to say, he harnesses their power within the governing structure of an ideal that is loved deeply (revered) so as to actuate them in their highest possibilities with the actualization of his own highest possibilities. Here we should look to *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 75:

The degree and kind of a man's [person's] sexuality reaches up into the ultimate pinnacle of his [their] spirit [*geist*].

The thinker harmonizes his body to the needs of his soul, he rejoices in it and has no reason to be afraid of it (cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 566). The Christian, on the other hand, fears his bodily nature, for as sinful it is the cause of his present deserved suffering and potential future sufferings even more frightful. As such, to the extent that the bodily nature is still powerfully active (for a life of renunciation *can* put a given drive or instinct – or a certain form or manifestation of an instinct – to sleep) it is a source of misery to him.

The Origin of the Christian Understanding in Paul

The Christian posture towards the body has its origin in Paul, the “*first Christian*, the inventor of Christianess” (aphorism 68). For as the teacher of the “*destruction of the law*”, Paul, according to Nietzsche, reasoned thusly (aphorism 68):

To die to evil – that means also to die to the law; to exist in the flesh – that means also to exist in the law! To become one with Christ – that means also to become with him the destroyer of the law; to have died with him – that means also to have died to the law! Even if it is still possible to sin, it is no longer possible to sin against the law: ‘I am outside the law.’ ‘If I were now to accept the law again and submit to it I should be making Christ an accomplice of sin’, for the law existed so that sins might be committed, it continually brought sin forth as a sharp juice brings forth a disease; could God could never have resolved on the death of Christ if a fulfillment of the law had been in any way possible without this death; now not only has all guilt been taken away, guilt as such has been destroyed; now the law is dead, now the carnality in which it dwelt is dead – or at least dying constantly away, as though decaying. Yet but a brief time within this decay! –

The Christian ontological perspective should not be confused for being *beyond* good and evil, rather, to be sure it *presupposes* it. We can begin to explain this as follows.

Christianity has not freed us from suffering: life is suffering, *deserved* suffering, and we suffer from sinfulness but are saved, redeemed (i.e., given our *moral worth* back upon having lost it) by loving God and humbly and patiently enduring life’s tortures (but recall aphorism 15), and also through self-inflicted suffering through renunciation of the bodily or worldly. According to Christianity we cannot deserve eternal life, we can only receive it by grace, for we are all immoral or impure in our material or worldly nature. Thus it is not that the Christian believes virtue to be its own reward or that virtue itself deserves no reward, on the contrary, virtue *does* make one worthy of reward according to the Christian schema (after all, is not evil worthy or deserving of punishment?): it is, rather, the fact that virtue is *impossible to attain* without divine assistance for inherently sinful man that makes one in need of grace. Such as we are, we are not good enough to live up

to virtue but are saved by believing in Christ, who paid the debt of man's sin and made possible the acceptance of God's gift of eternal love. Here we can look to aphorism 72:

Paul knew of nothing better he could say of his Redeemer than that he had *opened* the gates of immortality to everyone – he did not yet believe in the resurrection of the unredeemed; indeed, as would follow from his teaching of the unfulfillability of the law and of death as the consequence of sin, he suspected that hitherto no one (or only very few, and then through mercy and not their own deserts) had become immortal: it was only now that immortality had *begun* to open its doors – and in the end only a very few would be selected: as the arrogance of the elect cannot refrain from adding.

Now, the transition from Judaism to Christianity involves, among other things but preeminently, a transition from sinning against *the law* to sinning *against God*; here sin becomes an affront to God's holiness as such and not to his will or command as the God or King of Israel. But this is subtle and requires explication.

In Judaism, according to Nietzsche's Paul, the Law constantly brings forth sin, indeed it constantly goads one on towards sinfulness through the promise or challenge of fulfilling it. It thus leads one into sin through one's pride, in this case a *moral* pride, which is sinful. Only God may be morally proud; the law is *unfulfillable* for man, and the very attempt to fulfill it, fueled by pride, only leads to its opposite, to sinfulness. But Paul, tormented by the law, the "epileptic" and "zealot of the law who was inwardly tired to death of it", eventually found a way out of this difficulty inherent in his Judaism. The "idea of ideas, the key of keys, the light of lights" (aphorism 68) came to him, as he believed, in the form of a revelation. With his new idea Christianity emerged.

Henceforth, we sin, *not* against the law, but against God, and this by *existing in the law*. Redemption is attainable only by being "outside the law" as such (aphorism 68), though even when outside of the law the Christian may relapse into sin by way of rejecting the gift of God's love and choosing instead the immoral path of self-love, pride, self-regard or *selfishness*. Nietzsche explains as follows (aphorism 87):

In the New testament the canon of virtue, of the fulfilled law, is set up: but in such a way that it is the canon of *impossible virtue*: those still *striving* after morality are in the face of such a canon to learn to feel themselves ever *more distant* from their goal, they are to *despair* of virtue, and in the end *throw themselves on the bosom* of the merciful – only if it ended in this way could the Christian's moral effort be regarded as possessing any value, with the presupposition therefore that it always remains an unsuccessful, miserable, melancholy *effort*; only thus could it *serve* to bring about that ecstatic moment when he experiences the 'breakthrough of grace' and the moral miracle: –

All those who live in the flesh are unredeemed, both the debauched who give no thought to the law *and* those who strive to fulfill it. They are *both* led at the core by arrogance or *pride* and thus cause offence to God's honor, who, like a compromised and unrequited lover, takes the most terrible vengeance (however righteous) against those who have failed to accept his free gift of love and freely love him in return. We can look here to *The Joyous Science*, aphorisms one-hundred thirty-five, one-hundred forty, and one-hundred forty-one (cf. aphorism 69 of Nietzsche's *On the History of the Moral Sensations*):

Origin of sin. – Sin, as it is now experienced wherever Christianity holds sway or has held sway, is a Jewish feeling and a Jewish invention. Regarding this background of all Christian morality, Christianity did aim to "Judaize" the world. . . . "Only if you *repent* will God show you grace" – that would strike a Greek as ridiculous and annoying. He would say: "Maybe slaves feel that way." The Christian presupposes a powerful, overpowering being who enjoys revenge. His power is so great that nobody could possibly harm him, except his honor. Every sin is a slight to his honor, a *crimen laesae majestatis divinae* [the crime of an affront to the divine majesty] – and no more. Contrition, degradation, rolling in the dust – all this is the first and last condition of his grace: in sum, the restoration of his divine honor. Whether the sin has done any other harm, whether it has set in motion some profound calamity that will grow and seize one person after another like a disease and strangle them—this honor-craving Oriental in heaven could not care less! Sin is an offense against him, not against humanity. Those who are granted his grace are also granted this carelessness regarding the natural consequences of sin. God and humanity are separated so completely that a sin against humanity is really unthinkable: every deed is to be considered *solely with respect to its supernatural consequences*, without regard for its natural consequences; that what Jewish feeling demands, for whatever is natural is considered ignoble.

Too Jewish.—If God wished to become an object of love, he should have given up judging and justice first of all; a judge, even a merciful judge, is no object of love. The founder of Christianity was not refined enough in his feelings at this point – being a Jew.

Too Oriental.—What? A god who loves men, provided only that they believe in him, and who casts an evil eye and threats upon anyone who does not believe in this love? What? A love that has not even mastered the feelings of honor and vindictiveness? How Oriental this is? "If I love you, is that your concern?" is a sufficient critique of the whole of Christianity. [And here Kaufmann informs that the quotation is from "Goethe's discussion of Spinoza's dictum, in the *Ethics*, 'Whoever loves God must not expect God to love him in return'", which Nietzsche 'reverses' by questioning the expectation of the Christian God to be loved in return]

As we have seen, the law, and thus sin, *dwell* or *abide* in carnality (aphorism 68; cf. First Letter of *John* 4:16: God is Love. And he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him). We must understand the bodily or carnal as broadly as possible. Not only the Jewish roots of Christianity but also the Hellenic roots are relevant here (cf. aphorism 70). Indeed, in the face of Rome (which strove so mightily for power and glory) the bodily came to mean the worldly. The world on the Christian understanding is *sinful*. For this we can see aphorism seventy-one:

Christian revenge on Rome. – Nothing, perhaps, is so wearying as the sight of a perpetual conqueror – for two centuries the world had seen Rome subdue one people after another, the circle was closed, the whole future seemed to be fixed, all things were ordered as though to last forever – when the Empire *built*, indeed, it built with the notion of ‘*aere perennius*’; we, who know only the ‘melancholy of ruins’, can barely understand that quite different *melancholy of eternal construction* from which one had to try to rescue oneself by some means or other – through frivolity, for example as in the case of Horace. Others sought other antidotes to this weariness bordering on despair, to the deadly awareness that every impulse of head or heart was henceforth without hope, that the great spider was everywhere, that it would implacably consume all blood wherever it might well forth. – This centuries long speechless hatred for Rome on the part of its wearied spectators, which extended as far as Rome ruled, at last discharged itself in *Christianity*, inasmuch as Christianity welded together Rome, the ‘world’ and ‘sin’ into *one* sensation: it avenged itself on Rome by imagining the sudden destruction of the world to be near at hand; it avenged itself on Rome by reestablishing a future – Rome had known how to turn everything into its *own* prehistory and present – and a future, moreover, in comparison with which Rome no longer appeared the most important thing; it avenged itself on Rome by dreaming of a last *judgment* – and the crucified Jew as symbol of salvation was the profoundest mockery of the splendidly arrayed provincial Roman governors, for they now appeared as symbols of ill-fortune and of ‘world’ ripe for destruction.

The Jews felt differently about the world, however, as is evident from Nietzsche’s discussion of the ‘after-death’, which teaching proselytizing Christians (not Paul himself) drew chiefly from Hellenic roots. Here we can look to aphorism seventy-two (*The ‘after-death’*):

The Jews, as a people firmly attached to life – like the Greeks and more than the Greeks – had paid little attention to these ideas: definitive death as the punishment for the sinner, and never to rise again as the severest threat – that was sufficient admonition for these strange people, who did not desire to get rid of their bodies but, with refined Egyptianism, hoped to retain them for all eternity (a Jewish martyr, whose fate is recorded in the Second Book of the Maccabees, has no thought of renouncing possession of his torn-out intestines: he wants to *have* them at the resurrection – such is the Jewish way!)

The Christian, then, has hatred for the world and thus hatred for all that is worldly in himself: this is essential to his “unremitting hatred of sin” (aphorism 81).

On Love and Lust

At this point we must ask: why is the ideal of Christian love believed to be so *radically* different from lust? Two related aspects of the religious claim are most important. First, lust, it is claimed, is bodily in origin and desires the bodily, and the bodily is the mortal, the fleeting, the deceptive; (inasmuch as death is the wage of sin, the bodily is the sinful). Love, on the other hand, is purely spiritual and desires the purely spiritual; as such it partakes in the eternal, in the *true world* (love is divine). Second, and related, love (especially the love of God), it is claimed, is *miraculous* in its character of being *selfless* or *unegoistic*: the lover loves the beloved with a *pure* love, which is to say, wholly for the sake of the beloved and even to the lover's own detriment; the lover is selflessly devoted to the beloved and this on account of the beauty, goodness, or virtue (moral splendor and dignity) of the beloved and not from any base or otherwise personal ulterior motive on behalf of the lover. The lover believes that were they beautiful like the beloved they would be happy or blessed. Lust, on the other hand, is egoistic or self-interested; its aim is bodily pleasure and as such it seeks something that is base, fleeting, and morally bankrupt. In short, whereas lust is a kind of selfish devouring of base things (though even here one risks the accusation of being raised amongst sailors), love is a selfless devotion to beautiful things. Let us begin with Nietzsche's response to the second aspect of the Christian claim, love's selflessness, before taking up the reasons for

Nietzsche's denial of the first claim.

Man, in the traditional Christian conception, is both beast and divine, part animal, part God; one part of his being is natural, lusty, covetous, and detestable, the other divine, loving, generous, and lovable. This Christian division of man's nature, evident from aphorism seventy-six of *Daybreak* (where we learned of the diabolizing of Eros and Aphrodite), is spelled out in clear detail in aphorism one-hundred and thirty-six of *The Will to Power*:

Rudimentary psychology of the religious man: -- All changes are effects; all effects are effects of will (- the concept "nature," "law of nature" is lacking); all effects suppose an agent. Rudimentary psychology: one is a cause oneself only when one knows that one has performed an act of will.

Result: when man experiences the conditions of power, the imputation is that he is not their cause, that he is not responsible for them: they come without being willed, consequently we are not their author: the will that is not free (i.e., the consciousness that we have been changed without having willed it) needs an external will.

Consequence: man has not dared to credit himself with all his strong and surprising impulses – he has conceived them as "passive," as "suffered," as things imposed upon him: religion is the product of a doubt concerning the unity of the person, an *altération* of the personality: in so far as everything great and strong in man has been conceived as superhuman and external, man has belittled himself – he has separated the two sides of himself, one very paltry and weak, one very strong and astonishing, into two spheres, and called the former "man," the latter "God."

He has continued to think in this way; in the period of the moral idiosyncrasy he did not interpret his exalted and sublime moral states as "willed," as "work" of the person. The Christian too divides his person into a mean and weak fiction which he calls man, and another which he calls God (redeemer, savior) –

Religion has debased the concept "man"; its ultimate consequence is that everything good, great, true is superhuman and bestowed only through an act of grace—

One's "exalted and sublime moral states" are considered revelatory or miraculous: the moral man is infused with the spirit of God; he acts from enthusiasm. The miraculous character of the moral state is vouched for by the miraculous character of its love, that is, of its loving the morally splendid for the sake of the morally splendid and even to one's own detriment. Alternatively stated, the miraculous character of love is evident from the element of *sacrifice for the beautiful*. Prior to *Daybreak*, in *Human all-too-Human*, *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, Nietzsche spells out the matter as follows:

Morality as the self-division of man.— A good author whose heart is really in his subject wishes

that someone would come and annihilate him by presenting the same subject with greater clarity and resolving all the questions contained in it. The girl in love wishes that she might prove the devoted faithfulness of her love through her lover's faithlessness. The soldier wishes that he might fall on the battlefield for his victorious fatherland, for in the victory of his fatherland his greatest desire is also victorious. The mother gives the child what she takes from herself: sleep, the best food, in some instances even her health, her wealth. Are all these really selfless states, however? Are these acts of morality *miracles* because they are, to use Schopenhauer's phrase, "impossible and yet real"? Isn't it clear that, in all these cases, man is loving *something of himself*, a thought, a longing, an offspring, more than *something else of himself*, that he is thus *dividing up* his being and sacrificing one part for the other? Is it something *essentially* different when a pigheaded man says, "I would rather be shot at once than move an inch to get out of that man's way" – The *inclination towards something* (a wish, a drive, a longing) is present in all the above-mentioned cases; to yield to it, with all its consequences, is in any case not "selfless." In morality, man treats himself not as an *individuum* [that which cannot be divided without destroying its essence], but as a *dividuum* [that which is composite and lacks an individual essence].

Nietzsche asks whether it is not "clear" that this is the case; he implies, that is, that the egoistic character of sacrifice can be seen clearly by anyone genuinely interested in looking at the phenomenon. And yet this character of sacrifice is universally denied by the moral-religious, who hold sacrifice to be the quintessentially *unegoistic* act. How, then, on Nietzsche's account, is it possible or probable that men deny what stares them so clearly in the face? According to Nietzsche, the answer lies in man's ingenious capacity for self-deception in pursuit of the feeling of power.

According to Nietzsche, love and truthfulness stand opposed to one another (at least, in all non-philosophers): "For the sake of love we are inveterate transgressors against truth and habitual thieves and receivers, who allow more to be true than appears to us true" (aphorism 479: *Love and Truthfulness*; cf., aphorisms 302 and 391). Alternatively, love is intimately related to lying, acting, and artistry, and yet it does not simply or unqualifiedly carry its victory in the soul: love has, in Nietzsche's terms, the intellectual conscience against it. On the joy and advantage of lying, to which love is essentially prone, Nietzsche says (aphorism 309):

. . . love contains a secret impulse to see as much beauty as possible in the other or to elevate him as high as possible: to deceive oneself here would be a joy and an advantage. – and so one does so.

We see that at least one lie involved in love is a lie concerning beauty: love always finds (or creates) the utmost beauty in the beloved, whether the beloved be an idea, a desire, or an offspring. But before clarifying these matters, we must note that according to Nietzsche love is a disease or illness that brings rapture and misery side by side. We can begin by looking to aphorism four-hundred and fifteen, bearing in mind that only sicknesses require cures:

Remedium amoris.—The cure for love is still in most cases that ancient radical medicine: love in return.

Now, in order to understand the element of distress, torment, misery, or sickness in love we must understand that the lover, as a liar, knows himself to be a liar: for in order to tell a lie as a *lie* one must know the truth. The deceiver or liar, even the self-deceiver, cannot be entirely convinced by his own deception. Here we can begin by looking at a passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, (Of Love of One's Neighbor)*:

It is not only he who speaks contrary to what he knows who lies, but even more he who speaks contrary to what he does not know. And thus you speak of yourselves in your dealings with others and deceive your neighbour with yourselves.

We might also look here to aphorism 6 of Nietzsche's *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*:

Against fantasists. – The fantasist denies reality to himself, the liar does so only to others.

The liar, however, as self-deceived lover also denies reality to himself and thus has something of the fantasist in him. Indeed, the lover's intellectual conscience knows the truth, it knows that the lover has painted beauty with an imaginary brush. However artistic we might consider this beautifying process, it is surely *dishonest*, as we ourselves are more or less dimly aware. For more on this we can look to aphorism 279:

Wherein we become artists. – He who makes an idol of someone tries to justify himself in his own eyes by elevating this person to an ideal; in the process he becomes an artist so as to have a good conscience. If he suffers, he suffers not from *not knowing* but from self-deception, from the pretence of not knowing. – The inner distress and joy of such a person – and all passionate lovers are of their number – is not to be measured with an ordinary measure.

We can best elaborate on this theme by taking particular note of the deceptions involved in love. One such deception is that of virtue or moral splendor in the object loved, and most interestingly when the object loved is an idea (such as the idea of “God” or “Country”) or a person (such as Jesus Christ, or Napoleon). Concerning the attribution of moral splendor to the people we love romantically, for example, Nietzsche says the following (aphorism 379; cf. 403):

Probable and improbable. – A woman was secretly in love with a man, raised him high above her, and said a hundred times in the most secret recesses of her heart: ‘if such a man loved me, it would be something I so little deserve I would have to humble myself in the dust!’ – And the man felt in the same way, and in regard to the same woman, and he said the same thing in the most secret recesses of his heart. When at last their tongues were loosed and they told one another everything they had kept hidden, there followed a silence; then, after she had been sunk in thought for a time, the woman said in a cold voice: ‘but everything is now clear! Neither of us is what we have loved! If you are that which you say, and no more, I debased myself and loved you in vain; the demon seduced me, as he did you.’ – This story, which is not at all an improbable one, never happens – why not?

“Why not?” Nietzsche asks us. We see that each person secretly says: “I am worthless in the face of your splendor; I do not deserve your love though you deserve mine, and were you to reciprocate I would have to debase myself utterly so as to display my awareness of, and gratitude for, your clemency or affections.” This is true: the lover elevates the beloved “as high as possible” (aphorism 309), and thus feels his own ‘lowness’ in the face of the beloved; it is as ‘lower’ that the lover *devotes* himself to the beloved who, being higher, is worthy of our sacrifice; indeed it is through service that one can perhaps best express one’s gratitude for one’s undeserved love. From here speaks that secret part of a lover that *knows* that it is not exceedingly beautiful (i.e., morally splendid) or otherwise worthy of devotion (really, worship). But what about the speech of that part of the person that believes in their own lie concerning their “virtue?” Does not that part of the lover say to the exalted object of his love: “I am deserving of you and you ought to love me in return?” The lover, in fact, continually exalts and debases himself in the same

breath, for the hope or in this case at least the *demand* for reciprocity in love carries this contradiction with it in every instance of itself. The contradiction is as clear as day and yet we never draw the conclusion as to the erroneousness and even absurdity of the fact: “Why not?” Nietzsche asks. Can we not say in response that the reason is that such a conclusion would involve our conceding that *we* are not what we believed ourselves to be? That we are not of such exalted beauty as we pretend ourselves to be? In short, we cannot admit to our own ‘lowness’ in the face of our own contrary claim to *exaltedness*; indeed, even the suspicion or ‘half-awareness’ of our not truly living up to our ideal is a source of torment for us. In fact, as we shall see, it is our own exalted self-portrait that we see and love in the beloved and not the beloved themselves¹⁰⁸. Indeed, Nietzsche has the woman in aphorism three-hundred and seventy-nine naively blurt out the whole secret as to the self-idolization of love that dresses itself as love for the sake of another: “but everything is now clear! Neither of us is what we have loved!” In other words, we believe or in part believe that *we are* what we love; it would not be false to go further and say that in a manner we believe or in part believe that *we are* those *whom* we love.

At first hearing this might sound remarkable – *not* to say unbelievable – but according to Nietzsche man is ingenious in his ability to impose his idealized self-image upon others while deluding himself that he is not in fact doing so but rather, that he is loving the other for *their* sake, on account of their ‘lovability’ or intrinsic worthiness to be loved. That said, despite being ingenious this type of man is very limited by virtue of his inability to love anyone but himself. For this we can see aphorism four-hundred twelve:

¹⁰⁸ The actual person, the beloved that is, is on this understanding almost always accidental, a kind of ‘space-filler’ for a public possibility, someone three-quarters random upon whom we can impose our idealized self-portrait.

Ingenious and limited. – He does not know how to love anyone but himself; and when he wants to love others he always has first to transform them into himself. But in that he is ingenious.

For more on this transformation of others into ourselves (or transformation of ourselves into others after the other has been painted in our own inflated self-image) we can look to perhaps the clearest statement Nietzsche makes concerning this matter (*Human all too Human*, *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, aphorism 37; cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 532):

Deception in love. – We forget a great deal of our own past and deliberately banish it from our minds: that is to say, we want the image of ourself that shines upon us out of the past to deceive us and flatter our self-conceit – we are engaged continually on this self-deception. – And do you think, you who speak so much of ‘self-forgetfulness in love’, of ‘the merging of the ego in the other person’, and laud it so highly, do you think this is anything essentially different? We shatter the mirror, impose ourself upon someone we admire, and then enjoy our ego’s new image even though we may call it by that other person’s name – and this whole proceeding is supposed *not* to be self-deception, *not* egoism! A strange delusion! – Those who conceal something of themselves *from themselves* and those who conceal themselves from themselves as a whole are, I think, alike in this, that they perpetrate a *robbery* in the treasure-house of knowledge: from which we can see against which transgression the injunction ‘know thyself’ is a warning.

Now, this imposition onto another of our own self-image (or rather, the more favorable side of our self-image, for we are of two minds on this matter, as discussed earlier), this self-deception and noble falsehood can be seen to be the utmost in vanity and arrogance when one considers the fact that we believe ourselves to be, in part at least, gods, and that when we transform others into our idealized selves and attempt to transform ourselves into that other or idealized self we thus transform them into gods (complete with all the moral splendor and worthiness of devotion that belongs to a divinity). Perhaps above all for this we should see *The Will to Power*, aphorism seven-hundred sixty-eight:

The “ego” subdues and kills: it operates like an organic cell: it is a robber and violent. It wants to regenerate itself—pregnancy. It wants to give birth to its god and see all mankind at its feet.

But is there direct evidence in *Daybreak* that when we sacrifice for love we in fact transform ourselves into gods (or, ‘shatter the mirror’ so that what is seen is beautiful) and gaze devotedly upon ourselves as we are (distortedly) reflected in the beloved? Yes, for in aphorism two-hundred fifteen, Nietzsche writes:

Morality of sacrificial beasts. – ‘Enthusiastic devotion’, ‘sacrifice of oneself’ – these are the catchwords of your morality, and I can readily believe that you are, as you say, ‘in earnest about it’: but I know you better than you know yourselves when you ‘earnestness’ is able to walk in arm with such a morality. . . . For by devoting yourselves with enthusiasm and making a sacrifice of yourselves you enjoy the ecstatic thought of henceforth being at one with the powerful being, whether a god or a man, to whom you dedicate yourselves: you revel in the feeling of his power, to which your very sacrifice is an additional witness. The truth of the matter is that you only *seem* to sacrifice yourselves: in reality you transform yourselves in thought into gods and enjoy yourselves as such. . .

The preceding provides a suitable point from which to turn to aphorism two-hundred ninety-eight (*The hero-cult and its fanatics*), quoted in its lengthy entirety below. The main interpretive question the aphorism poses is this: how is it that the lover who partakes in the “self-deception and noble falsehood” of idealizing and indeed deifying another person does so out of “arrogance”? And how does the arrogance of this self-deception and noble falsehood reach its “peak” in the martyrdom of the mistreated lover?

The hero-cult and its fanatics. – the fanatic of an ideal which has flesh and blood is usually in the right so long as he *denies*, and in this he is dreadful: he knows that which he denies as well as he knows himself, for the simple reason that he comes from there, is at home there, and lives in the secret dread of having to go back there – he wants to make it impossible for him to return by the way in which he denies. But as soon as he affirms he half-closes his eyes and begins to idealise (often only so as to hurt those who have stayed home –); one might call this something artistic – very well, but there is also something dishonest in it. He who idealises a person sets this person at so great a distance from himself that he can no longer see him clearly – then he reinterprets what he still sees into the ‘beautiful’, that is to say the symmetrical, soft-lined, indefinite. Since he henceforth wants also to worship his distance ideal he needs to construct a temple to guard it from the *profanum vulgus*. Into this temple he fetches all the revered and consecrated objects he otherwise possesses, so that their magic may rub off on to his ideal and, thus *nourished*, it shall grow and become ever more divine. At last he has actually succeeded in completing his god – but alas! There is one who knows how this has been brought about, his intellectual conscience – and there is also one who, quite unconsciously, protests at it, namely the deified being himself, who in consequence of the cult, worship and incense surrounding him has now become insupportable and in a horrible fashion betrays himself as being very obviously not a god at all too much a human. Here a fanatic such as we have described is now left with only one recourse: he patiently submits himself and his kind to mistreatment and interprets the whole misery still *ad maiorem dei gloriam* by means of a new species of self-deception and noble falsehood: he takes sides against himself and, as the one mishandled and as interpreter, feels as he does so something like a martyrdom – thus he mounts to the peak of his arrogance. – Men of this kind lived about Napoleon for example: perhaps, indeed, it was precisely he who implanted into the soul of our century the romantic prostration before ‘genius’ and the ‘hero’ which is so contrary to the spirit of the Enlightenment; he of whom a Byron was not ashamed to say he was ‘a worm compared with such a being’. (The formula for this kind of prostration was invented by that presumptuous old grumbler and middle-head Carlyle, who employed a long life in trying to turn romantic the reasonableness of his Englishmen: in vain!)

The lover or idealist, Nietzsche says, “patiently submits” to his mistreatment and “interprets the whole misery still *ad maiorem dei gloriam*”. It is here in the interpretation of one’s suffering as being for the greater glory of God that arrogance reaches its *peak*: for it is now that the *greatest distance* is present in the soul between the highest states of opinion and feeling of worthiness and the lowest states of opinion and feeling of degradation. The more one voluntarily suffers the slings and arrows of self-hatred and self-degradation before one’s god, the greater the ecstatic feeling of power involved in being united with the god whose power and truth is testified to *by the power of the sacrifices he draws forth from us*. The idealist in aphorism two-hundred ninety-eight is *already arrogant* in his initial idealization: his beloved ideal is essentially the reflection of his idealized self, an idealized self already at a distance from his ‘lower-self’ which looks ‘up’ to the admired beloved. But in the next phase of his self-deception and noble falsehood, as interpreter of his mistreatment by the deified being, his arrogance reaches its *peak* in proportion to his self-hatred reaching its *bottom*: the higher-self revels in the greater or higher ecstasy the ‘further down’ it must look to see the lower-self which is sacrificed at its alter. And here, again, we can look to aphorism one-hundred thirteen (*The striving for distinction*). The ladder of cruelty, let us recall, reaches its peak in the “*ascetic and martyr*”. Precisely where self-cruelty or voluntary suffering reaches its peak the ecstatic feeling of power does likewise: “Indeed, happiness, conceived as the liveliest feeling of power, has perhaps been nowhere greater on earth than in the souls of superstitious ascetics” (aphorism 113). The pious ascetic is a manifestation of the “psychical extravagance of the lust for power” (*ibid*), or a piece of colossal arrogance: in reality the pious ascetic transforms himself in thought into God and revels in himself as

such, thus reaching the furthest height of intoxication, voluptuousness, and excess.

Nietzsche asks: is this unegoistic? Here we might look to aphorism 87 of Nietzsche's *On the History of the Moral Sensations*:

Luke 18, 14 improved. – He that humbleth himself wants to be exalted.

The original passage reads: “for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted”. Nietzsche improves the passage by pointing to the secret motivation of those who follow it: not only *shall* he be exalted, fundamentally he *wants* to be exalted. We might also see here aphorism 292 of *daybreak*:

The demon of power.— Not necessity, not desire—no, the love of power is the demon of men. Let them have everything, health, food, a place to live, entertainment—they are and remain unhappy and low-spirited: for the demon waits and waits and will be satisfied. Take everything from them and satisfy this: thus they are almost happy—as happy as men and demons can be. But why do I repeat this? Luther has said it already, and better than I, in the verses: “Let them take from us our body, goods, honor, children, wife: let it all go—the kingdom [Reich] must yet remain to us!” Yes! Yes! The “Reich”!

Luther is willing to *sacrifice* everything worldly for the exalted state he hopes to attain when entering the Kingdom of God in Heaven, and here, we should recall aphorism fifty-seven, quoted earlier, of *On the History of the Moral Sensations*. There Nietzsche asks, after raising the examples of the good author who loves the truth of his subject matter more than his personal opinions on that matter, a girl in love who would willingly suffer the betrayal of her beloved so as better to demonstrate her undying loyalty, a patriotic soldier who wishes above all else to die ‘with his boots on’ in the cause of his fatherland’s victory, and a mother who will undergo any and all physical burdens so as to meet the physical needs of her child:

Are all these really selfless states, however? Are these acts of morality *miracles* because they are, to use Schopenhauer's phrase, “impossible and yet real”? Isn't it clear that, in all these cases, man is loving *something of himself*, a thought, a longing, an offspring, more than *something else of himself*, that he is thus *dividing up* his being and sacrificing one part for the other?

Clearly, the psychology of sacrifice is according to Nietzsche as follows: one “sacrifices” some lower part of oneself (for the Christian, the bodily, worldly, selfish, sinful, or guilty part of oneself) to some higher part of oneself, indeed to a *divine* or *deified* part of oneself. The lover, plagued by the pestering doubts of his intellectual conscience as to his true merit (and not least in comparison to the virtue of the beloved), ‘proves’ his worth through enthusiastic sacrifice, thus drowning his intellectual conscience amidst rapturous passion and shining forth in reflection of the infinite and eternal beauty that he mirrors and to which he looks. Inasmuch as “love and death” are “brothers”, as Nietzsche suggests, to sacrifice one’s life to an ideal (be it a woman, a god, a hero, or whatever), to *die* for love (thus making the greatest of all sacrifices, excepting perhaps one’s worth, self-respect, or dignity, which no lover will relinquish completely . . .), is in fact the secret and sometimes not so secret desire of all great lovers: death is intimately related not only to the physical-sexual but also to love as idealism (or, psychic love). In death one does not put an end to one’s love affair nor relinquish one’s life entirely: death, one prays or hopes ever so dearly and secretly, is the love affairs final consummation. The lover, upon dying, is reborn in unity with the perfect beloved in the ‘higher world’ wherein the beloved dwells and to which the lover is beckoned: love whispers promises of a happy ending despite or rather because of its necessary and maddening trajectory into the tragic (cf. aphorism 68, very end, on the martyred Saint Paul).

In all events, the priestly nature, the ascetic or saint (i.e., the most important exemplar of Christian love) is not simply accused of being a “hypocrite,” of being “base” or “wicked” or an *outright* deceiver: the saint is self-deceived and has the greatest of

motivations for being so. Here we might look to aphorism fifty-five of *On the History of the Moral Sensations*:¹⁰⁹

To suspect morality because of belief.—No power can maintain itself if only hypocrites represent it. However many "worldly" elements the Catholic Church may have, its strength rests on those priestly natures, still numerous, who make life deep and difficult for themselves, and whose eye and emaciated body speak of nightly vigils, fasting, fervent prayers, perhaps even flagellation. These men shock others and worry them: what if it were *needful* to live like that?—this is the horrible question that the sight of them brings to the tongue. By spreading this doubt they keep reestablishing a pillar of their power. Not even the most freeminded dare to resist so selfless a man with the hard sense for truth, and say: "You who are deceived, do not deceive others."

We should also look here at *The Will to Power*, aphorisms 138 and 338:

Priests are the actors of something superhuman which they have to make easily perceptible, whether it be in the nature of ideals, gods, or saviors: in this they find their calling, for this their instincts serve them; to make everything as believable as possible they have to go as far as possible in posturing and posing; the shrewdness of their actor's art must above all aim at giving them a good conscience, by means of which alone is it possible to carry true conviction.

For more on this aspect of *acting* in the Christian life, we can look to *Will to Power*, aphorism 338:

What is the *counterfeiting* aspect of morality?—It pretends to *know* something, namely what "good and evil" is. That means wanting to know why mankind is here, its goal, its destiny. That means wanting to know that mankind *has* a goal, a destiny –

This might also be a good time to look again at the previously quoted passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, (*Of Love of One's Neighbor*):

It is not only he who speaks contrary to what he knows who lies, but even more he who speaks contrary to what he does not know. And thus you speak of yourselves in your dealings with others and deceive your neighbor with yourselves.

On the Morality of Pity

According to Nietzsche, modern morality is a morality of pity and as such is merely the residuum of Christianity. Indeed, Nietzsche sets out to vivisect the morality of his

¹⁰⁹ Cf. aphorisms 142 and 143 of *The Religious Life*; cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 543.

time, as Socrates, for example, did before him. And like Socrates Nietzsche confronts a certain prejudice concerning the morality of his time, namely, that it is something known (aphorism 132):

There is today perhaps no more firmly credited prejudice than this: that one *knows* what really constitutes the moral. Today it seems *to do everyone good* when they hear that society is on the way to *adapting* the individual to general requirements, and that *the happiness and at the same time the sacrifice of the individual* lies in feeling himself to be a useful member and instrument of the whole . . .

As he says again in *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism two-hundred and two:

We have found that in all major moral judgments Europe is now of one mind, including even the countries dominated by the influence of Europe [above all, the United States of America]: plainly, one now *knows* what Socrates thought he did not know and what that famous old serpent once promised to teach—today one “knows” what is good and evil.”

Now, we should notice that whereas in earlier Christian morality one loved and sacrificed for the neighbor not for *their* sake but for God’s, modern ‘humanistic’ (i.e., compassionate, essentially Christian) morality asks that we love and sacrifice for the sake of the neighbor, for the common good. That said, to the extent that selflessness itself is taken to task as the moral element of pity, Nietzsche’s attack on modern morality is simultaneously an attack on Christian morality and above all on the Christian virtue of charity; for it is not the *object* of selfless devotion that is the main focus of his attack (whether it be God, the neighbor, the community, the state, or so forth) but rather the claim to selflessness itself, which claim and its admiration are the echo of Christianity and its judgments and feelings. In any event, Nietzsche spells out the relationship between Christianity and modern morality in aphorism one-hundred thirty-two:

The echo of Christianity in morality. – ‘On n’est bon que par la pitié: il faut donc qu’il ait quelque pitié dans tous nos sentiments’ [One is good only by pity: there must then be some pity in all our sentiments]—thus says morality today! And why is that? – that men today feel the sympathetic, disinterested and generally useful social actions to be the *moral* actions – this is perhaps the most general effect and conversion which Christianity has produced in Europe: although it was not its intention nor contained in its teaching. But it was the residuum of Christian states of mind left when the very much antithetical, strictly egoistic fundamental belief in the ‘one thing needful’, in the absolute importance of eternal *personal* salvation, together with the dogmas upon which it rested, gradually retreated and the subsidiary belief in ‘love’, in ‘love of one’s neighbour’, in

concert with the tremendous practical effect if ecclesiastical charity, was thereby pushed into the foreground. The more one liberated oneself from the dogmas, the more one sought as it were a *justification* of this liberation in a cult of philanthropy: not to fall short of the Christian ideal in this, but where possible to outdo it, was a secret spur with all French freethinkers from Voltaire up to Auguste Comte. . . .

Nietzsche begins his discussion of pity, however, in aphorism one-hundred thirty-one, and he does so by contrasting the egoism of ancient morality, as exemplified for example by Epictetus, with the altruistic ideal of modern morality (itself a 'distilled' form of Christian morality). As the title indicates (*Fashions in morality.*), what is generally considered moral and immoral is always a matter of 'fashion' and thereby not only something somewhat superficial but also something related to beauty and ultimately to *taste*, which differs from place to place at any given time and likewise differs over time in a single place (and even in a single society taste will differ amongst particular persons). Aphorism one-hundred thirty-one is as follows (cf. aphorism 546):

Fashions in morality.— How the overall moral judgments have shifted! The great men of antique morality, Epictetus for instance, knew nothing of the now normal glorification of thinking of others, of living for others; in the light of our moral fashion they would have to be called downright immoral, for they strove with all their might *for their ego* and *against* feeling with others (that is to say, with the sufferings and moral frailties of others). Perhaps they would reply to us: "If you are so boring or ugly an object to yourself, by all means think of others more than of yourself! It is right you should!"

Modern taste, according to Nietzsche, values pity, values above all those who are helpful, those who alleviate the suffering of others, such as Mother Theresa, for example. And yet, according to Nietzsche those who practice love and pity, so far from acting selflessly, act out of the *lust for power*: they want -- even and *especially* such a one as Mother Theresa -- to possess or conquer those whom they love and pity, to subdue and kill them in their independent being. We can begin here with aphorism one-hundred ninety-two of *The Joyous Science*:

The good natured. – What is the difference between those good-natured people whose faces

radiate good will, and other people? They are cheered by the sight of another person and quickly fall in love with him; therefore they are well disposed toward him, and their first judgment is: "I like him." What distinguishes these people is a rapid succession of the following states: the wish to appropriate (they do not scruple over the worth of the other person), quick appropriation, delight in their new possession, and action for the benefit of their latest conquest.

Indeed, aphorism three-hundred eighty-six of *Daybreak* shows that not only the one pitying seeks power, even the person who seeks to be pitied seeks power over the one pitying, for to be able to inflict suffering on another is to have a kind of power over them.

Above all here we should see a portion of aphorism fifty in *On the History of the Moral Sensations*:

... Observe how children weep and cry, *so that* they will be pitied, how they wait for the moment when their condition will be noticed. Or live among the ill and depressed, and question whether their eloquent laments and whimpering, the spectacle of their misfortune, is not basically aimed at *hurting* those present. The pity that the spectators then express consoles the weak and suffering, inasmuch as they see that, despite all their weakness, they still have at least *one power*: the *power to hurt*. In this feeling of superiority of which the manifestation of pity makes him conscious, the unfortunate man gains a sort of pleasure; in the conceit of his imagination he is still of sufficient importance to cause affliction in the world. Thus the thirst for pity is a thirst for self-enjoyment, and at the expense of one's fellow men. It reveals man in the whole ruthlessness of his most intimate dear self, but not precisely in his "stupidity," as La Rochefoucauld thinks.

These things said, however, the pitied is always, as pitied, inferior on Nietzsche's understanding (as it is with common sense) to the one pitying as pitying. For this we can see aphorism one-hundred thirty-eight of *Daybreak* (cf. aphorism 135):

... even in the most favourable case, there is something degrading in suffering and something elevating and productive of superiority in pitying – which separates these two sensations from one another to all eternity.

For more on this aspect of wanting power and possession, however, we can look to aphorisms thirteen and fourteen of *The Joyous Science*:

On the doctrine of the feeling of power.— Benefiting and hurting others are ways of exercising one's power upon others—that is all one desires in such cases! One *hurts* those whom one wants to feel one's power; for pain is a much more efficient means to that end than pleasure:—pain always raises the question about its origin while pleasure is inclined to stop with itself without looking back. We *benefit* and show benevolence to those who are already dependent on us in some way (which means that they are used to thinking of us as causes); we want to increase their power because in that way we increase ours, or we want to show them how advantageous it is to be in our power—that way they will become more satisfied with their condition and more hostile to and willing to fight against the enemies of *our* power. Whether benefiting or hurting others involves sacrifices for us does not affect the ultimate value of our actions; even if we offer our lives, as

martyrs do for their church, this is a sacrifice that is offered for *our* desire for power or for the purpose of preserving our feeling of power. Those who feel "I possess Truth"—how many possessions would they not abandon in order to save this feeling! What would they not throw overboard to stay "on top"—which means, *above* the others who lack "the Truth"! . . .

The things people call love.— . . . Our love of our neighbor—is it not a desire for new possessions? And likewise our love of knowledge, truth, and altogether any desire for what is new? Gradually we become tired of the old, of what we safely possess, and we stretch out our hands again; . . . Our pleasure in ourselves tries to maintain itself by again and again changing something new *into ourselves*,—that is what possession means. . . . When we see somebody suffer, we like to exploit this opportunity to take possession of him; those who become his benefactors and pity him, for example, do this and call the lust for a new possession that he awakens in them "love"; and the pleasure they feel is comparable to that aroused by the prospect of a new conquest. Sexual love betrays itself most clearly as a desire for possession: the lover wants unconditional and sole possession of the person for whom he longs, he wants equally unconditional power over the soul and over the body of the beloved; he alone wants to be loved and desires to live and rule in the other soul as supreme and supremely desirable.

We see from the above that Nietzsche's arguments are chiefly *experiential*. That is, Nietzsche's arguments are not logical, he does not dissect the concept of pity as a *concept*; rather, he dissects the lived experience of feeling pity and holds our opinions concerning that experience (above all, our opinion that it is a selfless experience) up to that light. When understood *essentially* one sees that Nietzsche's response to the moral and religious man is *not* merely to trip them up with dialectics, nor to merely counter their claims with alternative claims of his own, but rather, he simply says: "You do not know yourself very well, you have not looked at yourself very long or very critically, and so as a consequence you have all sorts of erroneous opinions about yourself, which opinions reinforce and are reinforced in turn by certain feelings, above all feelings of elevation (enthusiasm) and degradation (lawlessness or injustice, for the Christian, sinfulness). Worst of all, you lack the *will* to any serious self-reflection, and this above all because you lack the will to honesty that is the will to justice. I deny, Mr. 'Moral and Religious', that you really love justice and even that you know what it is, that you really

long to give to each thing what is appropriate to it, and you would deny it yourself were you to look better at yourself.”

Let us look some more, then, at Nietzsche’s treatment of pity in this light, beginning with aphorism one-hundred thirty-three. As we shall see, Nietzsche’s comments, which I shall often quote at length, are so straight forward that little to no commentary on their claims is required. Aphorism one-hundred thirty-three is as follows:

*‘No longer to think of oneself’. — Let us reflect seriously upon this question: why do we leap after someone who has fallen into the water in front of us, even though we feel no kind of affection for him? Out of pity: at that moment we are thinking only of the other person—thus says thoughtlessness. Why do we feel pain and discomfort in common with someone spitting blood, though we may be ill-disposed towards him? Out of pity: at that moment we are not thinking of ourself—thus says the same thoughtlessness. The truth is: in the feeling of pity—I mean in that which is usually and misleadingly called pity—we are, to be sure, not consciously thinking of ourself but are doing so *very strongly unconsciously*; as when, if our foot slips—an act of which we are not immediately conscious—we perform the most purposive counter-motions and in doing so plainly employ our whole reasoning faculty. An accident which happens to another offends us: it would make us aware of our impotence, and perhaps of our cowardice, if we did not go to assist him. Or it brings with it in itself a diminution of our honour in the eyes of others or in our own eyes. Or an accident and suffering incurred by another constitutes a signpost to some danger to us; and it can have a painful effect upon us simply as a token of human vulnerability and fragility in general. . . . It is misleading to call the *Leid* (suffering) we may experience at such a sight, and which can be of very varying kinds, *Mit-Leid* (pity), for it is under all circumstances a suffering which he who is suffering in our presence is *free* of: it is our own, as the suffering he feels is his own. But it is *only this suffering of our own* which we get rid of when we perform deeds of pity. But we never do anything of this kind out of *one* motive; as surely as we want to free ourselves of suffering by this act, just as surely do we give way to an *impulse to pleasure* with the same act – pleasure arises at the sight of a contrast to the condition we ourselves are in; at the notion that we can help if only we want to; at the thought of the praise and recognition we shall receive if we do help; at the activity of helping itself, insofar as the act is successful and as something achieved step by step in itself gives delight to the performer; especially, however, at the feeling that our action sets a limit to an injustice which arouses our indignation (the discharge of one’s indignation is itself refreshing). All of this, and other, much more subtle things in addition, constitute ‘pity’: how coarsely does language assault with its one word so polyphonous a being! – That pity, on the other hand, is the *same kind of thing* as the suffering at the sight of which it arises, or that it possesses an especially subtle, penetrating understanding of suffering, are propositions contradicted by *experience*, and he who glorifies pity precisely on account of these two qualities *lacks* adequate experience in this very realm of the moral.*

Let us move now from an emphasis on what is selfish or egoistic in pity to an emphasis on what is downright *indecent* about pity, or rather about the manner in which it is usually experienced. Indeed, anyone who has not felt from their own experience how

superficial, affected, self-indulgently gratifying, and belittling one's own and other's pity usually is has not looked too keenly at either. We can begin with aphorism 224 of

Daybreak:

What is 'elevating' in our neighbour's misfortune. – He has experienced a misfortune, and now the 'compassionate' come along and depict his misfortune for him in detail – at length they go away content and elevated: they have gloated over the unfortunate man's distress and over their own and passed a pleasant afternoon.

We can also look here at aphorism 383 (cf. aphorism 142):

The comedy of pity. – However much we may sympathize with an unfortunate, in his presence we always play a little comedy: much that we think and the way we think it we do not say, like a physician at the bedside of a serious invalid.

Perhaps the most penetrating, straightforward, and far reaching aphorism on pity that occurs in Nietzsche's writings is in *The Joyous Science*, namely, aphorism three-hundred thirty-eight, where Nietzsche asks two questions: Is it good for oneself to be above all full of pity? And is it good for others that we above all pity them? Nietzsche addresses the second question first, and argues that there are at least three ways in which it is *not* good for one to be pitied. In the first place, our suffering is always insultingly interpreted by other in the most shallow way, for, "it belongs to the nature of the emotion of pity to divest unfamiliar suffering of its properly personal character - our 'benefactors' are, more than our enemies, people who make our worth and will smaller." Secondly, any genuine help we might receive must be suited to the unique conditions of our personal distress. Yet, those given to pity give no thought to our unique situation and its unique remedy (assuming there is any remedy at all): "The 'religion of pity' (or 'the heart') commands them help, and he thinks he has helped best when he has helped most quickly." Thirdly, pity, the quick inclination to help wherever suffering is found, is blind to the *goodness* of suffering, to the fact that, "to speak mystically, the path to one's own

heaven always leads through the voluptuousness of one's own hell." It is blind to this because behind the modern religion of pity is a "religion of comfortableness," a lazy, slothful, and to Nietzsche's mind despicable religion. When we leap to the "help" of another, we deprive them of the opportunity, however painful the lesson, of learning to strengthen and thereby help themselves. Rather than coddle those we care for to their own weakening, we ought to employ once again the divine cannibalism by which we are able to *let* another person suffer, to watch them suffer, for according to Nietzsche, this too belongs to greatness.

That said, what would it really mean to help somebody in Nietzsche's thought? We get the answer in aphorism one-hundred seventy-four of *Daybreak*:

Moral fashion of a commercial society. – Behind the basic principle of the current moral fashion: 'moral actions are actions performed out of sympathy for others', I see the social effect of timidity hiding behind an intellectual mask: it desires, first and foremost, that *all the dangers* which life once held should be removed from it, and that *everyone* should assist in this with all his might: hence only those actions which tend toward the common security and society's sense of security are to be accorded the predicate 'good'. – How little pleasure men must nowadays take in themselves when such a tyranny of timidity prescribes to them their supreme moral law, when they so uncontradictingly allow themselves to be ordered to look away from themselves but to have lynx eyes for all the distress and suffering that exists elsewhere! Are we not, with this tremendous objective of obliterating all the sharp edges of life, well on the way to turning mankind into *sand*? Sand! Small, soft, round, unending sand! Is that your ideal, you heralds of the sympathetic affections? – In the meantime, the question itself remains unanswered whether one is of *more use* to another by leaping to his side and *helping* him – which help can in any case only be superficial where it does not become a tyrannical seizing and transforming – or by *creating* something out of oneself that the other can behold with pleasure: a beautiful, restful, self-enclosed garden perhaps, with high walls against storms and the dust of a roadway but also a hospitable gate.

To truly help someone would be a tyrannical seizing and transforming. Above all, this seizing and transforming would consist of education, and not one that fills one's head with impersonal concepts and knowables, but an education in self-seriousness, an education towards *independence* (i.e. towards not requiring help), towards genuine *individuality*, an education that teaches one to conserve oneself and not to flee one's very self in tossing oneself away in the attempt to "help others," so that one day the learner

may be rich enough in *himself* to give himself away, an education for the purpose of living best, an education towards a philosophy of life and above all directed at one's own life (cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 194 and 196).

For more on this, we can return to Nietzsche's second question in aphorism three-hundred thirty-eight of *The Joyous Science*: is it good for one to be above all full of pity? Nietzsche does not believe so, and above all because in looking to the needs of others we neglect our own needs and thus *lose our own way*. Nietzsche's argument is to the effect that the innermost conscience of every human being (not the conventionally constructed "conscience" of the herd that pretends to be a god in your ear), calls out to them, telling them to become what they are, to be their 'true selves,' to actualize their destiny and the highest task of their nature, namely, to be a genuine individual, which means to be the creator of one's own ideals, one's own tablet of "good and evil," tablets that address one's *true needs*. According to Nietzsche, answering the call of this conscience is exceedingly hard, even for the very best of men (such as himself): "for our 'own way' is a thing too hard and insistent, and too far removed from the love and gratitude of others, and we do not really mind escaping from it – and from our very own conscience —to flee into the conscience of the others and take refuge in the lovely temple of the 'religion of pity.'"

For this reason, according to Nietzsche whenever a war breaks out precisely the most gifted people will "rush with rapture to meet the new danger of *death*, because they believe that in the sacrifice for their country they have finally been offered that long-sought-for permission—to *dodge their goal*; war is for them a detour to suicide, a detour, however, with a good conscience." Of course, Nietzsche does not want to be too critical or offensive concerning the psychological vivisection of war-heroes or martyrs, since

they are terribly needed and cherished by those they die defending everywhere and always, but he does want to be clear about the character of genuine help – authentic concern, in Heidegger’s analysis – which he speaks of as follows:

And although silent here about some things, I will not, however, be silent about my morality, which says to me: Live in concealment in order that thou *can* live for yourself. Live ignorant of that which seems to your age to be most important! Put at least the skin of three centuries between yourself and the present day! And the clamor of the present day, the noise of wars and revolutions, ought to be a murmur to you! You will also wish to help—but only those whose distress you *understand* entirely because they share with you one suffering and one hope—your friends – and only in the manner that you help yourself. I want to make them bolder, more persevering, simpler, more joyous. I want to teach them what is understood by so few today, least of all by these preachers of pity: to share not suffering but joy.

At this point, however, a problem seems to have emerged. In pitying, Nietzsche says, we lose our own way; we are not selfish enough but rather neglect ourselves for others: we act selflessly, it seems. And yet according to Nietzsche’s whole account the pitying man is *not* selfless but selfish. So which is it? This problem can be resolved when one understands that when Nietzsche claims that moral actions make us lose our way he does *not* mean that with moral actions we act *selflessly*, rather, he means to say that we lose our true way, neglect the *true* need of our ego, in favor – selfishly in favor – of a false or conventionally demanded way that attends to the false or conventionally delegated needs of a false or imaginary herd-ego -- complete with its own conscience -- intoxicated with the illusion of its own “noble selflessness,” and so much so that it rushes lovingly to the sufferings of others and even and especially into the throes of death so as to avoid the true self and its cry for tending. For more on this we must look to aphorism one-hundred and five of *Daybreak*:

Pseudo-egoism. – Whatever they may like to think and say about their ‘egoism’, the great majority nonetheless do nothing for their ego their whole life long: what they do is done for the phantom of their ego which has formed itself in the heads of those around them and has been communicated to them; - as a consequence they all of them dwell in a fog of impersonal, semi-personal opinions, and arbitrary, as it were poetical evaluations, the one for ever in the head of someone else, and the head

of this someone else again in the heads of others: a strange world of phantasms – which at the same time knows how to put on so sober an appearance! This fog of habits and opinions lives and grows almost independently of the people it envelops; it is in this fog that there lies the tremendous effect of general judgments about ‘man’ – all these people, unknown to themselves, believe in the bloodless abstraction ‘man’, that is to say, in a fiction; and every alteration effected to this abstraction by the judgments of individual powerful figures (such as princes and philosophers) produces an extraordinary and grossly disproportionate effect on the great majority – all because no individual among this majority is capable of setting up a real ego, accessible to him and fathomed by him, in opposition to the general pale fiction and thereby annihilating it.

Strange thing, then, this polyphonous thing we cherish so highly and call pity: judged by “worldly” standards it is not only unenlightened and, in part, vain, but it is good neither for the one pitying nor the one pitied¹¹⁰. Judged by “superworldly” standards, it is far, very far from being selfless. And though man’s pity for his fellow men may be a touching and even bitter-sweet sentiment in a world that is not sentimental, all the same according to Nietzsche it is, upon examination, an entirely inadequate ground for moral admiration and even its encouragement should be circumscribed by the higher needs of individuals and the community at large.

The Songs of Souls

How, then, did the idea of pity or of ‘loving the neighbor’ come to be so thoughtlessly revered? Nietzsche might ask the same question about “love”, about devotion to the “common good” (i.e., the good of the whole minus its victims, or, as Nietzsche indicates in aphorism 146, the sacrificing of some citizens to others, “‘for the sake of the general interest’ as they put it.”), about “sacrifice”, and still other and related notions or ideas at the heart of morality, for all these ideas have been promoted with as much

¹¹⁰ Of course, nothing is unconditionally good or bad, but that said, *on balance* there is, on Nietzsche’s account, more harm in these psychological states than good.

thoughtlessness as enthusiasm. Indeed, according to Nietzsche they have been thoughtlessly accepted and promoted *because* they are attended by *enthusiasm*. We might look here at aphorism four-hundred fifty-six of *Daybreak*:

A virtue in process of becoming. – Such assertions and promises as those of the antique philosophers concerning the unity of virtue and happiness, or the Christian ‘But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you’ has never been made with total honesty and yet always without a bad conscience: one has advanced such propositions, which one very much desires to be true, boldly as the truth in the face of all appearance and has felt in doing so no religious or moral pang of conscience – for one had transcended reality *in honorem majorem* of virtue or of God and without any selfish motive! Many worthy people still stand at this *level of truthfulness*: when they *feel* themselves selfless they think they are permitted to *trouble themselves less* about truth. Notice, however, that *honesty* is among neither the Socratic nor the Christian virtues: it is the youngest virtue, still very immature, still often misjudged and taken for something else, still hardly aware of itself – something in process of becoming which we can advance or obstruct as we think fit.

Indeed, this dishonesty, this overlooking of even the serious need to be honest when one believes oneself to be speaking and acting “*in honorem majorem*” (“for the greater glory”) of God, reaches its lowest level when one is advancing or defending an idea against others, as was the case with the early Christians in their attempt to usurp the Old Testament, the book of divine *Justice*, from the Jews and to read in it only Christian teachings, “[f]or they were conducting a *war* and paid more heed to their opponents than to the need to stay honest” (aphorism 84). We can also look here at aphorisms 511 (cf. aphorism 557):

The temptress. – Honesty is the great temptress of all fanatics. That which seemed to approach Luther in the shape of the Devil or a beautiful woman, and which he warded off in so uncouth a manner, was no doubt honesty, and perhaps, in rarer cases, even truth.

Now, rather than focusing here on the question of honest and dishonesty, let us first attempt to understand how, on Nietzsche’s account, it comes to happen that one not only overlooks but often fails entirely to notice how impoverished their moral thinking is and in particular how thoughtless the essential tenets of moral thinking are. To go further, we not only fail to see their manifest impoverishment, but often believe the exact opposite,

namely, that their soundness and goodness is self-evident (cf. aphorism two-hundred fifty-three of *Daybreak*). The essential reason for this is that these notions are attended by feelings of inspiration, but to understand this better we should look to aphorism two-hundred fifty-five of *Daybreak* and Nietzsche's ever-so-subtle analysis of a certain kind of music.

However, before commenting on this aphorism titled *Conversation about music*, let us first establish that in this “conversation about music” Nietzsche is talking about much more than instrumental music: he is talking about the music of the soul. Recall aphorism one-hundred of *Daybreak*.¹¹¹

Awakening from a dream. – Wise and noble men once believed in the music of the spheres: wise and noble men still believe in the ‘moral significance of existence’. But one day this music of the spheres too will no longer be audible to them! They will awaken and perceive that their ears had been dreaming.

Indeed, the fact that Nietzsche is talking about the soul and its moral-theological orientation is made even clearer in aphorism four-hundred sixty-one, which also indicates with its reference to Aesop’s fable *The Braggart* ¹¹², that the time for music to prove itself capable of its highest task was not before nor later, but *now*:

Hic Rhodus, hic salta [“Rhodes is here, here is where you jump!”]. – Our music, which can transform itself into everything and has to transform itself because, like the daemon of the sea, it has in itself no character: in the past this music followed the *Christian scholar* and was able to translate his ideal into sounds; why should it not in the end discover that brighter, more joyful and universal sound which corresponds to the *ideal thinker*? – a music which knows how to *be at home* only floating up and down among the broad soaring vaulted arches of *his soul*? – Our music has hitherto been so great, so good: nothing has been impossible to it! So let it show that it is possible to feel these three things at the same time: sublimity, deep and warm illumination, and the joy of perfect consistency.

We can now look at the lengthy aphorism two-hundred fifty-five to see an example

¹¹¹ One might also see aphorism 250 of *Daybreak* with the relevant portion of aphorism 230 of *The Will to Power*.

¹¹² In this fable an athlete brags of a tremendous jump he performed at Rhodes, adding that he can produce witnesses, and receives the reply that is the title of the aphorism; i.e., there is no need to produce witnesses: if you really can perform this feat, do so *now*.

of how Nietzsche applies his eye to music and musicians (cf. aphorism 223):

Conversation about music. – A: What have you to say about this music? – It has overcome me, I have nothing at all to say about it. Listen! They are playing it again! – A: So much the better! Let us see to it that this time *we* overcome *it*. May I say a few words about this music? And may I also show you a drama which you may not have noticed at first hearing? – B: Very well! I have two ears, and more if need be. Come up close to me! – A: What we hear now is not yet what *he* wants to say to us: up to now he has only been promising that he will say something and, as by these gestures he intends to indicate, something unheard-of. For they are gestures. How he beckons! Draws himself up! Throws out his arms! And now he seems to have reached the supreme moment of tension: two more fanfares and he introduces his theme, splendid and adorned, as though jingling with precious stones. Is it a beautiful woman? Or a beautiful horse? Enough: he looks around him in delight, for his task is to assemble delighted looks – only now is he wholly satisfied with his theme, only now does he become inventive, venture on bold and novel strokes. How he expands this theme! Ah! Pay attention – he knows not only how to decorate it but also how to *colour* it! Yes, he knows what colour health is, he understands how to make it appear – he is more subtle in his self-knowledge than I thought. And now he is convinced that he has convinced his hearers, he presents his ideas as though they were the most important things under the sun, he points shamelessly at his theme as though it were too good for this world. – Ha, how mistrustful he is! He is afraid we might get tired! So now he showers his melodies with sugar – now he appeals even to our coarser senses so as to excite us and thus again get us into his power. Hear how he conjures up the elemental forces of stormy and thunderous rhythms! And now, when he has seen that these forces have seized hold of us, throttled and almost crushed us, he ventures to introduce his theme into this play of the elements and to *convince* us, half-stupefied and shattered as we are, that our stupefaction and convulsion are the effect of his miraculous theme. And thenceforth his hearers believe it is so: as soon as they hear the theme there arises within them a recollection of that shattering elemental effect – this recollection then benefits the theme, it has now become ‘daimonic’! How well he understands the soul! He rules over us with the arts of a demagogue! -- But the music has stopped! – B: And just as well! For I can no longer endure to listen to *you*! O would ten times rather *let myself be deceived* than *once* know the truth after you fashion! – A: This is what I wanted to hear from you. As you are, so are even the best nowadays: you are content to let yourselves be deceived! You come with coarse and lustful ears, you no longer bring the conscience of the art of hearing with you, on the way here you have thrown away the *finest part of your honesty*! And by doing this you ruin art and artists! Whenever you cheer and clap you have the artists’ conscience in your hands – alas if they notice you are incapable of distinguishing between innocent music and guilty music! I do not mean between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ music – both species include both good and bad music. What I mean by *innocent music* is music which thinks believes in itself and thinks wholly and solely of itself and has forgotten the world – the self-resounding of the profoundest solitude, which speaks to itself of itself and no longer knows that outside there are hearers and listeners and effects and failures. – Finally: the music we have just heard *is* of this noble and rare species, and everything I said about it was lyingly invented – forgive me my wickedness, if you feel inclined to do so! – B: Oh, then you love *this* music too? Then many sins are forgiven you!

Guilty music is music within the horizon of good and evil; that is, music that translates moral ideals into sounds. Innocent music is beyond good and evil. For this we can look at aphorism two-hundred fifty-five of *Beyond Good and Evil* (end):

I could imagine a music whose rarest magic would consist in this, that it no longer knew anything of good and evil, except that perhaps some sailor’s homesickness, some golden shadow and delicate weakness would now and then flit across it: an art that would see fleeing towards it from a great

distance the colors of a setting, now almost incomprehensible *moral* world, and would be hospitable and deep enough to receive such late fugitives. – ¹¹³

In light of all this we must ask why Nietzsche – who’s great claim was to be beyond good and evil – tells the auditor in aphorism two-hundred fifty-five of *Daybreak* that the music have been listening to “*is* of this noble and rare species” (i.e., that it *is* innocent music) and that everything he said about it was “lyingly invented”, thus allowing the man to infer that he loves this music too? In order to understand his irony here we must bear in mind Nietzsche’s teaching that good and evil are *not* psychological or metaphysical realities but rather imaginations of the intellect, and that the *true* virtues of a man, the virtues that lie concealed behind his so-called “virtues,” are loving, creating, life-affirming or Yes-saying and innocent virtues that moral men do not know of and ultimately *no* man can *know* of. As Nietzsche says in aphorism two-hundred forty-nine of *Beyond Good and Evil*:

Every people has its own tartuffery and calls it its virtues. – What is best in us we do not know—we cannot know.

Nietzsche *does* love “guilty” music as well, for from the heights of his understanding and the depths of his love – and ultimately, ascent in the soul cannot be thought separate from descent – he grasps or rather glimpses something of its true innocence as well as its true value and beauty, for his soul is “hospitable and deep enough to receive such late fugitives.”

¹¹³ One could also look here at *The Joyous Science* aphorism 106, bearing in mind that a disciple is a seedling that is tended by the innovator but also that a new doctrine, thought, or idea is itself when first thought a seedling of the thinker who thinks it, thus indicating Nietzsche’s relation to himself and his relation to his best young readers, whom he teaches to take possession of themselves and to be their own best enemy as they grow to maturity and *make their own way*, as well indicating the relation of the thinker – when young and then differently with full maturity – to truth.

Continuing with an analysis of aphorism two-hundred fifty-five, let us see what tricks the composer employs in order to make his everyday idea seem divine or daimonic. The composer begins not by saying anything but by *gesturing* that he will say something, and that something *unheard of*. The composer, then, is a kind of innovator or originator (cf. *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 353 and 85). These gestures, which involve beckoning forth, drawing up, and throwing of arms, clearly indicate the arousal of passion, and as Nietzsche says in aphorism one-hundred and six of *Beyond Good and Evil*: “In music the passions enjoy themselves”. We might also look here at aphorism one-hundred forty-one of *Daybreak* where Nietzsche warns against according Christian morality a higher rank than Ancient (especially stoic) morality, for it comes at the cost of rationality and is thus a return to a coarser, less intellectual, or more bestial phase of animality.

More beautiful but less valuable. – Picturesque morality: this is the morality of steeply ascending emotions, of abrupt transitions, of pathetic, importunate, fearsome, solemn sounds and gestures. It is the semi-savage stage of morality: one must not let its aesthetic charm lure one into according it a higher rank.

After gesturing in the aforementioned manner the composer goes on to *decorate* his theme. What does he decorate it with? He decorates it with the splendor of *morality*, which Nietzsche refers to as “precious stones” (aphorism 255). Here we should look to aphorism 277 of *Daybreak*:

Hot and cold virtues. – Courage as cold valorousness and intrepidity, and courage as hotheaded, half-blind bravery – both are called by the same name! Yet how different from one another are the *cold virtues* and the *hot*! And he would be a fool who believed that ‘being good’ happens only when heat is applied: and no less a fool he who wanted to ascribe it only to coldness! The truth is that mankind has found hot and cold courage very useful and, moreover, of sufficient rarity to count it in both colours as among the precious stones.

Now, upon decorating his theme the composer goes on to *color* it: he paints the appearance of health. Indeed his self-knowledge is such that he knows what colors constitute psychic health (and to know merely the color is a somewhat superficial and

quite deficient knowledge), and he uses this knowledge to make health *appear*, that is, (merely appear). With this art a sick man (for example, the Christian or, in general, the moral man) can be made to appear as the healthiest of men. At this point, being convinced that his listeners are convinced, the composer begins to point to his theme as a supernatural or divine theme. But being “mistrustful” (aphorism 255; cf. aphorism 216), the composer must *sweeten* his melodies with more beauty and joviality so as to be certain of our being convinced (and also, so as to be fully convinced himself, somewhat like the rhetorician who cannot help but believe in his own best contrivances—his half-acknowledged sophistry and moral mumbo-jumbo—because part of himself *wants* to believe in them).

When Nietzsche says here that the composer “showers his melodies with sugar” he surely means to say that he induces pleasure. But that is not all: next he “conjures up the elemental forces of stormy and thunderous rhythms”, which is to say, he makes us fearful of cosmic or rather supernatural forces, thus causing stupefaction and convulsions¹¹⁴. These are *moral* convulsions and this can easily be confirmed by referencing several aphorisms in *Daybreak*, but we must let the following aphorism suffice (545):

*But we do not believe you! – You would dearly like to pass as being well versed in the ways of men, but we shall not let you do so! Do we not notice that you represent yourselves as being more experienced, profounder, more passionate, more complete than you are? Just as well as we feel the presumptuousness of that painter even in the way he wields his brush: just as well as we hear how that composer wants to make his theme appear more elevated than it is by the way he introduces it. Have you experienced *history* in yourselves, convulsions, earthquakes, and sadness wide and protracted, happiness that strikes like lightning? Have you been foolish with fools great and small? Have you really borne the delusion and the burden of good men? And the burden and singular happiness of the most evil as well? If so, speak of morality: but not otherwise!*

¹¹⁴ Recall aphorism six: *The conjurer and his opposite*, and the lesson concerning our long standing historical belief in the efficacy of the will, which delusion, as Nietzsche considers the matter, is inherent to the structure of language. For more on this one should also see the exceedingly penetrating aphorism 84 of *The Joyous Science* on rhythm.

These convulsions inflicted by the composer, as moral convulsions, are interpreted as revelations or inspirations (aphorism 255):

And now, when he has seen that these forces have seized hold of us, throttled and almost crushed us, he ventures to introduce his theme into this play of the elements and to *convince* us, half-stupefied and shattered as we are, that our stupefaction and convulsion are the effect of his miraculous theme. And thenceforth his hearers believe it is so: as soon as they hear the theme there arises within them a recollection of that shattering elemental effect – this recollection then benefits the theme, it has now become ‘daimonic’! How well he understands the soul! He rules over us with the arts of a demagogue! --

Now we must notice the confusion between cause and effect: whereas in truth the moral convulsions are the cause of our believing in the miraculous or revelatory character of the theme (which theme may be, for example, charity or love), we believe the revelatory character of the theme to be responsible for our convulsions. And once an idea is associated with high or elevating feelings (i.e., revelatory feelings), the revelatory experience “*arises*”¹¹⁵ every time we hear the idea. In this manner, unexamined, half-brained ideas like “loving the neighbor” or “sacrifice” or “devotion to the common good”, “pity as the highest virtue,” “love as selflessness,” and so forth come to be seen as the most rational ideas in the world, for being attended by powerful moral *feelings* they are mistaken for revelations from a God “who in this manner gives expression to his reason as the highest rationality” (*Daybreak*, aphorism 28).

The Psychological Mechanics of a Revelation

The preceding provides us with a perfect entry point into the concluding sections of our analysis of *Daybreak* and Nietzsche’s moral-theological investigations. As we

¹¹⁵ The word used here in aphorism 255 for “*arises*”, namely, “*entsteht*”, is as we shall see of the utmost importance inasmuch as it signals Nietzsche’s historical method and the *psychological origin of revelatory experiences*, there swelling up from within as opposed to a supernatural agency that in any way ‘enters’ from ‘outside.’

have just seen, on Nietzsche's understanding the auditor in aphorism two-hundred fifty-five believes that he is receiving a revelation from God *because* of the elevated moral feelings he experiences (though by his own understanding the auditor believes the elevated feelings to be caused by the revealed idea or theme). However, this phenomenon that we have been analyzing has its most important manifestation not in the impressionable masses but rather in the *prophets* or originators of religions. In order to examine the religious originator we shall first treat of him generically from aphorism sixty-two of *Daybreak*, and then look closer at the person of Paul and specifically the conditions for his revelation on the road to Damascus so as to see a particular instantiation of Nietzsche's thesis. Lastly, we shall look at the typical Christian in their experience of the *moral miracle* and *breakthrough of grace*. Aphorism sixty-two is as follows:

On the origin of religions. – How can a person regard his own opinion about things as a revelation? This is the problem of the origin of religions: on each occasion there was a person to hand in whom this phenomenon was possible. The precondition is that he already believed in the fact of revelation. Then, one day, he suddenly acquires *his* new idea, and the happiness engendered by a great hypothesis encompassing the universe and all existence enters his consciousness with such force he does not dare to consider himself the creator of such happiness and ascribes the cause of it, and again the cause of the cause of this new idea to his god: as his god's revelation. How should a man be the originator of such great joy! -- That is the pessimistic doubt which fills him. And other secret levers are at work within him, too: for example, one *strengthens* an opinion in one's own estimation when one feels it to be a revelation, one therewith abolishes its hypothetical nature, one removes it from all criticism, indeed from all doubt, one makes it holy. One thus debases oneself to the status of an organon, to be sure, but our idea, as an idea of god's, will in the end be victorious – the feeling that with this idea one will finally prove the victor gains ascendancy over the feeling of debasement. Another feeling, too, is playing its game in the background. If one exalts *one's offspring* above oneself, and seems to be disregarding one's own worth, this is nonetheless attended by a rejoicing of paternal love and paternal pride which compensates, and more than compensates, for everything.

We note firstly that from the outset Nietzsche's posing of the question presupposes a denial of any theological understanding or interpretation of the phenomenon in question: the originator of a religion regards *his own opinion* as a revelation. Nietzsche seems, then, to disregard the possibility that the human being in

question *has* received a revelation. That said, according to Nietzsche's argument the precondition for this phenomenon is that the originator of a religion himself already believes "in the fact of revelation". Now this may mean that the originator in question already believes in what we may call the *major* form of revelation: visions, audible and unambiguous communication with the divine (or his angels, muses, various underlings and daimonia), revelation of law and of knowledge (especially of the origins or *first things*), prophetic speeches and visions of the future, an overwhelming experience of being seized by an *outside* or external power or will, and so forth. However, "believing in the fact of revelation" may also mean that the originator already believes in what we may call the *minor* form of revelation: God's communication of his Will by way of the conscience, the rapturous experiences that attend good deeds and the pleasant and reassuring sensation of a good conscience generally, the frightful experiences of foreboding punishment for unatoned injustice, the burden of a bad conscience generally, and so forth. In short, the minor form of revelation is God's communication of His Will through moral-knowledge and the psychological realities that attend our obedience or disobedience to that will. But notice this: Nietzsche speaks of the religious originator as believing in the *fact* of revelation, which is subtly different than saying he believes in the *possibility* of revelation. The religious originator positively believes that someone, somewhere, at some time, has *actually had* a revelation from the divine realm. According to this argument a philosopher, then, who did not positively believe in the "fact of revelation" nor the "possibility of revelation" could surely never *have* any form of revelation inasmuch as he does not meet the *conditions* for the possibility of the experience (i.e., the ego-maniacal delusion, on Nietzsche's account).

Nietzsche continues, saying that one day “he suddenly acquires *his* new idea”.

We see that the idea in question has two characteristics: first, its import encompasses the universe and all existence, which is to say, it is an idea encompassing the whole and thus it is a knowledge that constitutes *wisdom*; and, second, the acquiring of this wisdom produces a tremendous happiness or joy unlike any joy previously experienced and so much so is this the case that the originator is positively *frightful* of attributing the idea to himself (he does not “dare” to do so), and this on account of the tremendous hubris or self-glorification that would be involved in doing so.

At this point Nietzsche makes a confusing statement intended to be overlooked by the impatient reader, who is led to conclude only that the religious originator ascribes the cause of both his happiness and his idea to god, as his god’s revelation, without reflecting further as to what might really *cause* the originator’s doing so. The statement is as follows:

Then, one day, he suddenly acquires *his* new idea, and the happiness engendered by a great hypothesis encompassing the universe and all existence enters his consciousness with such force he does not dare to consider himself the creator of such happiness and ascribes the cause of it, and again the cause of the cause of this new idea to his god: as his god’s revelation.

Now, the “it” in “ascribes the cause of it” can only intelligibly refer to the happiness and not the idea or the great hypothesis, for otherwise the sentence would be saying that he ascribes the cause of the idea to God and the cause of the cause of the new idea to God, which would nonsensically mean that he ascribes a cause for the existence of God, namely, God (and even more nonsensically, “gods revelation”). But reading the “it” in “ascribes the cause of it” as “the happiness” does not resolve the confusion, for now we read: he ascribes the cause of his happiness to God and the cause of the cause of the new idea to God: as his god’s revelation. But if God is the cause of the new idea then again

we have a situation in which God is the cause of God, the idea, and the happiness (and can still make no sense of “as his god’s revelation”).

Now, if God is the cause of the cause of the new idea then we have to ask: what is the cause of the new idea? What could the religious originator possibly be thinking when he thinks this way? Perhaps the answer is that he ascribes the cause of the new idea to *himself* and the cause of his own being to God, “as his god’s revelation”. But this “as his god’s revelation” makes the idea senseless, for one may believe one’s being to be caused by god but no one ever believed their being to be caused by “god’s revelation”. And so again we must ask: to what is Nietzsche pointing with this? To see the answer we must recognize that Nietzsche is speaking from the perspective of *his* understanding and not the religious originators when he slips in this ever so baffling ‘second cause’.

“He ascribes the cause of it, and again the cause of the cause of his new idea to his god: as his god’s revelation” means: he ascribes the cause of his happiness to god, as his god’s revelation, and he ascribes the cause of the new idea (which means *in truth*: the preexisting and now mightily fortified and interwoven *moral prejudices* that have been at work all or much or part of his life and certainly in his previous opposition and struggle against the existing order) to his god, as his god’s revelation. In sum, the originator posits the false cause of god’s revelation for the true cause that is his own moral prejudices. This does not mean that the originator, looking back in retrospect, now attributes god’s revelation as the cause of the moral opinions that previously tormented him, but rather that the “new” idea is in fact a twist on many old ideas, especially moral ideas (prejudices), which are *now* deemed unquestionably true as sanctioned by divine inspiration. The originator ascribes the cause of his idea and his happiness to his god, as

his god's revelation, but Nietzsche slips in his 'correction' of this causality by pointing to the pre-existing and powerful belief in the phenomenon of revelation in the form of elevating moral opinions and their ambitious and confused character in the religious innovator: these opinions remain, lurking as it were *behind* the new idea as the true cause of the new idea that brings these opinions themselves to their summit and 'solution,' which idea then engenders the happiness.

The religious originator, Nietzsche indicates, has doubts concerning himself and his revelatory experiences. This is clear from the sentence that follows: "How should a man be the originator of such great joy!—this is the pessimistic doubt which fills him." But notice this: he does not ask how a man should be the originator of such wisdom, but rather of such joy; the religious originator seems to find the primary ground for his belief in his own revelatory experience in the *feeling* produced and not in the wisdom. (Nietzsche himself makes clear that the idea is the cause of the feeling by saying that the happiness is "engendered" by the hypothesis.) And here we should recall the auditor in aphorism 255 and his confusion of cause and effect: the religious originator believes that his joy is the effect of the revelation and finds the proof of the revelatory character of the idea in the joyous feeling that attends it, whereas in truth, according to Nietzsche, it is the joyous feeling that is the cause of his belief or partial belief in the idea as revealed. In short, the originator says: I experienced great rapture because it was a revelation from god; Nietzsche says: you believe you experienced a revelation from god because you experienced great rapture, and that because you believed you glimpsed moral sublimity.

The religious originator, then, suffers from self-doubt with respect to both his wisdom and his happiness, suspecting himself to be the cause of both but insisting, lest he

accuse himself of tremendous immorality, on god's revelation as the cause of both. But these are not his only doubts; as we shall see he also doubts the truth of the idea or hypothesis as well as the *admirableness* of his *relation* to the idea. Nietzsche says: "one *strengthens* an opinion in one's own estimation when one feels it to be a revelation, one therewith abolishes its hypothetical nature, one removes it from all criticism, indeed from all doubt, one makes it holy." Note how, in accordance with our treatment hitherto, the religious originator "feels" the hypotheses to be a revelation. Notice also that the idea is spoken of as a *hypotheses* the hypothetical nature of which is *abolished*: he knows on some level that his new idea is not knowledge nor unquestionably demonstrable. Seen in this light we can understand why Nietzsche emphasizes the word "*strengthens*" in his statement: on its own (i.e., without the attribution of its cause to God) the idea is not on entirely sure footing. But by attributing the idea to God so as to strengthen it or move it from the realm of the hypothetical into the realm of the certain the religious originator surely "debases" himself "to the status of an organon", but he takes solace in the fact that his idea, "as an idea of god's, will in the end be victorious". In what follows Nietzsche indicates (above all in the "finally") that the religious originator has been engaged in a battle with other ideas and their adherents, a battle that, hitherto and to his own frustration, he has been *unable to win*, saying: "the feeling that with this idea one will finally prove the victor gains ascendancy over the feeling of debasement". We have already noted on a previous occasion that victory is always the strongest cure, and here the victory of his idea (through followers) constitutes a kind of cure for his self-doubt¹¹⁶. This provides the first consolation to his doubt concerning the dignity of his status as an organon. The next example Nietzsche provides concerning the secret levers at work in the

¹¹⁶ See aphorism 571; cf. aphorisms 67 and 325; cf. aphorism 22.

soul of the religious originator also provides consolation for his doubt concerning the dignity of his status as organon and is as follows:

Another feeling, too, is playing its game in the background. If one exalts *one's offspring* above oneself, and seems to be disregarding one's own worth, this is nonetheless attended by a rejoicing of paternal love and paternal pride which compensates, and more than compensates, for everything.

Notice that the religious innovator only *seems* to be disregarding his own worth: in truth he is exceedingly concerned with the question of his own worth (cf. aphorism 552).

Leaving aphorism sixty-two and its treatment of the origins of religion in the psychological-history of the souls of the religious originators, we can now look to aphorism sixty-eight, for the two aphorisms scream for comparison, aphorism sixty-eight being a psychological-history of Paul as read from out of his writings in the New Testament. Now, we have already discussed much of aphorism sixty-eight on a prior occasion and so shall not repeat that analysis here. Rather, at this point we shall only take up those aspects of the aphorism that it was inappropriate to comment upon earlier but which can only be fully appreciated now. Aphorism sixty-eight, perhaps the most important aphorism in the book and thus well worth quoting in full, is as follows:

The first Christian. – All the world still believes in the writings of the 'Holy Spirit' or stands in the after-effect of this belief: when one opens the Bible one does so to 'edify' oneself, to discover a signpost of consolation in one's own personal distress, great or small – in short, one reads oneself into and out of it. That it also contains the history of one of the most ambitious and importunate souls, of a mind as superstitious as it was cunning, the history of the apostle Paul – who, apart from a few scholars, knows that? But without this remarkable history, without the storms and confusions of such a mind, of such a soul, there would not be Christianity; we would hardly have heard of a little Jewish sect whose master died on the cross. To be sure: if this history had been understood at the right time, if the writings of Paul had been read, not as the revelations of the 'Holy Spirit', but with a free and honest exercise of one's own spirit and without thinking all the time of our own personal needs – *really read*, that is to say (but for fifteen hundred years there were no such readers) – Christianity would long since have ceased to exist: for these pages of the Jewish Pascal expose the origin of Christianity as thoroughly as the pages of the French Pascal expose its destiny and that by which it will perish. That the ship of Christianity threw overboard a good part of the Jewish ballast, that it went and was able to go among the heathen – that is a consequence of the history of this one man, of a very tormented, very pitiable, very unpleasant man who also found himself unpleasant. He suffered from a fixed idea, or more clearly from a *fixed question* which was always present to him and would never rest: what is the Jewish *law* really concerned with? And, in particular, what is the *fulfillment of this law*? In his youth he had himself wanted to satisfy it, voracious for this highest distinction the Jews were able to conceive –

this people which had taken the fantasy of moral sublimity higher than any other people and which alone achieved the creation of a holy God, together with the idea of sin as an offence against this holiness. Paul had become at once the fanatical defender and chaperone of this God and his law, and was constantly combating and on the watch for transgressors and doubters, harsh and malicious towards them and with the extremest inclination for punishment. And then he discovered in himself that he himself – fiery, sensual, melancholy, malevolent in hatred as he was – *could* not fulfill the law, he discovered indeed what seemed to him the strangest thing of all; that his extravagant lust for power was constantly combating and on the watch for transgressors and goad. Is it really ‘carnality’ which again and again makes him a transgressor? And not rather, as he later suspected, behind it the law itself, which *must* continually prove itself unfulfillable and with irresistible magic lures on to transgression? But at that time he did not yet possess this way out of his difficulty. Many things lay on his conscious – he hints at enmity, murder, sorcery, idolatry, uncleanness, drunkenness and pleasure and debauch – and however much he tried to relieve this conscious, and even more his lust for domination, through the extremest fanaticism in revering and defending the law, there were moments when he said to himself; ‘it is all in vein! The torture of the unfulfilled law cannot be overcome.’ Luther may have felt a similar thing when he wanted in his monastery to become the perfect man of the spiritual ideal; and similarly to Luther, who one day began to hate the spiritual ideal and the Pope and the Saints and the whole clergy with a hatred the more deadly the less he dared to admit it to himself – a similar thing happened to Paul. The law was the cross to which he felt himself nailed: How he hated it! How he had to drag it along! How he sought about for a means of *destroying* it – and no longer to fulfill it! And at last the liberating idea came to him, together with a vision, as was bound to happen in the case of this epileptic: to him, the zealot of the law who was inwardly tired to death of it, there appeared on a lonely road Christ with the light of God shining in his countenance, and Paul heard the words: ‘why persecutest thou *me*?’ What essentially happened then is rather this: his *mind* suddenly became clear: ‘it is *unreasonable*’, he says to himself, ‘to persecute precisely this Christ! For here is the way out, here is perfect revenge, here and nowhere else do I have and hold the *destroyer of the law!*’ Sick with the most tormented pride, at a stroke he feels himself recovered, the moral despair is as if blown away, destroyed – that is to say, *fulfilled*, there on the cross! Hitherto that shameful *death* had counted with him as the principle argument against the ‘Messiahdom’ of which the followers of the new teaching spoke: but what if it were *necessary* for the *abolition* of the law! – the tremendous consequences of this notion, this solution of the riddle, whirl before his eyes, all at once he is the happiest of men – the destiny of the Jews – no, of all mankind – seems to him to be tied to this notion, to this second of his sudden enlightenment, he possesses the idea of ideas, the key of keys, the light of lights; hence forth history revolves around him! From now on he is the teacher of the *destruction of the law!* To die to evil – that means also to die to the law; to exist in the flesh – that means also to exist in the law! To become one with Christ – that means also to become with him the destroyer of the law; to have died with him – that means also to have died to the law! Even if it is still possible to sin, it is no longer possible to sin against the law: ‘I am outside the law.’ ‘If I were now to accept the law again and submit to it I should be making Christ an accomplice of sin’, for the law existed so that sins might be committed, it continually brought sin forth as a sharp juice brings forth a disease; could God could never have resolved on the death of Christ if a fulfillment of the law had been in any way possible without this death; now not only has all guilt been taken away, guilt as such has been destroyed; now the law is dead, now the carnality in which it dwelt is dead – or at least dying constantly away, as though decaying. Yet but a brief time within this decay! – that is the Christian’s lot, before, become one with Christ, he arises with Christ, participates with Christ in divine glory and becomes a ‘son of God’, like Christ. – with that the intoxication of Paul is at its height, and likewise the importunity of his soul – with the idea of becoming one with Christ all shame, all subordination, all bounds are taken from it, and the intractable lust for power reveals itself as an anticipatory reveling in *divine* glories. – This is the *first Christian*, the inventor of Christianity! Before him there were only a few Jewish sectarians.

We see that Paul suffered from all the tell-tale signs of somebody ripe or fertile for a “revelatory experience”: self-doubt, self-hatred, extreme moral torment, opposition to the existing law to which he is unable to accommodate himself, obscene arrogance, outrageous lust for power, and epilepsy (i.e., a pre-disposition for frantic and uncontrollable outbursts stemming from conflicting physiological forces). Moreover, in perfect keeping with our analysis of aphorism sixty-two (*On the origins of religions*), notice the content of Paul’s “vision”:¹¹⁷ Traveling on the lonely road from Palestine to Damascus for the purpose of persecuting a small and politically pernicious Jewish sect whose master had been crucified, Paul sees Jesus “with the light of God shining in his countenance” and hears the words “why persecutest thou me?” – What do these words *mean*? This Paul infers on his own, for he did not also claim to hear a subsequent interpretation of these words. Paul, then, goes on to interpret the words *on his own* and from his interpretation the whole of “Christianity” was born. Like the religious originator in aphorism sixty-two whose great hypothesis concerning the universe and all existence engenders an incredible happiness, Paul’s revelatory experience is in the first instance the product of a *cognitive* experience: “what essentially happened”, according to Nietzsche, “is rather this: his *mind* suddenly became clear” (aphorism 68). As Nietzsche continues, we see that Paul considered his new idea to be exceedingly rational (and this sudden judgment *must*, it would seem, be based on presuppositions): “‘it is *unreasonable*,’ he says to himself, ‘to persecute precisely this Christ! For here is the way out, here is perfect revenge, here and nowhere else do I have and hold the *destroyer of the law!*’” Nietzsche tells us what Paul *essentially* thought, what thoughts lurked as it were *behind*

¹¹⁷ Aphorism 68; as aphorism 66, *Capacity for visions*, argues, a “vision” is in truth merely “a profound mental disturbance”.

his thoughts, not relaying a factual history of the sequence of Paul's conscious thoughts, who surely never dared say to himself that he could now take perfect "revenge" on his God or his God's Holy Law. Through revenge one restores to oneself one's feeling of power, one restores one's *dignity* and fearsomeness, by giving back pain for pain, one delights in the cruelty of inflicting pain (though the willfulness is usually circumscribed by the idea of measure or fittingness), one shows oneself capable of requiting harm, and harms with a good conscience because one harms what is *deserving* of harm, what has willfully and unjustly harmed one. Indeed, one wonders whether there is any essential difference between revenge and conventional punitive justice, and not rather only one of degrees in measuring, revenge being a kind of *wild justice*, (as Francis Bacon said of it). At any rate, by taking revenge against the law Paul thereby accuses the Law, *Torah*, of *injustice*, and he interprets his new idea – which destroys the law in its revenge – as the perfect actualization of *justice*. Thus he accuses the Law in the name of his new idea. But how could the Jewish Paul have believed the Law, which was given by God, to be unjust (and thus immoral)? He certainly could not have believed God to be immoral, and thus needed God to be moral because he needed to believe in God, and he needed to believe in God because in his colossal arrogance he needed to believe in all his own godliness. As a Jew, Paul's torment was surely tremendous when, struggling with the law prior to his revelation, "he did not yet possess this way out of his difficulty." The revelation and its teaching were for Paul in a manner mere means and above all the "means of *destroying*" the law while simultaneously fulfilling his own innermost ambitions.

Next comes the happiness that from the perspective of the religious originator constitutes the *effect* of the revelation and the primary *proof* of the vision's being genuinely revelatory:

“the tremendous consequences of this notion, this solution of the riddle, whirl before his eyes, all at once he is the happiest of men – the destiny of the Jews – no, of all mankind – seems to him to be tied to this notion, to this second of his sudden enlightenment, he possesses the idea of ideas, the key of keys, the light of lights; hence forth history revolves around him!

In this manner Paul came to “regard his own opinion about things as a revelation” (aphorism sixty-two), just as we saw described in aphorism sixty-two (*On the origin of religions*). For more confirmation of this entire analysis we can look here to *The Will to Power*, aphorism one-hundred seventy-one:

Toward a psychology of Paul. – The given facet is the death of Jesus. This has to be explained—That an explanation may be true or false has never entered the minds of such people as these: one day a sublime possibility comes into their heads: “this death *could* mean such and such! A hypothesis is proved true by the sublime impetus it imparts to its originator –

“The proof of power”: i.e., an idea is proved true by its effect—(“by their fruits” as the Bible naively says); what inspires must be true—that for which one sheds one's blood must be true –

Here, the sudden feeling of power that an idea arouses in its originator is everywhere accounted proof of its value: – and since one knows no way of honoring an idea other than by calling it true, the first predicate with which it is honored is the predicate “true” – How otherwise could it be so effective? It was imagined by some power: if that power were not real, it could not be effective – The idea is understood to have been inspired: the effect that it exercises possesses something of the violence of a daemonic influence—

An idea that such a decadent is unable to resist, to which he completely succumbs, is thus “proved” true! ! !

None of these holy epileptics and seers of visions possessed a thousandth part of that integrity in self-criticism with which a philologist today reads a text or proves the truth of an historical event – Compared with us, they are moral cretins—

Lastly with respect to aphorism sixty-eight of *Daybreak*, we get further confirmation here of our earlier analysis concerning the self-deification of the lover in the beloved and the subsequent consummation of that love through its brother death, complete with the rebirth as that deified self that the lover has been pregnant with all along:

. . . now the law is dead, now the carnality in which it dwelt is dead – or at least dying constantly away, as though decaying. Yet but a brief time within this decay! – that is the Christian's lot,

before, become one with Christ, he arises with Christ, participates with Christ in divine glory and becomes a 'son of God', like Christ. – with that the intoxication of Paul is at its height, and likewise the importunity of his soul – with the idea of becoming one with Christ all shame, all subordination, all bounds are taken from it, and the intractable lust for power reveals itself as an anticipatory reveling in *divine* glories. –

Paul lacked self-knowledge, which is moderation or knowledge of our boundaries or limits (recall aphorisms 48 and 49): thus he misread himself into and out of the world.

We are now ready to look again at aphorism eighty-seven (*The moral miracle*), for there too Nietzsche speaks of moral convulsions, though in this aphorism the great convulsion is from sinfulness (whether as outright wantonness or as striving for virtue) to fulfilled morality or blessedness as redemption. Moreover, whereas we have seen Nietzsche's analysis of the mechanics of a revelation as concerns religious originators, in *The Moral Miracle* we see Nietzsche apply his diagnosis to the *ordinary Christian* in the manner of the most accessible form of revelation: the breakthrough of grace. But in order to best appreciate that aphorism in the face of its *seemingly* merely mocking analysis of the Christian recipient of grace as psychologically ill, we should recall aphorism fourteen (*Significance of madness in the history of morality*). There, Nietzsche says that "almost everywhere" (and we must not fail to notice the *almost*) it was madness that prepared the way for a new idea that broke the spell of a venerated usage and superstition, asking:

Do you understand why it had been madness which did this? Something in voice and bearing as uncanny and incalculable as the demonic moods of the weather and the sea and therefore worthy of a similar awe and observation? Something that bore so visibly the sign of total unfreedom as the convulsions and froth of the epileptic, that seemed to mark the madman as the mask and speaking-trumpet of a divinity? Something that awoke in the bearer of a new idea himself reverence for and dread of himself and no longer pangs of conscience and drove him to become the prophet and martyr of his idea? – while it is constantly suggested to us today that, instead of a grain of salt, a grain of the spice of madness is joined to genius, all earlier people found it much more likely that wherever there is madness there is also a grain of genius and wisdom – something 'divine', as one whispered to oneself.

The madman and epileptic appeared to ancient peoples as though they had been infused with and taken over by an external force (i.e., a god or spirit) when in fact they are only *internally* overwhelmed by their own physical sickness. The parallel in the psycho-religious domain is the prophet whose criminality in the face of the existing order plagues him with pangs of conscience (caused internally by his own erroneous opinions) but who, upon having his health seemingly restored by a new idea and a new set of moral opinions (based now on more or less *new* but still internal and erroneous reasonings), interprets that seeming restoration of health as an infusion of a god. Another parallel to the madman and epileptic in this domain is the Christian who experiences the moral miracle or breakthrough of grace. Fundamentally or *essentially*, the Christian in his psychological illness is no different than the epileptic or the mentally ill of all stripes: internal conflict, whether physical or psychological-moral, is the cause of the outward and evident phenomenon observed. We can now look at aphorism eighty-seven:

The moral miracle. – In the sphere of morality, Christianity knows only the miracle: the sudden change in all value-judgments, the sudden abandonment of all customary modes of behavior, the sudden abandonment of all customary modes of behaviour, the sudden irresistible inclination for new persons and objects. I conceive this phenomenon to be the work of God and call it a rebirth, it accords it a unique, incomparable value: everything else which calls itself morality but has no reference to this miracle thus becomes a matter of indifference to the Christian – indeed, inasmuch as it involves a feeling of pride and well-being, it may even become an object of fear to him. In the New Testament, the canon of virtue, of the fulfilled law, is set up: but in such a way that it is the canon of *impossible virtue*: those still *striving* after morality are in the face of such a canon to learn to feel themselves ever *more distant* from their goal, they are to *despair* of virtue, and in the end *throw themselves on the bosom* of the merciful – only if it ended in this way could the Christian's moral effort be regarded as possessing any value, with the presupposition therefore that it always remains an unsuccessful, miserable, melancholy *effort*; only thus could it *serve* to bring about that ecstatic moment when he experiences the 'breakthrough of grace' and the moral miracle: -- but this wrestling for morality is not *necessary*, for that miracle not seldom overtakes the sinner when his is as it were leprous with sin: indeed, the leap from the deepest and most all[pervading] sinfulness into its opposite even seems to be somewhat easier and, as a more striking *demonstration* of the miracle, also somewhat *more desirable*. – For the rest, *what* such a sudden, irrational and irresistible *reversal*, such an exchange of the profoundest wretchedness for the profoundest wellbeing signifies physiologically (whether it is perhaps a masked epilepsy?) – that must be determined by the psychiatrists, who have indeed plenty of occasion to observe similar 'miracles' (in the form of homicidal mania, for example, or suicide mania). The relatively '*more pleasant consequences*' in the case of the Christian make no essential difference.

The Christian believes the convulsion to be the effect of the miracle though in fact, as with the auditor in aphorism two-hundred fifty-five on music, and as with the religious originator, it is the moral convulsion that causes the belief that a miracle has occurred.

Christian Spiritual States as Circular Folly

We have seen Nietzsche's diagnosis of prophets generally as well as his diagnosis of Saint Paul's revelatory experience and the more common Christian experience of being *reborn in Christ*, but we might ask: what about the lives of the higher persons of the Christian ideal? For these do not base their faith on a single event, but rather on a long, hard, *life lived in faith*. Yet, as one might have imagined, according to Nietzsche these Christians are self-deceived, and he attempts to demonstrate this thesis above all with the person of the *saint*. Being self-deceived, the saint according to Nietzsche undergoes a certain *experience*: he *opines* and *feels* himself to be sinful and likewise to be infused with God's merciful love. The saint experiences the need for redemption and according to Nietzsche the 'logic' of the Christian experience is such that precisely this need contains the means to its own satisfaction. To understand this better we should look to aphorisms one-hundred thirty-two through to one-hundred thirty-five of *The Religious Life*. These aphorisms, as indicated by the discussions themselves as well as by the lack of titles for aphorisms one-hundred thirty-three through to one-hundred thirty-five, form *one argument*. Aphorism one-hundred thirty-two is titled *On the Christian need of redemption*, and begins as follows: "Careful reflection ought to be able to yield an explanation of the occurrence in the soul of a Christian called need of redemption which

is free of mythology: that is to say, a purely psychological explanation.” That explanation is not completed until aphorism one-hundred thirty-five, but the account begins as follows in aphorism one-hundred thirty-two:

Man is conscious of certain actions that rank low in the customary hierarchy of actions; in fact, he discovers within himself a tendency to these kinds of actions, a tendency that seems to him almost as unchangeable as his whole nature. How he would like to try his luck in that other category of actions, those that are generally esteemed to be the topmost and highest; how he would like to feel full of a good consciousness, which is said to follow a selfless way of thinking! But unfortunately it does not go beyond this wish: the dissatisfaction about being unable to satisfy the wish is added to all the other kinds of dissatisfaction that his lot in life generally, or the consequences of those actions, termed evil, have aroused in him. Thus he develops a deep discontent and searches for a doctor who might be able to put an end to this discontent and all its causes.— This condition would not be felt so bitterly if man would only compare himself dispassionately to other men; then he would have no reason to be dissatisfied with himself to any special degree; he would only be sharing the common burden of human dissatisfaction and imperfection. But he compares himself to a being who is solely capable of those actions called selfless and who lives in the continual consciousness of a selfless way of thinking: God. Because he is looking into this bright mirror, his own nature appears so clouded, so abnormally distorted. Next, the thought of this other being makes him fearful, in that it hovers in his imagination as a punishing justice; in every possible experience, large or small, he thinks he recognizes its anger, its menace, and he even thinks he has a presentiment of the whiplashes it will deliver as judge and executioner. Who helps him in this danger, which by its prospect of an immeasurable duration of punishment, surpasses in horror all other terrors of the imagination?

In the next aphorism (133) Nietzsche goes on to ‘demonstrate’ that the Christian only experiences this need of redemption due to intellectual errors. We shall deal with this aphorism shortly, but for now let us see how, given the experience of *needing* redemption, the experience itself brings about the *feeling* of redemption. In a nutshell, the sheer physical and psychical *exhaustion* involved in the excessive excitement of a protracted battle itself brings about, like any exhaustion, a period of pleasurable or blissful rest. This is clear from aphorism one-hundred thirty-four of the same discussion in *The Religious Life*:¹¹⁸

If the Christian has, as we said, come to feel self-contempt through certain errors, through a false, unscientific interpretation of his actions and feelings, he must notice with the greatest astonishment how that condition of contempt, of remorse, of displeasure generally, does not last; how occasionally there are hours when it is all blown away from his soul and he feels free and courageous again. In truth, pleasure in oneself and contentment with one's own strength, in league

¹¹⁸ In order to make the matter still clearer, it is helpful to look to a string of aphorisms contained in *The Will to Power*, specifically, aphorisms 226 through to 232.

with the inevitable weakening of any great excitement, have gained the victory: man loves himself again; he feels it—but this very love, this new self-esteem, seems unbelievable to him; he can see in it only the wholly undeserved downpouring of a merciful light from above. If he previously thought he saw warnings, threats, punishments, and every kind of sign of divine anger in all occurrences, so now he reads divine goodness into his experiences: one event seems to be loving, another seems to be a helpful hint, a third, and particularly his whole joyful mood, seems to be proof that God is merciful. As previously, in a state of discontent, he interpreted his actions wrongly, so now he misinterprets his experiences. He understands his mood as the consoling effect of a power governing outside himself; the love with which he fundamentally loves himself, appears as divine love; that which he calls mercy and a prelude to redemption is in truth self-pardon, self-redemption.

The basic formula of the Christian life is thus clearly as follows: excessive excitement, exhaustion, bliss (rest, sleep, death). The Christian runs through these states in a kind of circular fashion, and the more serious the Christian, the more saintly he is, the more dramatic and powerful the experience of this “*folie circulaire*”. Indeed, only now are we ready to return to an important statement Nietzsche makes in *Daybreak* concerning happiness. In his discussion of the visible *beauty* of the higher Catholic priests, he comments (aphorism 60): “[h]ere the human face attains to that total spiritualization produced by the continual ebb and flow of the two species of happiness (the feeling of power and the feeling of surrender)”. As concerns this feeling of surrender, in order to understand it we should look to aphorism two-hundred seventy-one of *Daybreak*:

The festive mood. – It is to precisely those people who strive most hotly after power that it is indescribably pleasant to feel themselves *overcome*! Suddenly and deeply to sink into a feeling as into a whirlpool! To let the reins be torn from one’s grasp and to look on at a movement going who knows where! Whoever it may be, what ever it may be, that does us this service – it is a great service: we are so happy and breathless and feel around us an exceptional silence as though we were at the midpoint of the earth. For once quite without power! A plaything of primeval forces! There is in this happiness a relation of tension, a throwing-off of the great burden, an effortless falling as though by the pull of gravity. It is the dream of the mountaineer who, though his *goal* may be above him, goes wearily to sleep on his way and dreams of the *happiness of the opposite course* – of effortless falling. –

Now, concerning this feeling of surrender we must indicate that it too brings the feeling of power, for as experienced by the moral-religious such states are considered *inspirational*: one is infused with the divine. We might say that by surrendering one

shares in God's power 'by association.' The saint, then, as the highest exemplar of the Christian life, revels in the feeling of his own power as he tyrannizes himself, with one part of himself actively mastering and another surrendering but without *pleasure* or 'voluntary compliance' (here it is *tyrannized*). But this is exhausting, and eventually exhaustion itself gives way to the blissful and even more pleasurable felt experience of 'redemption.' But how long can one run through this circle without exhausting its possibilities? According to Nietzsche, the Christian life is such that one can never exhaust the possibilities of this *folie circulaire*. In order to explain this, let us begin with aphorism sixty-nine of *Daybreak*:

Inimitable. – There exists a tremendous span and tension *between* envy and friendship, between self-contempt and pride: the Greek dwelt in the former, the Christian in the latter.

As we shall see, the Christian dwells *inescapably* within this span and tension, and precisely this inescapability guarantees that the Christian can have no terminal point, that his *folie circulaire* can go on endlessly.

In order to clarify this matter, let us return briefly to a discussion of Christian love and hate, beginning with aphorism seventy-nine:

A suggestion. – 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!

One allows and accepts that God and other men should love them, love their ego, out of clemency. One does *not* accept that one should love *oneself* out of clemency. Nietzsche asks: if you are capable of loving the undeserving, the deserving of hatred, out of clemency (i.e., the neighbor in its most universal meaning), then why not love yourself,

though you *deserve* hatred, out of clemency? But Pascal and the Christian *will not accept this*. We are surely meant to ask as Nietzsche surely asked: why not? The answer is because the Christian is not *allowed* to do so. Alternatively, one cannot love oneself out of clemency, for it is precisely our love of ourselves that we hold as hateful or sinful, and it is through self-hatred that we hope to be saved out of clemency. For more on this we can look to aphorisms seventy-four and seventy-five of *Daybreak*:

Christian mental reservation. – Should the most common mental reservation of the Christian of the first centuries not have been this: ‘It is better to *convince* oneself of one’s guilt rather than of one’s innocence, for one does not quite know how so *mighty* a judge is disposed – but one has to *fear* that he hopes to find before him none but those conscious of their guilt! Given his great power, he will more easily pardon a guilty person than admit that someone is justified in his presence.’ – This is how poor people felt in the presence of the Roman provincial governor: ‘He is too proud to admit of our innocence’ – how should precisely this sensation not have reasserted itself in the Christian representation of the supreme judge!

Not European and not noble. – There is something Oriental and something feminine in Christianity: it betrays itself in the idea: ‘Whom the Lord loveth he chasteth’; for in the Orient women regard chastisements and the strict seclusion of their person from the world as a sign of their husbands love and complain if this sign is lacking.

The Christian thinks: God may love me (indeed it is more likely that he will love me) if I suffer with guilt and self-hatred for love of him. God chastises us with the terrible burden of guilt, the guilt inherent to our mortal nature, but He does this out of love for those who acknowledge their inescapable guilt as well as His love and glory (as sinless). *Only* when this faith is present does “the gloomy *propylaea* of Christian salvation open up”, with its “promise of a posthumous *second innocence*” (aphorism 321). But before moving on we should notice that the Christian does not claim to *deserve* redemption for their feelings of guilt and despair, they only *hope to receive redemption* on account of their faith. And yet, does it really make a fundamental difference whether one *hopes* to receive good as a consequence of their faith or whether one *demand*s that they receive good as the just reward for their faith? That is, is the man who says, “I make sacrifices so

that I may deserve reward” any more morally disingenuous than the man who says, “I make sacrifices with *the hope* of receiving the greatest goods”? And here every person of conscience must question themselves as follows and with all the honesty of their intellectual conscience: if I were to subtract all hope of eternal blessedness, would I still despise my natural passions and deny myself their satisfaction? Would I still embrace sufferings as a legitimate chastisement? Would I still go out of my way to do the Lord’s work, even at the cost of the greatest *sacrifices*? Do I really do these things from love of God (i.e., because I love God *for God’s sake alone*)? Do I really love good for the sake of the good and hate evil likewise? Or is it all a matter of ego-mania, self-deception, and securing a happiness invulnerable to perishing?

Now, the Christian hates himself for loving himself and loves himself for hating himself (recall *The Religious Life*, aphorism 134: “the love with which fundamentally he loves himself appears as divine love”). What, then, is his relation to his neighbor? Does the Christian love his neighbor? Yes and no: the Christian loves his neighbor to the extent that the neighbor hates himself and hates his neighbor to the extent that the neighbor loves himself (translated into Christian terminology: the Christian loves his fellow man not for their sake but for God’s sake). Nietzsche indicates this in aphorisms sixty-three and eighty of *Daybreak*:

Hatred of one’s neighbor. – Supposing we felt towards another how he feels towards himself – that which Schopenhauer calls sympathy but which would be better designated empathy – then we would have to hate him if, like Pascal, he found himself hateful. And that is probably how Pascal himself felt toward mankind as a whole; as did the earliest Christians, who, under Nero, were, as Tacitus reports, ‘convicted’ of *odium generis humani*.

The compassionate Christian. – The reverse side of Christian compassion for the suffering of ones neighbor is a profound suspicion of all the joy of ones neighbor, of his joy in all that he wants to do and can.

But leaving aside for now the Christians relation to his neighbor, let us look again at the Christians relation to himself, clarifying the manner in which his *folie circulaire* is potentially endless. We have seen how the Christian, according to Nietzsche, alternates between excited states of self-hatred and torment and rapturous states of redemption. Above all this cycle occurs with respect to the bodily or the natural. Natural desires and passions (and above all those which relate to sexuality) are thwarted, suppressed, strangled, crucified, and ultimately – in the best case – extirpated (cf., aphorism 109). But what then? That is, to what enemy will the Christian turn *after* he has attained victory over this aspect of his nature? Does he sit joyously redeemed, awaiting the final springing-forth or flight and liberation from his mortal coil? No. Rather, at this point the Christian turns in suspicion and wrath against his own hopes and longings and even his *rapturous experiences themselves*, “he scourges his self-idolatry with self-contempt and cruelty” (*The Religious Life*, aphorism 142). As Nietzsche explains elsewhere (*The Religious Life*, aphorism 141):

When finally, as a consequence of their way of life and their destroyed health, this enemy [i.e., the bodily-sexual] took flight forever, they knew at once how to see their inner self populated by new demons. The scales of arrogance and humility, in vacillation up and down, entertained their brooding minds as finely as the alternation of desire and serenity.

We see, then, the manner in which this *folie circulaire* is without end. We can also look here at aphorism five-hundred twenty-one of *Daybreak*:

Vain of an exception. – This man has the consolation of possessing one supreme quality: over the rest of his being – and it is almost all the rest! – he casts his eye with contempt. But he finds relief from himself whenever he enters as though into his sanctuary; even the path thither seems to him an ascent on broad and gentle steps: -- and you are cruel enough to call him vain on that account!

We have seen that it is not only the critical other who is potentially cruel enough to accuse the Christian of vanity in this manner, the Christian *himself*, who has an interest in cruelty and ceaseless inner conflict, can accuse himself on just this point. He may, for

example, turn against his own pride, perhaps suspecting that he believes himself deserving and justified, perhaps wondering, “Was it my own pride, my own vanity, and not God’s love and wisdom that had swollen my head and heart?”, or he may perhaps suspect that he acts fundamentally from the impure motive of desiring personal and blessed immortality¹¹⁹. At any rate, there is no end to the variety of ways in which the Christian may sustain himself as an epic battleground before the great spectator that is his God.

Having shown, then, the self-perpetuating nature of this *folie circulair*, we can return to Nietzsche’s claim that the Christian has got himself into this madness due to intellectual errors (aphorisms 132-135 of *The Religious Life*). Without this claim, Nietzsche has no legitimate ground for inferring so assuredly that the Christian is only psychologically (physiologically) ill. Alternatively, Nietzsche’s claim that both the need of redemption and redemption itself are not realities, but rather the products of imaginations in the soul of the Christian, is grounded in his claim that the Christian suffers from intellectual errors that he can come to recognize as such, thereby repudiating his faith. Let us begin with aphorism one-hundred thirty-three of *The Religious Life*:

Before we present the further consequences of this condition, we want to avow that man has arrived at this condition not through his "guilt" and "sin," but rather through a series of errors of reason, that if his nature seemed dark and hateful to him to that degree, it was the fault of the mirror, and that that mirror was his creation, the very imperfect creation of human imagination and powers of judgment. First, any being who would be capable of purely selfless actions only is more fabulous than the phoenix. It cannot even be imagined clearly because from the start the whole concept of "selfless action," if carefully examined, evaporates into the air. Never has a man done anything that was only for others, and without any personal motivation. Indeed, how could he do anything that had no reference to himself, that is, with no inner compulsion (which would have to be based on a personal need)? How could the ego act without ego?— A God who conversely is all love, as is occasionally assumed, would not be capable of one single selfless action, which should remind us of a thought of Lichtenberg’s taken, to be sure, from a more common sphere: "It is impossible for us to feel for others, as the saying goes. We feel only for ourselves. The principle

¹¹⁹ Here one might look to aphorism 278 of Nietzsche’s *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* while asking *who* is being praised when we rejoice; cf. aphorism 105 of *On the History of the Moral Sensations*.

sounds harsh, but it is not, if it is only understood correctly. We love neither father nor mother nor wife nor child, but rather the agreeable feelings that they give us." Or, as La Rochefoucauld says, "si on croit aimer sa maîtresse pour l'amour d'elle, on est bien trompé." ["If we believe we love our mistress for love of her we are very much mistaken."] For the explanation of why actions of love are evaluated more highly than others, namely because of their usefulness rather than their essence, see the above-mentioned investigations *On the Origin of the Moral Sensations*. But if a man should want to embody Love, quite like that God, to do everything for others, nothing for himself, it is already impossible from the start, because he has to do a great deal for himself in order to be able to do anything at all for the sake of others. Next, it assumes the other person is egoist enough to accept those sacrifices, that life for his sake, over and over again: so men of love and self-sacrifice have an interest in the continued existence of loveless egoists incapable of self-sacrifice, and the highest morality, in order to endure, would have virtually to compel the existence of immorality (by which, to be sure, it would cancel itself out).— Furthermore, the idea of a God disturbs and humiliates as long as it is believed, but given the present state of comparative ethnology, its origin can no longer be in doubt; and with insight into that origin, the belief disappears.

Now, can Nietzsche be serious about this claim concerning the study of comparative ethnology as decisive for establishing atheism? Surely not. That God can reveal the truth to man in stages is not only entirely possible¹²⁰, but also an opinion held by many adherents of the world's religions (for example, the teaching is part of orthodox Islam, whose adherents are well aware of the stupidities and fantasies of earlier religions and of the present religions of 'primitives'). But perhaps Nietzsche has in mind by this claim about comparative ethnology that one can undoubtedly deny God by seeing that morality differs from place to place and time to time and people to people, an insight that would lead to a denial of any absolute or true morality? This argument, however, is persuasive only to the laziest and most superficial. In fact, Nietzsche addresses this argument in aphorism three-hundred forty-five of *The Joyous Science*, saying of the historians of morality:

Their usual mistaken premise is that they affirm some consensus of the nations, at least of tame nations, concerning certain principles of morals, and then they infer from this that these principles must be unconditionally binding also for you and me; or, conversely, they see the truth that among different nations moral valuations are *necessarily* different and then infer from this that *no* morality is at all binding: both procedures are equally childish.

¹²⁰ See *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, aphorism 53.

More decisive, however, for showing that Nietzsche is not fully serious concerning the claim about comparative ethnology as being sufficient to refute the belief in God is the fact that right here, in the concluding aphorism of the four-aphorism argument we have been addressing (aphorism 135), Nietzsche makes a *different claim* as to how one comes to repudiate their Christianity, one that has nothing to do with “comparative ethnology”:

Thus a certain false psychology, a certain kind of fantasy in interpreting motives and experiences, is the necessary prerequisite for becoming a Christian and experiencing the need for redemption. With the insight into this aberration of reason and imagination, one ceases to be a Christian.

And what exactly does ceasing to be a Christian entail in the full sense? Here we can go back to aphorism one-hundred thirty-four, picking up Nietzsche’s argument where we left it with its claim concerning comparative ethnology (cf. *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, aphorism 56):

The Christian who compares his nature to God is like Don Quixote, who underestimates his own bravery because he is preoccupied with the miraculous deeds of heroes out of chivalric novels; in both cases, the standard of measure being used belongs to the realm of fable. But if the idea of God disappears, so too does the feeling of “sin” as a transgression against divine precepts, as a stain on a creature consecrated to God. Then what probably remains is that discontent which is very intimately bound up with and related to the fear of punishment by a secular justice, or the fear of men’s disrespect; but discontent from the pangs of conscience, the sharpest sting in the feeling of guilt, has been stopped short when one perceives that through one’s actions one may have transgressed against human tradition, human statutes and regulations, but that one has not yet jeopardized the “eternal salvation of the soul” and its relation to the divinity. If in the end man succeeds in convincing himself philosophically that all actions are unconditionally necessary and completely irresponsible, and if he takes this conviction into his flesh and blood, those vestiges of the pangs of conscience disappear, too.

Now, in aphorism one-hundred thirty-three Nietzsche delivered a cutting analysis of selflessness, of the idea of selflessness. The arguments are essentially psychological, and with the possible exception of the argument concerning the necessity of evil persons for the possibility of Christian morality, they are powerful. That the self cannot un-self itself (i.e., that actions belong to subjects and thus necessarily flow from the subject’s needs and wants), that one has never done nor is one ever likely – short of divine

intervention – to do anything “wholly for others and with no personal motivation whatsoever”, is perhaps one of the most easily confirmable psychological assertions in the world; one has only to observe oneself and make three steps towards self-knowledge to see this (indeed, self knowledge is the only plausible way one possibly could affirm or deny these assertions). And yet the entire edifice of our moral thinking is based on the possibility of a psychological reality called “selflessness.” In more primitive times, according to Nietzsche, morality was the command that one act in obedience of the law as law, as commanded, and without giving thought to oneself as an individual. But notwithstanding the fact that disregarding oneself was involved in moral action, selflessness itself was not glorified as such (see aphorism ninety-six of *On the History of the Moral Sensations*).

Yet, in completing the move from (Jewish) divine justice to divine love, Christianity glorified the selfless as such, and moral action became identical to what is done selflessly *for the love of God* (as opposed to selflessly in obedience to justice or the law); one might not be too misled if one thought of this as a move from the predominance of fear over love to the predominance of love over fear, but one would not want to fail to appreciate the tremendous importance of fear in the Christian life – nor of love in the Jewish life – which, with the addition of eternal torment for the unredeemed, reached perhaps unknown levels of horror (cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 77). Nor was the idea that such sacrifice is the essence of the moral entirely foreign to the Greeks. In Plato’s *Symposium* (his dialogue on beauty and love wherein he investigates the god Eros) for example, we see Phaedrus tell of how Orpheus, who contrived to enter Hades alive so as to take back his dead wife, Eurydice, was sent out empty-handed as a punishment for his

ignoble *self-regard*, whereas to Alcestis, who willingly died for her husband, they gave the honor of returning her soul from Hades as a reward for the beauty of her selflessness (179b-e)¹²¹. As Seth Benardete comments on this matter in his riddling commentary on the *Symposium*: “Love must therefore be a god if it is powerful enough to overcome self-interest”. At any rate, the selfless is experienced as an infusion of a god, as *miraculous*, as Nietzsche has made clear numerous times already (recall, for example, aphorism 57 of *On the History of the Moral Sensations*: “Are these deeds of morality *miracles* because they are, in Schopenhauer’s words, ‘impossible and yet real’?”). But Nietzsche denies that there is any psychological reality corresponding to “selflessness” (nor to “love of the neighbor”). What exists is only the *belief* that one acts selflessly, a belief that one can readily observe in oneself to be based on an error. And yet here the will to self-deception is at its most powerful, even the will to *think* about the matter is immediately driven back by a more powerful will to *look away*, to choose ignorance, to trust one’s feelings. A similar situation prevails with respect to free-will (which is of course related to selflessness and selfishness). Almost all Christian-moral thinking is based on the idea of free-will, on the idea that one can freely choose to definitively harm oneself (i.e., that one can act in a way that is -- upon a total reckoning of the act -- harmful to oneself while knowing one is doing so and intending to do so), and likewise on the idea that the wicked man is not *ignorant* but rather *willful* (and thus can *deserve punishment*). And yet, again, that no one ever willingly harms oneself in such a manner is an assertion that one can easily confirm in oneself if one only has the will to look honestly at oneself (and likewise with the claim that one can choose to act more or less intelligently than one has to act or that one can choose to be more or less intelligent than one has to be). And here, if the

¹²¹ One notes with shock and dismay that Alcestis is *not* rewarded with eternal life

past is perhaps murky, one should turn one's gaze towards the future; that is, henceforth, try to catch yourself in the act of willingly harming yourself (really harming yourself in a reckoning of the total value of the act): you shall never do so, not even were you to commit suicide. As Nietzsche says:¹²²

Socrates and Plato are right: whatever man does, he always acts for the good; that is, in a way that seems to him good (useful) according to the degree of his intellect, the prevailing measure of his rationality.

The Refutation of the Biblical God Through Self-Knowledge

But at this point we must ask: how persuasive is this analysis of the saints and especially that of Paul and of the religious originator generally? Does Nietzsche *know*, *could* Nietzsche (or anyone else for that matter, short of another recipient of revelation) know what happened some 2000 years ago on the road from Palestine to Damascus? Or what happened to Muhammad while meditating in the cave at *Hira*. Surely not, and Nietzsche would be the first to concede this. By extension, then, Nietzsche would not claim to know that all religions originate in just this way, nor that every Christian spiritual experience that has ever occurred instantiated such a circular folly as he described. But is his analysis here nothing but conjecture? No it is not, for Nietzsche believes, as we have previously seen, that history (despite the unknowable nature of its particular facts) *can* be done in a scientific way *if* one has experienced history *in oneself* and moreover attained *self-knowledge* as to that history: from one's own self-knowledge

¹²² *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, aphorism 102; cf. aphorism 107 of the same; cf. aphorism 23 of *The Wanderer and His Shadow*. Ultimately, of course, Nietzsche differed with Plato and Socrates as to the meaning of "rationality," (namely, as the highest spiritualization of the will to power) but the import of the statement for Nietzsche's general argument remains unchanged. Cf. *Daybreak*, aphorisms 22 and 116 to see Nietzsche's quarrel with Socrates and Plato on the question of the origin of human action.

(which is knowledge of the world *in us*) and its necessary and inseparable corollary (knowledge of the world *around us*) one can confidently infer the truths of history, which are *essential* truths and not particular or factual truths. We must now turn, then, to the self-knowledge upon which Nietzsche grounds his historical knowledge. We would do well to begin first with aphorism ninety, which is as follows:

Egoism against egoism. – How many there are who still conclude: ‘life could not be endured if there were no God!’ (or, as it is put among the idealists: ‘life could not be endured if its foundation lacked an ethical significance!’) – therefore there *must* be a God (or existence *must* have an ethical significance)! The truth, however, is merely that he who is accustomed to these notions does not desire a life without them: that these notions may therefore be necessary to him and for his preservation – but what presumption it is to decree that whatever is necessary for my preservation must actually *exist*! As if my preservation were something necessary! How if others felt in the opposite way! If those two articles of faith were precisely the conditions under which they did not wish to live and under which they no longer found life worth living! – And that is how things are now!

The conflict between the religious man and the atheist is a conflict *not* between the unegoistic and the egoistic but rather, like the conflict between the Christian moralist and the ancient (especially stoic) moralist, a conflict between two egoists. According to Nietzsche, the religious man does not say that life cannot be endured without a moral God because his own supreme love of God would then be the love of something or rather, ‘someone’ who is nonexistent. Rather, such a man’s life could not be endured without a moral God because *he* needs to believe in this God for his *own happiness*. Ultimately, such a posture has its roots in the tremendously vain proposition “that whatever is necessary for my preservation must actually exist!” But what about the non-believer? Notice that Nietzsche does not say merely that he does not believe in the moral God, which would be one thing, since he may still wish in his heart that such a God did actually exist, but goes much further still: he says that he could not endure life precisely

if the moral God *did* exist. Nietzsche deems his own happiness or preservation¹²³ to be incompatible precisely with the existence of this moral God. As we shall see, Nietzsche rolls the dice and *takes* Pascal's wager, for the matter is indeed *urgent* and *serious* (cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 82; recall also aphorism 130, end), but relying on his own judgment to judge the evidence he says, in effect, "I will take Chance, I will take life without belief in God's existence." Why is this so? The answer comes in the aphorism that follows (aphorism ninety-one), and that in light of the work as a whole.

Aphorism ninety-one is titled *God's honesty*. We are reminded of someone else who, by Nietzsche's own account, investigated the question of God's honesty, namely Socrates (who was eventually – after some forty years – put to death for this investigation), as Nietzsche discusses in *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, aphorism seventy-two:

Divine missionaries. – Socrates too feels himself to be a divine missionary: but even here there is perceptible I know not what touch of Attic irony and sense of humour through which that unfortunate and presumptuous concept is ameliorated. He speaks of it without unction: his images, of the brake and the horse, are simple and unpriestly, and the actual religious task to which he feels himself called, that of *putting the god to the test in a hundred ways to see whether* he has told the truth, permits us to imagine that here the missionary steps up to his god with a bold and candid deportment. This putting of the god to the test is one of the subtlest compromises between piety and freedom of spirit that has ever been devised. – Nowadays we no longer have need even of this compromise.

But before discussing God's honesty let us take up the question of human honesty and above all that of the Christians. Nietzsche takes this up in aphorism eighty-four of *Daybreak* (cf. the opening of aphorism 68 already quoted previously):

The philology of Christianity. – How little Christianity educates the sense of honesty and justice can be gauged fairly well from the character of its scholar's writings: they present their conjectures as boldly as if they were dogmas and are rarely in any honest perplexity over the interpretation of a passage in the Bible. Again and again they say 'I am right, for it is written–'

¹²³ For Nietzsche, happiness must be understood in terms of the instinct for preservation and the latter must not be understood as an instinct that acts so as to maintain a being in its present state but rather, as the instinct that projects a being's essential nature as seeking pleasurable growth or enhancement of that nature in its possibilities, and avoiding its painful diminishment; cf. *Human all-too-Human*, *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, aphorisms 102-104.

and then follows an interpretation of such impudent arbitrariness that a philologist who hears it is caught between rage and laughter and asks himself: is it possible? Is this honourable? Is it even decent? – How much dishonesty in this matter is still practiced in Protestant pulpits, how grossly the preacher exploits the advantage that no one is going to interrupt him here, how the Bible is pummeled and punched and the *art of reading badly* is in all due form imparted to the people: only he who never goes to church or never goes anywhere else will underestimate that.

In sum, according to Nietzsche Christianity does exceedingly little to educate Christians or to inculcate in them the sense of honesty and justice. One might go further and say that it positively forbids these qualities in its adherents. But be that as it may, we can now look to aphorism ninety-one of *Daybreak*:

God's honesty. – A god who is all-knowing and all-powerful and who does not even make sure that his creatures understand his intention – could that be a God of goodness? Who allows countless doubts and dubieties to persist, for thousands of years, as though the salvation of mankind were unaffected by them, and who on the other hand holds out the prospect of frightful consequences if any mistake is made as to the nature of truth? Would he not be a cruel God if he possessed the truth and could behold mankind miserably tormenting itself over the truth? – But perhaps he is a God of goodness notwithstanding, and merely *could* not express himself more clearly! Did he perhaps lack the intelligence to do so? Or the eloquence? So much the worse! For then he was perhaps also in error as to that which he calls his 'truth', and is himself not so very far from being the 'poor deluded devil'! Must he not then endure almost the torments of Hell to have to see his creatures suffer so, and go on suffering even more through all eternity, for the sake of knowledge of him, and *not* be able to help and counsel them, except in the manner of a deaf-and-dumb man making all kinds of ambiguous signs when the most fearful danger is about to fall on his child or his dog? – A believer who reaches this oppressive conclusion ought truly to be forgiven if he feels more pity for this suffering God than he does for his 'neighbors' – For they are no longer his neighbors if that most solitary and most primeval being is also the most suffering being of all and the one most in need of comfort. – All religions exhibit traces of the fact that they owe their origin to an early, immature intellectuality in man – they all take astonishingly *lightly* the duty to tell the truth: they as-yet know nothing of a *duty of God* to be truthful towards mankind and clear in the manner of his communications. – On the 'hidden God', and on the reasons for keeping himself thus hidden and never emerging more than half-way into the light of speech, no one has been more eloquent than Pascal – a sign that he was never able to calm his mind on this matter: but his voice rings as confidently as if he had at one time sat behind the curtain with this hidden God. He sensed a piece of immorality in the '*deus absconditus*' and had the greatest fear and shame of admitting it to himself: and thus, like one who is afraid, he talked as loudly as he could.

This aphorism, read thoughtlessly, appears to be nothing other than positively insulting, and Nietzsche seems to go out of his way to offend all our religious sensibilities; however, by that very fact he invites the reader to ignore what is serious in the aphorism: by evoking anger and disgust he invites a thoughtless reading of this perhaps the most serious aphorism in the book. God is likened to a parent, yes, but also to a dog-owner,

and more than that, he is depicted as impotent, ignorant, and even suffering and pitiable. Believers for their part are likened to dogs. And what, aside from being loyal, do dogs do? They flatter their masters by delightfully wagging their tails and fawning on them, and all for the purpose of attaining a morsel, a bone, a petting, a walking, and so forth (they even express sadness vocally and visually – by their bearing – and can often seem to want to evoke our pity). “They flattered me like a dog!”, Shakespeare’s *King Lear* says of the ingrate children who took his kingship under the pretense of love and loyalty to him. But we do not have to look to Shakespeare for a commentary on dogs, since Nietzsche provides one in aphorism two-hundred fifty-eight of *Daybreak* (cf. aphorisms 155 and 300, also aphorism 135):

Patting the dog. – This dog needs to be stroked only once: he is immediately ignited and throws off sparks, like any flatterer – and he is clever in his own way. Why should we not put up with him?

Nor should we neglect the way in which masters deal with their dogs when they want something from them: we flatter the dog in return, saying “good boy!” with elation, give the dog all sorts of signs (through tone and gesture) of our delight in them or anger with them, and this so as to get the dog to do ‘tricks’ for our idle amusement, or to sit on our lap and fawn on us, or to fetch our shoes (and so forth). At any rate, Nietzsche’s depiction here of God and believers in God is anything but flattering to either.

Aphorism ninety-one begins with the following question: how could God be *good* (i.e., moral, just) if he had the truth, and the power to give it to us, but refused to give it to us while punishing us all the while for not possessing what he is unwilling to give? The aphorism thus begins from the standpoint that God does not adequately reveal his will to man and that man for his part lacks sufficient knowledge of God’s will.

Whereas here in aphorism ninety-one God is said to communicate through “ambiguous

signs”, in aphorism eighty-nine it is made clear that on the Christian understanding faith is supposed to be an exceedingly ‘unambiguous’ affair (though not necessarily *absolutely* unambiguous, but sufficiently unambiguous as to conquer doubt). Aphorism eighty-nine, let us recall, is as follows:

Doubt as sin. — Christianity has done its utmost to close the circle and declared even doubt to be sin. One is supposed to be cast into belief without reason, by a miracle, and from then on to swim in it as in the brightest and least ambiguous of elements: even a glance towards land, even the thought that one perhaps exists for something else as well as swimming, even the slightest impulse of our amphibious nature – is sin! And notice that all this means that the foundation of belief and all reflection on its origin is likewise excluded as sinful. What is wanted are blindness and intoxication and an eternal song over the waves in which reason has drowned!

We see, then, that according to aphorism ninety-one God himself is the cause of our necessarily doubting and thus our necessarily sinning: he has not communicated his Will in any intelligible manner. How then can he punish us for not knowing that exceedingly ambiguous will?

The following should also be noted. Whereas aphorism ninety-one starts with the issue of God’s intentions or *will* it quickly slides into a commentary on his unwillingness to give us the *truth*. We can understand the relation between God’s Will and truth as follows: God is Truth, and thus his knowledge of Himself is true and likewise his will reflects the truth that he *is* and further his communication of Himself (i.e., of his will and knowledge and power, which are inseparable from one another) must therefore communicate truth. Only truth can come from God, who is Truth. God must be honest. This denial of the possibility that God Himself may tell noble lies and thus exercise a higher ‘goodness’ and lead to a more essential and perhaps non-moral truth, that God’s giving what is best for one may include telling him half-truths or truths nestled in deceptive parables and symbols, is a very questionable denial. Indeed, still deeper questions arise when we consider *the meaning of truth* and perhaps above all in the

utterance that Being or God is Truth; here, a meditation on the meaning of Truth – which meditation may shatter any posited identity of truth and reason and thus of honesty (truth-telling) and rationality – is simultaneously a meditation on God or Being. Yet all the same, the issue that might appear to be of the utmost importance here, namely, that God cannot lie concerning his own goodness (and to do so would itself be not good but wicked or immoral), would seem to be unaffected. But can we really settle on this? Why cannot God lie for our benefit and tell us that he is moral? Yet the question already exposes a problem: his very intention to benefit us already establishes his goodness. But *must* goodness be equivalent to *moral goodness*? And should not God's communication take cognizance of the one communicated to? Should not philosophers allow the possibility that God knows and acts in accordance with the very insight that they themselves claim and act in accordance with, namely, the knowledge that different people require – that is, are benefited most by – different teachings? Be that as it may, on the truly fundamental point of the aphorism Nietzsche's argument holds, given his own premise that we do not know the moral God's will, i.e., that we do not know what good and evil are or have moral knowledge, and his far more readily acceptable premise that we believe the God to be a moral God, which no orthodox or conventional believer would disagree with (to say nothing of mystics). That fundamental point of the argument is this: how can God be moral while punishing us undeservedly, that is, unjustly or immorally? Has he not lied to us inasmuch as we have been told that we have moral knowledge (having eaten of the apple and thereby deserved our fall) and also that we can choose to be immoral and are thus held accountable for that choice, when all the while it is *He* who necessitated our being sinners and yet insists on punishing us? If so, it is this lie, this

piece of dishonesty, that would reveal the God to be not at all *good* (moral or otherwise), but rather, cruel. If God were to lie to us for our benefit concerning the moral, He certainly would not reward us or punish us on moral grounds since those grounds are themselves fictitious: He cannot punish us on moral grounds and still be beyond good and evil himself. Thus, if he *really* punishes us on moral grounds than he himself must really or *truly* be moral. Here we should look to *On the History of the Moral Sensations*, aphorism one-hundred five, the relevance of which may not be immediately clear:

A rewarding justice.— The man who has fully understood the theory of complete irresponsibility can no longer include the so-called justice that punishes and rewards within the concept of justice, if that consists in giving each his due. For the man who is punished does not deserve the punishment: he is only being used as the means to frighten others away from certain future actions; likewise, the man who is rewarded does not deserve this reward; he could not act other than as he did. Thus a reward means only an encouragement, for him and others, to provide a motive for subsequent actions: praise is shouted to the runner on the track not to the one who has reached the finish line. Neither punishment nor reward are due to anyone as *his*; they are given to him because it is useful, without his justly having any claims on them. One must say, "The wise man rewards not because men have acted rightly," just as it was said, "The wise man punishes not because men have acted badly, but so they will not act badly." If we were to dispense with punishment and reward, we would lose the strongest motives driving men away from certain actions and toward other actions; the advantage of man requires that they continue; and in that punishment and reward, blame and praise affect vanity most acutely, the same advantage also requires that vanity continue.

We can also look to *The Will to Power*, aphorism two-hundred ninety:

The moral hypothesis with the object of *justifying God* was: evil must be voluntary (merely so that the voluntariness of goodness can be believed in), and on the other hand: the object of evil and suffering is salvation.

The concept "guilt" as *not* extending to the ultimate ground of existence, and the concept "punishment" as an educative benefit, consequently the act of a *good* God.

Absolute dominion of moral valuation over all others: one did not doubt that God could not be evil and could not do anything harmful, i.e., by "perfection" one meant merely a moral perfection.

Thus, if God is truly moral and wise, how can he punish us in an after-life when it could not possibly be of any utility for others and moreover is based on our not knowing what we *could* not know and thereby (necessarily) not doing what we *could* not do¹²⁴. God

¹²⁴ And even if one knew not only *what* action is commanded for them to do but also what is *good* or moral in that action – for example, to be selflessly loving – one may still not be *able* to do it, for reasons discussed at length.

would be unjust and dishonest in this schema *precisely if morality were true*. Is God then guilty of injustice? Guilty of *lying*? Yes and No, according to Nietzsche:¹²⁵

Perhaps I am even envious of Stendhal? He took away from me the best atheistical joke that precisely I might have made: "God's only excuse is that he does not exist."

Let us continue with aphorism ninety-one and its argument. Three of God's attributes are discussed: his goodness (or, his righteous will), his power, and his knowledge. In keeping with traditional theology these attributes are posited in an absolute form: God is all-goodness, all-powerful, and all-knowing. As the aphorism's argument unfolds Nietzsche attempts to show what happens if any alteration or deduction is made to the schema that attributes infinite goodness, omnipotence, and omniscience to God. According to that schema, God is absolutely good and lacks neither the knowledge nor the power to communicate his Will, which Moral-Will he does indeed communicate: Nietzsche is simply wrong. That said, upon analysis (and taking good to mean *moral*) six possibilities emerge: 1) God is omniscient and omnipotent but is not good but rather cruel or immoral; 2) God is all-good and all powerful but lacks knowledge (and thus the communication of his righteous and loving will is necessarily incoherent or unintelligible; and here a problem emerges: how can God be all-powerful without being all-knowing?); 3) God is all-good and all-knowing but lacks power: he simply *cannot* communicate his will to us (here, his intentions are good but his effects harmful to us and him inasmuch as he lacks the sufficient power to enact his goodness); 4) God is omniscient but neither omnipotent nor infinitely good; 5) God is omnipotent but lacks goodness and knowledge (and again we get the problem that arose in the second possibility above: indeed, even to enact perfectly one's evil intentions one would have to

¹²⁵ *Ecce Homo, Why I am so Clever*, section 3; cf. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and its account of *Beyond Good and Evil*, end.

know what it was and how to do it: an “all-powerful” God who was ignorant as to what good and evil *are*, whether beneficent or cruel in his intentions, thus a world – perhaps a terrifyingly familiar world – full of both good and evil with no possibility for either us or him of knowing which was which nor which was coming to us nor why: in a practical sense, and substituting “good and bad” or “the life-giving and the deadening” for “good and evil”, would this be the same for us as the rule of Chance?); 6) God is all-good but lacks the power and knowledge to help us (again a problem emerges: how can God be all-good if he lacks the knowledge to help us; i.e., if he lacks knowledge of what is good and evil for us? Here, his intentions would be good – and that is the only meaning of goodness that can stand here, since in aphorism ninety-one he is good *for* neither himself nor others – but his effects harmful or bad).

Nietzsche begins with the first possibility above: God is omniscient and omnipotent but cruel or immoral. Can the believer allow this possibility to stand? For God’s *morality* is more firmly believed in than his omniscience and impotence: his morality is felt and known, but his omniscience and omnipotence are really either inferred, posited by metaphysical theories, or taken on authority of his saying so. Concerning this possibility, then, must not the believer reply: how can this be true when every whisper of my conscience, every feeling of happiness and pleasant assurance that attends goodness and every foreboding feeling that attends wickedness, and all the lightest movements of my heart testify to God’s morality? God *must* be moral as testified to by my experience, for otherwise that experience of him is as inexplicable or unintelligible and deceptive as he himself must be (recall aphorism 130 of *Daybreak: Purposes? Will?*). Nietzsche grants this, and so continues, saying, “But perhaps he is a

God of goodness notwithstanding [i.e., notwithstanding his failure to communicate his will], and merely *could* not express himself more clearly! Did he perhaps lack the intelligence to do so? Or the eloquence? So much the worse!”

In what follows Nietzsche does not address the point concerning God’s eloquence, but says rather that if God lacks intelligence than he lacks knowledge and thus is “perhaps also in error as to that which he calls his ‘truth’, and is himself not so very far from being the ‘poor deluded devil’!” Precisely if God is *good* or loving must he thereby suffer the torments of Hell in watching his creatures – whom he has created and loved as their creator – suffer for knowledge of him, a knowledge he *wants* to communicate but *cannot* communicate. A believer – a serious and deeply pious believer, such as one believes a Pope to be – who reached this oppressive conclusion would pity their God, at least for some time, and that with the consequence of a withdrawal of pity for their neighbors (for they are inescapably evil and damned, but he is Love and thus suffers from this fact of our suffering for want of his help). What can the believer do to help his pitiable god? Nothing, for it is just his inability to be moral – his being moral being the only possible help he could give, the only alleviation of suffering and giving of joy possible – and that for lack of knowing what it is (and that for lack of the God’s communicating of it), that is the cause of the god’s suffering. For this pity such a believer ought truly to be forgiven in Nietzsche’s judgment but will not be forgiven in his god’s. From here we can perhaps begin to understand Zarathustra’s (Nietzsche’s) wonder as to how the God died, and also his resolution or absorption of this wonder in the fathoming and overtaking of another wonder. Zarathustra – Nietzsche’s ideal human being of the future – wonders if it is true that the old God choked or suffocated from

excessive pity, and asks the last ever Pope (who has been retired from service, like the God he served) if he saw *that* with his own eyes. He does not stay for an answer but gives his own (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Retired from Service*):

... It certainly could have happened like that: like that, *and* also otherwise. When gods die, they always die many kinds of death.

But very well! One way or the other, one way and the other – he is gone! He offended the taste of my eyes and ears, I will say no worse of him.

At this point we must ask why in this hypothetical ‘scenario’ God should insist on punishing us. The answer appears to be that God insists on punishing us because his essence or will is such that he loves goodness and hates evil and so has no choice in the matter other than to punish us, since we are in fact evil, whatever the reasons for our being so. But could anyone endure life precisely if such a God existed? Moreover, how could it matter what one thinks or does in this schema if whatever one thinks or does one is damned to Hell all the same (nor could one attempt to avoid ‘degrees’ or levels of Hell since one has no basis of knowing how to do so)? Furthermore, how can God be a good God in this very scenario if *He* makes us evil and then punishes us for being so (did he not *know how* to make us better)? Indeed, his will is not even good for Himself in this scenario. More, how could this be *punishment* and not just wretchedness or misfortune if we are not free to *be* otherwise and thus to think otherwise and act otherwise? Yet if God is *not* moral and we are not free, what is one to make of all of the internal testimonies of the soul (and external testimonies of the workings of Providence, which cannot be seen without the involvement of the heart) to the effect that God *is* moral, indeed that he is the very reality or actuality of the highest moral qualities, and that we are free to be moral or otherwise?

We see in aphorism ninety-one that Nietzsche likens God to a “deaf-and-dumb man making all kinds of ambiguous signs when the most fearful danger is about to fall on his child or his dog?” His inability to communicate has been addressed above and will be addressed again below. But what of the claim that he does not hear? Nietzsche has in mind that “tender composure” called “prayer” which is “a continual readiness for the ‘coming of God’” (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 58). We can thus understand God’s deafness as follows: God does not hear our prayers. But why would one think that God lacks the power to hear our prayers? Because they are never answered, at least not the deepest ones; our calls for that coming of God which would provide us sure guidance and sure faith are never responded to (consider Pascal). Since he wants to answer our call but does not, there must be some reason why he does not. Perhaps he lacks the power to help, or to hear, or perhaps he does not know what we want? Are Christians happy and redeemed men, for example, thus giving evidence of God’s power to help? For this we might look to aphorism ninety-eight of Nietzsche’s *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*:

What distinguishes us from the pious and the believers is not the quality but the quantity of belief and piety; we are contented with less. But if the former should challenge us: then be contented and appear to be contented!—then we might easily reply: “We are, indeed, not among the least contented. You, however, if your belief makes you blessed then appear to be blessed! Your faces have always been more injurious to your belief than our objections have! If those glad tidings of your Bible were written in your faces you would not need to insist so obstinately on the authority of that book: your works, your actions ought continually to render the Bible superfluous, through you a new Bible ought to be continually in course of creation! As things are, however, all your apologies for Christianity have their roots in your lack of Christianity; with your defense plea you inscribe your own bill of indictment. But if you should wish to emerge out of this insufficiency of Christianity, then ponder the experience of two millennia: which, clothed in the modesty of a question, speaks thus: “if Christ really intended to redeem the world, must he not be said to have failed?” –

We might also look here to *The Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, section fourteen:

—“They are miserable, there is no doubt, *all of these whisperers and nook-and-cranny counterfeiters*, even if they are crouching together warmly—but they tell me that their misery is a distinction and election from God, that one beats the dogs one loves the most; perhaps this misery is also a preparation, a test, a schooling, perhaps it is still more—something for which there will one day be retribution, paid out with enormous interest in gold, no! in happiness. This they call ‘blessedness’.”

The claim that God does not hear occurs again in aphorism fifty-three of *Beyond Good and Evil*, which aphorism is intended by Nietzsche to be understood in light of his previous works and their discussion of these matters and perhaps above all in light of this discussion in aphorism ninety-one of *Daybreak*. The aphorism is as follows:

Why atheism today?— “The father” in God has been thoroughly refuted; likewise “the judge,” “the rewarder.” Also his “free will”: he does not hear—and if he heard he still would not know how to help. Worst of all: he seems incapable of clear communication: is he unclear?—

This is what I found to be causes for the decline of European theism, on the basis of a great many conversations, asking and listening; it seems to me that the religious instinct is indeed in the process of growing powerfully—but the theistic satisfaction it refuses with deep suspicion.

The Biblical God and Dionysus

Now, by saying that God’s “free-will” has been refuted Nietzsche refers to God’s will as the absolute unity of perfect (moral) goodness, omnipotence and omniscience (i.e., God as *Perfection* or *Being*), for these are the “constituents” of his free-will (one could also conceive of God as omnipotent but neither morally good nor omniscient if by knowledge we mean God as the depository of eternal and objective “truths” – and as we shall see, such a one is conceived by Nietzsche¹²⁶; one could also conceive of Being, of God, as the absolute unity of perfect goodness, omnipotence and omniscience, and this in more than one articulation). God’s “goodness” would include his qualities as father (loving) and judge (rewarder and punisher). How have they been refuted? Nietzsche

¹²⁶ In his notes for his projected masterpiece, *The Will to Power*, on a few occasions Nietzsche experiments with a slight variation on his ‘Dionysus-hypothesis,’ suggesting that the only meaningful designation of “God” would be “God as a maximal state, as an epoch—a point in the evolution of the will to power by means of which further evolution just as much as previous evolution up to him could be explained” (aphorism 639; cf. aphorism 712). Nietzsche may well conceive of the actualization of the overman as this very *Zenith* in the Ring of Time.

does not say how here, but aphorism ninety-one of *Daybreak* allows us to see how this is so.

Before leaving aphorism fifty-three of *Beyond Good and Evil*, notice that God as such is not refuted but only the ‘theistic’ or moral God. For one must note carefully the wording: “the ‘father *in* God has been thoroughly refuted; ditto . . .” (my emphasis). It posits or assumes that God *is*, or at least that God as God has not been refuted, but that we have *falsely attributed* to him fatherly love, the role of judging, the hearing of our private concerns and the unambiguous communication of his will as moral knowledge. What, then, if we took these attributes ‘out’ of our conception of God? It is not true, according to Nietzsche, that there can be no God other than the perfectly moral God (*Will to Power*, aphorism 151):

Religions are destroyed by belief in morality. The Christian moral God is not tenable: hence “atheism”—as if there could be no other kinds of god.

We should also see here aphorism one-thousand thirty-six of the same:

A humanitarian God cannot be *demonstrated* from the world we know: today you can be compelled to admit this much. But what conclusions do you draw? “He cannot be demonstrated to us”: epistemological skepticism. You are all *afraid* of the conclusion: “from the world we know, a very different God would be demonstrable, one who at any rate is *not* humanitarian” – and, in short, you hold fast to your God and devise for him a world we do *not* know.

Also, aphorism one-thousand thirty-seven which follows:

Let us remove supreme goodness from the concept of God: it is unworthy of a god. Let us remove supreme wisdom: it is the vanity of philosophers that is to be blamed for this mad notion of God as a monster of wisdom: he had to be as like them as possible. No! God the *supreme power*—that suffices! Everything follows from it, “the world” follows from it!

We should also see here *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism one-hundred fifty, the central aphorism of the book and by the most deliberate intention the aphorism around which the whole book turns or revolves (recall further aphorisms 153 and 340 of *The Joyous Science*) as a Dionysus-inspired inspection of man and the world (especially Europe) in

Nietzsche's own time which depicts this satyr-play while simultaneously educating the heroic aristocracy of the future who will act as forerunners to the Overman:

Around the hero everything turns into a tragedy; around the demi-god, into a satyr-play; and around God – what? Perhaps into “world”?—

Dionysus, of course, is neither paternal nor moral. Notice that aphorism fifty-three of *Beyond Good and Evil* is titled “Why atheism today [heute]? A certain kind of non-atheism, then, may be possible and desirable in the future, which may satisfy the powerfully growing “religious instinct” of Europe which refuses the theistic satisfaction of itself with “deep suspicion”. Notice also the strange question posed in the aphorism: “is he unclear?” This may mean “is he unclear in his own mind? (i.e., does he lack knowledge), or it may mean “is he unclear to us? (i.e., is he unknown to us? Is his communication unclear?), or it may mean, “is he unclear? (i.e., is he in his essence unknowable? Is he, from the perspective of human knowing, ‘unclear-itself,’ so to speak?) According to Nietzsche on the basis of his own imperfect self-knowledge, the god Dionysus, the “great ambiguous one and tempter god”, fathomable as the Dionysian essence of man, is indeed thereby unknowable; for this we can see aphorisms two-hundred thirty-one and two-hundred eighty-nine of *Beyond Good and Evil*:

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

In the writings of a hermit one always hears something of the echo of the wilderness, something of the murmuring tones and timid vigilance of solitude; in his strongest words, even in his cry itself, there sounds a new and more dangerous kind of silence, of concealment. He who has

sat day and night, from year's end to year's end, alone with his soul in familiar discord and discourse, he who has become a cave-bear, or a treasure-seeker, or a treasure-guardian and dragon in his cave—it may be a labyrinth, but can also be a gold-mine—his ideas themselves eventually acquire a twilight-colour of their own, and an odor, as much of the depth as of the mold, something uncommunicative and recalcitrant that blows at every passerby like a chill.

The hermit does not believe that a philosopher—supposing that a philosopher has always in the first place been a hermit—ever expressed his actual and ultimate opinions in books: are not books written precisely to hide what one harbors?—indeed, he will doubt whether a philosopher *can* have “ultimate and actual” opinions at all; whether behind every cave in him there is not, and must necessarily be, a still deeper cave: an ampler, stranger, richer world beyond the surface, an abyss [Abgrund] behind every ground [Grunde], beneath every “foundation [begründung].” Every philosophy is a foreground philosophy—that is a hermit's verdict: “There is something arbitrary in the fact that he came to a stop *here* to look back and to look around; that he *here* laid his spade aside and did not dig any deeper—there is also something suspicious about it.” Every philosophy also *conceals* a philosophy; every opinion is also a hide-out, every word is also a mask.

Indeed, the enigmatic essence of man and the world is for Nietzsche a stimulus (*Will to Power*, aphorism 470):

Profound aversion to reposing once and for all in any one total view of the world. Fascination of the opposing point of view: refusal to be deprived of the stimulus of the enigmatic.

Dionysus is not known as an object of knowledge in the traditional sense but rather is known by Nietzsche as *experienced* through his self-knowledge, which is inseparable from his self-ignorance. Dionysus, the ultimate ground of man, is ultimately as unknowable as his own unknowable essence: perfect knowledge of the “Ego” and the still more fundamental “Self” is impossible. Does Dionysus communicate with man? In a manner, yes, for man himself is, if not *the* speech of Dionysus than *a* speech of Dionysus (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Of the Afterworldsmen*; and, Nietzsche would add, one's highest laughter is the golden laughter of Dionysus):

The belly of being does not speak to man, except as man. Truly, all being is hard to demonstrate; it is hard to make it speak. Yet, tell me, brothers, is not the most wonderful of all things most clearly demonstrated? Yes, this Ego, with its contradiction and confusion, speaks most honestly of its being – this creating, willing, evaluating Ego, which is the measure and value of things.

Indeed, Dionysus inspires man and reveals himself – or, Being inspires man and reveals itself – to man and this according to Nietzsche's own testimony, which we can see from *Ecce Homo* and its account of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, section 3:

Has anyone at the end of the nineteenth century a clear idea of what poets of strong ages have called *inspiration*? If not, I will describe it.— If one had the slightest residue of superstition left in one's system, one could hardly reject altogether the idea that one is merely incarnation, merely mouthpiece, merely a medium of overpowering forces. The concept of revelation, in the sense that suddenly, with indescribable certainty and subtlety, something becomes *visible*, audible, something that shakes one to the last depths and throws one down, that merely describes the facts. One hears, one does not seek; one accepts, one does not ask who gives; like lightning, a thought flashes up, with necessity, without hesitation regarding its form,—I never had any choice.

A rapture whose tremendous tension occasionally discharges itself in a flood of tears, now the pace quickens involuntarily, now it becomes slow; one is altogether beside oneself, with the distinct consciousness of subtle shudders and of one's skin creeping down to one's toes; a depth of happiness in which even what is most painful and gloomy does not seem something opposite but rather conditioned, provoked, a *necessary* color in such a superabundance of light; an instinct for rhythmic relationships that arches over wide spaces of forms—length, the need for a rhythm with *wide arches*, is almost the measure of the force of inspiration, a kind of compensation for its pressure and tension ...

Everything happens involuntarily in the highest degree but as in a gale of a feeling of freedom, of absoluteness, of power, of divinity ... The involuntariness of image and metaphor is strangest of all; one no longer has any notion of what is an image or a metaphor, everything offers itself as the nearest, most obvious, simplest expression. It actually seems, to allude to something Zarathustra says, as if the things themselves approached and offered themselves as metaphors (—"Here all things come caressingly to your discourse and flatter you: for they want to ride on your back. On every metaphor you ride to every truth. Here the words and word-shrines of all being open up before you; here all being wishes to become word, all becoming wishes to learn from you how to speak—").

This is *my* experience of inspiration; I do not doubt that one has to go back thousands of years in order to find anyone who could say to me, "it is mine as well."

To hear this speech of Being one must learn to listen, one must learn the "art of hearing" that is the "finest part of your honesty!" (*Daybreak*, aphorism 255). Indeed, Nietzsche's "confidential discord and discourse" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 289, quoted above) is in fact a kind of dialogue or conversation with Dionysus (i.e., his own essence or ground). For this we can see a portion of *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 295:

Meanwhile I have learned much, all too much, more about the philosophy of this god, and, as I said, from mouth to mouth—I, the last disciple and initiate of the god Dionysus—and I suppose I might begin at long last to offer you, my friends, a few tastes of this philosophy, insofar as this is permitted to me? In an undertone, as is fair, for it concerns much that is secret, new, strange, odd, uncanny.

Even that Dionysus is a philosopher, and that gods, too, thus do philosophy, seems to me to be a novelty that is far from innocuous and might arouse suspicion precisely among philosophers. Among you, my friends, it will not seem so offensive, unless it comes too late and not at the right moment; for today [heute], as I have been told, you no longer like to believe in God and gods. Perhaps I shall also have to carry frankness further in my tale than will always be pleasing to the strict habits of your ears? Certainly the god in question went further, very much further, in dialogues of this sort and was always many steps ahead of me

To return from Dionysus to the Biblical God, the latter is shown to be dishonest and thus, according to the entire Christian schema or system, immoral, for in that schema God is not allowed to be immoral (recall *Will to Power*, aphorism 290). We see this also if we look to *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 65a:

One is most dishonest to one's God: he is not *allowed* to sin.

Nietzsche means to say the following: we are dishonest towards the moral God because we claim to love the moral and hate the immoral when in fact we desire the immoral but are not *allowed* to do it, and are thus afraid to do it inasmuch as it leads to punishment. This is in perfect keeping with aphorism 65, both of which aphorisms form a deliberate pair, as indicated by their numbering:

The attraction of knowledge would be small if one did not have to overcome so much shame [scham] on the way.

This means: the attraction of knowledge (fundamentally, self-knowledge) would be small if knowledge did not seem *evil*. Knowledge harms morality, and the more so the more knowledge one attains; the insights of knowledge bring shame to the moral man. Why shame? Because the insights speak against the truth of our moral convictions, and not only concerning their truth as such but concerning our own morality in holding them, and one feels shame when something one wants concealed is revealed, when some supreme and awe-inspiring mystery is violated or desecrated (consider, for example, the mishandling of a dead body: a corpse *as a corpse* is *desecrated* and not 'damaged,' and moreover can never *be* a carcass, though this later hearkens to Heidegger and away from Nietzsche). According to Nietzsche our dishonesty towards God is one such shameful affair that can be exposed by knowledge or (joyous) science. We claim to have knowledge of the moral and insist that God be moral because *we* have a stake in a moral

relationship with him (above all, for eternal happiness or to become beautiful ourselves, for only in binding God's will to our own through *morality* can we hope to achieve this). In this manner we diminish God, rob from God, lie to God and try to take advantage of God: in sum, we reckon God's divine grandeur in terms of our petty needs for recompense, we cut God down to our own size. Thus Nietzsche wonders in the next aphorism whether a God's modesty ("scham"; namely, the modesty of Dionysus) might consist precisely in allowing such a thing as *our* not allowing ourselves, or him, to sin (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 66):

The inclination to depreciate himself, to let himself be robbed, lied to, and taken advantage of, could be the modesty [scham] of a god among men.

It was or is the modesty of Dionysus – according to Nietzsche's knowledge and overcomings – that hides behind this mask of Biblical men and their viewing of themselves and him through the veil of the Biblical God¹²⁷.

Now, whereas the Biblical God is impugned for being dishonest one cannot likewise impugn Dionysus on these grounds. For the god Dionysus, who is indeed Truth *if* by that we mean the "text," so to speak, or Being, is *not* honest: Dionysus is essentially appearance-making, interpretation, or world-construction (self-creation or eternal pregnancy). Indeed, henceforth (i.e., commencing with the Dionysian world-view and experience), nothing shall be holy or divine anymore except the lie, which is "everything." In this sense the Biblical God *was*, for he was true – i.e., life-giving – when believers believed in him, and holy:¹²⁸

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*

¹²⁷ See also *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 40. If we take "scham" here to mean, "being guilty of sin" as opposed to "modesty," the "sin" of the God – Dionysus – is that he *lies*.

¹²⁸ *The Joyous Science*, aphorism 344. Cf. *The Will to Power*, aphorisms 436, 471, and 277.

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 ones and 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 ... But what if this should become more and more incredible, if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie—if God himself should prove to be our most enduring lie? —

Let us return to aphorism ninety-one of *Daybreak*. We have seen that God's morality is contradicted by his unjust punishment of men, that God is dishonest about his righteousness and splendor, *on the condition that we do not know his intentions* (i.e., that we do not know his will or that we do not know good and evil). Indeed, Nietzsche's entire argument is *premised* on the claim that within the Christian framework itself we are *compelled by God* to sin through lack of moral knowledge and thus can neither be truly sinful nor justly punished: his argument stands or falls with this premise. The believer, then, can perhaps silence Nietzsche and certainly put an end to his seemingly obtuse argument and its outrageous conclusion of a pitiable God if only he is willing to deny Nietzsche's premise. That is, if they only claim to know God's will, to know good and evil, to have received moral knowledge (which, as a *workable* knowledge – whether of the mind or heart – must be *sufficiently* clear or unambiguous) through God's communication of it. But will Nietzsche fall silent if the believer makes the claim to know good and evil (even and especially if he claims it to be purely a knowledge of the heart as opposed to the head, the truth of which is attested to by its power in the soul). Will he not put this claim to the test through conversations, "asking and listening" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 53)? Has not this entire work been aimed at

demonstrating Nietzsche's argument that we do *not* know what good and evil are (cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 148) and that our belief in morality – which morality *inspires* – is based on delusions and above all the delusion of possessing moral knowledge *in our heads* (which delusion is present whether one admits to it or not)? But how can one confirm or deny Nietzsche's claim? In the end, each of us must do as Nietzsche did and sit "alone" in "confidential discord and discourse, year in and year out, day and night" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 289) in order to earn the right to confirm or deny Nietzsche's account (i.e., one has *a lot* to do and must do it oneself; unless, that is, someone of us has knowledge of God and himself in so clear and sure a manner that no questioning of either is necessary – but who would dare to be so impious as to claim that?). Ultimately, on Nietzsche's argument, it is not God's honesty that is impugned but rather *our honesty that is impugned*: we give the lie that we know and love good and evil which, in order to be a lie, we must know on some level to be untrue but attempt to conceal the fact and above all to conceal it from ourselves.

Staying with aphorism ninety-one of *Daybreak*, Nietzsche makes clear his fundamental point as the aphorism progresses and especially through his reference to the 'hidden God' as too hidden, indeed so hidden as to be immoral, thereby "refuting himself," so to speak. More exactly, however, we refute ourselves in our claim to know and love good and evil and thereby deny the veracity of our interpretations to the effect that God reveals his moral will to us, thus collapsing the grounds of our belief in that God for having undermined its foundation. Nietzsche says:

- All religions exhibit traces of the fact that they owe their origin to an early, immature intellectuality in man – they all take astonishingly *lightly* the duty to tell the truth: they as-yet know nothing of a *duty of God* to be truthful towards mankind and clear in the manner of his communications. –

In order to understand this immature intellectuality, let us look again at aphorism four-hundred fifty-six of *Daybreak*:

A virtue in process of becoming. – Such assertions and promises as those of the antique philosophers concerning the unity of virtue and happiness, or the Christian ‘But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you’ has never been made with total honesty and yet always without a bad conscience: one has advanced such propositions, which one very much desires to be true, boldly as the truth in the face of all appearance and has felt in doing so no religious or moral pang of conscience – for one had transcended reality *in honorem majorem* of virtue or of God and without any selfish motive! Many worthy people still stand at this *level of truthfulness*: when they *feel* themselves selfless they think they are permitted to *trouble themselves less* about truth. Notice, however, that *honesty* is among neither the Socratic nor the Christian virtues: it is the youngest virtue, still very immature, still often misjudged and taken for something else, still hardly aware of itself – something in process of becoming which we can advance or obstruct as we think fit.

As man’s intellectuality matures and his truthfulness or unconditional will to truth (which is moral) increases, no longer deeming it a *sufficient proof of truthfulness* that one merely *feel* moral, elevated, or selfless, the moral God, in order to be believed in as this God, has an increasing and moral duty to tell the truth inasmuch as dishonesty is immoral (and the particular piece of dishonesty in question, that is, his telling us that we can know his moral will when we *cannot*, his telling us that he has told us the truth about good and evil in the face of our inability to know that truth, has the effect of making God still more unjust inasmuch as he punishes undeservedly and thereby cruelly; cf. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Retired from Service*). The belief in the moral God and his providential order is contradicted by the awareness of our ignorance of good and evil, which ignorance we can become more fully aware of through investigation of the *history* of our own soul and its moral and religious convictions, which history exhibits the origins of one’s rational seeming morality to be in unreason (both as *error* and as the world of drives and affects or feelings) and immorality (i.e., immoral opinions and affects and drives; cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 1 and 340).

The Ultimate Test-Case: Pascal

Aphorism ninety-one of *Daybreak* ends with a climactic commentary on Pascal. Indeed, Nietzsche honors Pascal as the ‘logician of Christianity’ and the highest exemplar of Christian religiosity. In aphorism one-hundred ninety-two of *Daybreak* (titled, *The desire for perfect opponents*; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism forty-five and one-hundred ninety-one), Nietzsche says that Pascal was, “in unity of fervor, spirit and honesty the first of all Christians – and consider what had to be united there!” As we shall see, this is a somewhat idealized picture of Pascal, whose honesty was not without blemish; Nietzsche, as a perfect sage (aphorism 431 of *Daybreak*):

... elevates his opponent into the ideal and purifies his contradictory opinion of every blemish and adventitiousness: only when his opponent has by this means become a god with shining weapons does the sage fight against him.

In order to best understand Nietzsche’s discussion of Pascal we should begin with aphorism sixty-four of *Daybreak*:

The despairing. – Christianity possesses the hunter’s instinct for all those who can by one means or another be brought to despair – of which only a portion of mankind is capable. It is constantly on their track, it lies in wait for them, Pascal attempted the experiment of seeing whether, with the aid of the most incisive knowledge, everyone could not be brought to despair: the experiment miscarried, to his two- old despair.

Pascal’s two-fold despair was as follows: on the one hand he despaired because he did not get everyone to despair of their mere humanity; on the other hand, he despaired because his most incisive knowledge plagued with him with doubt as to the truth of Christianity, because he himself could not *know* by his reason or most incisive knowledge that the Christian faith was true, because his incisive intellect spoke *against* its truth. For Pascal, the more you *reason* about faith, the more *erroneous* faith seems, and thus the

more you will *need* faith in order to believe it since the intellect is speaking louder and louder against it. Pascal, like a scorpion driving its sting into its own body (recall the *Preface*, aphorism 3), used his own intellect to sacrifice his intellect to faith, and this by painfully using his reason to attempt to show that reason is insufficient and corrupt and that man *must* deny it and have faith. “‘Without the Christian faith’ Pascal thought, ‘you no less than nature and history will become for yourselves *un monster et un chaos*.’” (*Will to Power*, aphorism 83). And in the same aphorism – which discusses the inherent falseness or sinfulness of the world – Nietzsche writes:

“Our inability to know the truth is thus the consequence of our moral decay”; thus Pascal. And thus, at bottom, Schopenhauer. “The deeper the corruption of reason, the more necessary the doctrine of salvation”—or, in Schopenhauer’s terms, negation.

But Pascal went still further in his drawing the necessary conclusions of his “orgies of self-contempt and self-abuse” (*Will to Power*, aphorism 252), arguing that, if reason or knowledge is corrupt and falsified, “*revelation* was needed even to understand that the world ought to be denied” (*Will to Power*, aphorism 411; that is, even to understand that the world and thus reason or knowledge, themselves worldly, must be denied).

Pascal’s despair over not *knowing* the truth of Christianity and its morality was tormenting. We get an indication of this in aphorism forty-six of *Daybreak* (cf. *Ecce Homo*, *Why I am so Clever*, section 3):

Doubt about doubt. – ‘What a good pillow doubt is for a well-constructed head!’ – this saying of Montaigne’s always provoked Pascal, for no one longed for a good pillow as much as he did. Whatever was wrong? –

For Montaigne doubt was desirable, a good pillow, not for sleep (i.e., thoughtlessness), but for a well-constructed head (and it is ‘lying in bed’ that we often have our most private and profound reflections). For Pascal it was doubt that *would not let him sleep*; he too desired a good pillow, but he desired it for a good sleep, i.e., to desist from doubt

(cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 573), which almost unrelinquishingly doubt some serpent, he hoped (inasmuch as this was better than the alternative), had planted and which he hoped to kill. Pascal desperately *desired* Christianity to be true and desperately desired to sleep on the certainty of its truth. But he *could not sleep*, for his intellectual conscience continually doubted that it was true inasmuch as his intellect *could never make sense of it*. Whatever was wrong? God seemed immoral in his hiddenness and confusing speech inasmuch as by it he left Pascal in this miserable condition of unconquerable *doubt*, which doubt is itself a sin (recall aphorism 89: *Doubt as sin*). We can now begin to understand the end of aphorism ninety-one of *Daybreak*, which for convenience sake is worth quoting again¹²⁹:

– On the ‘hidden God’, and on the reasons for keeping himself thus hidden and never emerging more than half-way into the light of speech, no one has been more eloquent than Pascal – a sign that he was never able to calm his mind on this matter: but his voice rings as confidently as if he had at one time sat behind the curtain with this hidden God. He sensed a piece of immorality in the ‘*deus absconditus*’ and had the greatest fear and shame of admitting it to himself: and thus, like one who is afraid, he talked as loudly as he could.

On one level Pascal believed that he knew good and evil, namely, on the level of the heart and this by inspiration or revelation, yet on the level of his intellect he knew not only that he did not know it by his reason but also and more terribly – since not knowing alone would only lead to perplexity and a likely dismissal of reason’s findings as *indecisive* – that his reason spoke *against* the things he positively claimed to know by inspiration (including his own rational arguments for God and for the morality of His being hidden) and thus that he retained perpetual doubt: he simply *could not silence the reason or intellectual conscience that was inducing faithlessness in him*. That said, he was too afraid and ashamed to admit to the consequences of this ignorance, namely, that *God was making it impossible* for him to be free of perpetual doubt and thus free of

¹²⁹ Cf. 552 of *Daybreak* for “Vorhang” or curtain.

perpetual sin: hence the loudness and false confidence (the posing, really) of his claims that God's hiddenness was consistent and even integral to his moral goodness, truths that on his own ever so eloquent account he could not and did not know by reasoning but only by *inspiration* (thus he could not even say likewise that he knew *by his own reason* that his *own* arguments for God and the insufficiency of reason without revelation were true: he claimed to *know* all this by the *heart* and not the mind). Pascal could not stop talking about the morality of God's being hidden because he could not stop doubting it, and thus felt fear and shame for himself on account of the *wicked* thought that God seemed to him evil and harmful inasmuch as he had condemned him (and perhaps for an eternity) like an *unrequited lover* for a sinfulness he could not find the means nor was given the means to overcome. Recall aphorism two-hundred ninety of *The Will to Power*:

Absolute dominion of moral valuation over all others: one did not doubt that God could not be evil and could not do anything harmful, i.e., by "perfection" one meant merely a moral perfection

Pascal had to keep talking about God's goodness in remaining hidden because he had to keep trying to talk himself into it, for his *loudness* is less to persuade others than to persuade *himself*. Pascal has two thoughts to be fearful and ashamed for: his thought (in the form of the doubt) that Christianity is untrue, and his thought (in the form of an *evil insinuation*) to the effect that God is immoral. One sees immediately the connection between the two thoughts: *because* God is immoral the Christian faith in the holy God must *therefore* be untrue; God can *only* escape the accusation of immorality in the Christian schema if he has made it possible for us to obey his will or intentions (i.e., to know good and evil), for how else can he punish us without being cruel?

Pascal *needed* to know good and evil, he *needed* to know God's will – either by reason or by inspiration – since without it not only would God be immoral, not only would God be a lie, but he himself would be *a chaos and a monstrosity* (*Pensees*, #7):

What kind of freak is man! What a novelty he is, how absurd he is, how chaotic and what a mass of contradictions, and yet what a prodigy! He is judge of all things, yet a feeble worm. He is repository of truth, and yet sinks into such doubt and error. He is the glory and the scum of the universe!

Pascal could not endure his life without his God. This, in fact, was the *real* premise that under-plied the whole of his scenario of the wager (and not even “God is the truth,” for this premise, *psychologically*, is *prior*). Nietzsche *essentially* responds to Pascal: “and that you have a *right* to existence seems irrefutable to you” (*The Joyous Science*, aphorism 335: *Long live Physics!*): that is, that he was an essentially moral being – *able* to love God and shun evil but also to hate God and embrace sin – with a moral (proudful) claim to *deserve to be in the world and to deserve to receive justice from the world*, that was knowledge revealed to his heart, that he never questioned, even if it meant his own damnation; yet had he done so, according to Nietzsche, and investigated the origins of his moral prejudices more courageously, he would have found much that was questionable in such a claim. Above all, he would have discovered (recollected) the fundamental insight that he is unable to deserve anything, good or evil, because, knowing neither – and in particular, seeing in himself the immoral origins of his own moral convictions – and *knowing* that he knew neither, he would have observed that all voices of his heart had become *silenced*, he would have seen having become deaf that he did not know how to be nor how to do good or evil, and thus he would have wagered *against* the moral God's existence as *unendurable*. At this point in our work we can look to *The Anti-Christ*, aphorism fifty-five, where Nietzsche states once again in his riddling fashion his

definitive ground for rejecting the moral God and the revelations that testify to him: the grounding pathos of his philosophizing as questioning or moderation; i.e., his knowledge of his ignorance or his knowledge of what he knows and does not know: for one is capable of deciding or recognizing that it is *true* that one does not know what good and evil are, and no priestly syllogism can escape this.

- One step further in the psychology of conviction, of "faith." Long ago I posed the problem whether convictions are not more dangerous than lies as enemies of truth. Now I should like to ask the decisive question: Is there any difference at all between a lie and a conviction?— All the world believes there is; but what does all the world not believe! — . . . — By lie I mean: wishing *not* to see something that one does see, wishing not to see something *as* one sees it. Whether the lie takes place before witnesses or without witnesses does not matter. The most common lie is that with which one lies to oneself; lying to others is, relatively, an exception.— Now this wishing-*not*-to-see what one does see, this wishing-not-to-see *as* one sees, is almost the first condition for all who are *party* in any sense: of necessity the party man becomes a liar.... The priests are much more delicate in such matters and understand very well the objection which lies in the concept of a conviction, namely, a mendaciousness which is a matter of principle *because* it serves an end; so they have accepted the clever procedure of the Jews to introduce at this point the concept of "God," "will of God," "revelation of God." Kant too, with his categorical imperative, was on the same path: in this respect, his reason became *practical*.— There are questions in which man is *not* entitled to a decision about truth and untruth; all the highest questions, all the highest value problems, lie beyond human reason ... To comprehend the limits of reason—*that* alone is truly philosophy ... What did God give man revelation for? Would God have done something superfluous? Man is not *capable* of knowing by himself what is good and evil, therefore God taught him his will ... Moral: the priest does *not* lie—the question of "true" and "untrue" does not exist in the matters about which priests speak; these matters do not allow one to lie at all. For, to be able to lie, one would have to be capable of deciding *what* is true here. But of this man is not *capable*; thus the priest is merely the mouthpiece of God.— Such a priestly syllogism is by no means merely Jewish and Christian: the right to lie and the *shrewdness* of "revelation" belong to the priestly type, to the *décadent* priests as well as to the priests of paganism (—pagans are all those who say Yes to life, for whom "God" is the word for the great Yes to all things).— . . . "Truth is there": this means, wherever it is heard, *the priest is lying* ...

The priest (the Christian) *knows* that he does not know good and evil, he *knows* that his voice of God is the voice of his own heart, but unlike the philosopher he does not bring this knowledge honestly to the forefront but rather, perpetually flees it. There is no essential difference between a lie and a conviction inasmuch as the latter is but a species

of the former: the conviction as to the truth of our revelatory knowledge is a lie which, in order to be a lie, we must know to be a lie:¹³⁰

Even the bravest of us rarely has the courage for what he really *knows* . . .

We can also look again at the previously quoted passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, (*Of Love of One's Neighbor*):

It is not only he who speaks contrary to what he knows who lies, but even more he who speaks contrary to what he does not know. And thus you speak of yourselves in your dealings with others and deceive your neighbor with yourselves.

To conclude, Pascal held his revealed knowledge up to the light of what he could know by his intellect as to the truth or falsity of the opinions imparted to him by his Christian conscience. His Christianity was *peculiarly* tormenting because he, unlike so many of the deeply pious, had not only a powerful intellect but also a powerful and almost ceaseless drive or instinct to pursue truth through the natural activity of that intellect: Pascal had a loud or powerful *intellectual conscience*, and as Nietzsche indicates in aphorism sixty-eight of *Daybreak*, Christianity will perish by way of the intellectual conscience or honesty, which is still in its earliest phases with Pascal. Pascal *needed* moral knowledge in order for his God to be moral, he needed that God give him the means to know the truth and thus the means not to doubt inasmuch as doubt, disbelief or faithlessness is a sin (one *cannot* be gripped by faith in Christian truth and doubt of Christian truth at the same time: they are mutually exclusive in the traditional Christian-theological soul-schema; recall aphorisms 89 and 87). He could claim to know, and did

¹³⁰ *Twilight of the Idols, Maxims and Arrows*, aphorism 4; cf. *Daybreak*, aphorism 543; cf. *Will to Power*, aphorism 138 and 338.

claim to know, good and evil only by revelation and by revelation he knew that doubt was sin, yet he could not stop doubting on account of an intellectual conscience he could never fully silence. Had Pascal pursued the temptations of his intellectual conscience with still more vigor rather than *sacrificing it to his faith* (and in the end, according to Nietzsche, and as it occurred in him, Christian faith is *sacrificed to the intellectual conscience*), had he been still more honest with himself about the character of his moral convictions (namely, concerning their origins in his own fears, imaginations, hopes, willfulness or stubbornness, vanity, habituation, selfishness, lust for power, ignorance, and so forth), had he once looked to himself and his states of soul without the *single* perspective of his Christian-moral optics (cf. *Will to Power*, aphorism 270), had he applied his intellect not to the end of attacking itself *in the name of faith* but rather to the study of *morality as a problem*, he would have ceased to experience his “revelations” and would have denied Christianity altogether on Nietzsche’s thinking, for Christianity, quite simply, *cannot hold up under the weight of honestly pursued self-knowledge* on Nietzsche’s understanding.

Refuting the Truth of God

These things said, we can now leave Pascal and aphorism ninety-one and turn to aphorism ninety-three of *Daybreak*, which is as follows:

What is truth? – Who would not submit to the conclusion the faithful like to draw: ‘Science cannot be true, for it denies God. Consequently it does not come from God; consequently it is not true – for God is the truth.’ It is not the conclusion but the premise which contains the error: how if God were *not* the truth and it were precisely this which is proved? If he were the vanity, the lust for power, the impatience, the terror, the enraptured and fearful delusion of men?

From the outset we must ask: where did the believers get the premise that science or knowledge denies God? The answer is: from the spheres of worldly sciences, from science natural (especially modern) and philosophic. To see this clearly we can look at something Nietzsche says – considering the pious from the perspective of their moral hatred of science (worldly science), and thus not addressing Paul's other enemy, namely the Law – in his later written *Anti-Christ* (aphorism 47):

— That we find no God—either in history or in *nature* or behind nature—is not what differentiates *us*, but that we experience what has been revered as God not as "godlike" but as miserable, as absurd, as harmful, not merely as an error but as a *crime against life* ... We deny God as God ... If one were to *prove* this God of the Christians to us, we should be even less able to believe in him.— In a formula: *deus, qualem Paulus creavit, dei negatio* [God, as Paul created him, is a negation of God]. — A religion like Christianity, which does not have contact with reality at any point, which crumbles as soon as reality is conceded its rights at even a single point, must naturally be mortally hostile toward the "wisdom of this world," which means *science*—it will applaud all means with which the discipline of the spirit, purity and severity in the spirit's matters of conscience, the noble coolness and freedom of the spirit, can be poisoned, slandered, brought into *disrepute*. "Faith" as an imperative is the *veto* against science—in *praxi*, the lie at any price ... Paul *comprehended* that the lie—that "faith"—was needed; later the church in turn comprehended Paul.— The "God" whom Paul invented, a god who "ruins the wisdom of the world" (in particular, philology and medicine, the two great adversaries of all superstition), is in truth merely Paul's own resolute *determination* to do this: to give the name of "God" to one's own will, *Torah*, that is thoroughly Jewish. Paul *wants* to ruin the "wisdom of the world": his enemies are the *good* philologists and physicians of the Alexandrian school—it is they against whom he wages war. Indeed, one cannot be a *philologist* or physician without at the same time being an *anti-Christian*. For as a philologist one sees *behind* the "holy books"; as a physician, *behind* the physiological depravity of the typical Christian. The physician says "incurable"; the philologist, "swindle" ...

Now, note the hidden consequence of the absolute identity of God and truth: *God is the sole source of truth* (and therefore whatever comes from other than God must be false). Notice further that *two* conclusions are drawn from the denial of God by science: 1) that science does not come from God; and, 2) that science cannot be true. (Nietzsche would disagree with neither, on a certain understanding of each). But we can ask: what is the relation between these two conclusions, that is, between science's source in what is other than God (namely, evil) and science's falsity? From the perspective of the believer, science is false *because* it comes from other than God (namely, from worldly man), and

this by virtue of the premise of God's truth and its consequence that God is the sole source of truth, which we may call the consequence of God's honesty: science is false because God is truth; alternatively, because God is the truth the denial of God is false, and science, which denies God, therefore 1) comes from other than God and 2) is false. We can thus rework the syllogism from premise to conclusion as follows: [Major] God is the truth (therefore, by definition, God is the sole source of truth): [Minor] Science denies God : [Conclusion 1] Therefore, science does not come from god (by the major and minor) : [Conclusion 2] Therefore, science cannot be true (by the major and minor). We see that the conclusions are unthinkable apart from one another and both follow ultimately from the premise of God's truth (and his consequent honesty) and from the fact that science denies God.

God, as truth, must be honest, and it is God's honesty that is above all at issue in this syllogism too. To go further, God's honesty – and necessarily, *our* honesty – is the central issue in Nietzsche's entire investigation of the moral-theological problem or question, just as it was for Socrates before him (on Nietzsche's understanding). It is through this testing of God's or rather our honesty that Nietzsche and genuine or joyous science – by way of psychology and its intersection with cosmology or astronomy: in a word, *philosophy*, which must necessarily involve political philosophy – can “prove” that the premise “God (the moral God) is the truth” is false.

We have seen the manner in which this “proof” proceeds, the manner in which *science* refutes God: the knowledge or truth of good and evil that we believe God has revealed to us through the heart and conscience becomes, upon rigorous examination with the *intellectual conscience* of our claim to possess it, identifiable as a false belief or

mere pretence to knowledge attributable to our “vanity”, “lust for power”, “impatience”, and “enraptured and fearful delusion” (*Daybreak*, aphorism 93). We might see here aphorism four-hundred seventeen of *Daybreak*, bearing in mind that the limit of humility is the point at which one has *too much pride* to proceed with something, and moreover that with the one seemingly little step that Nietzsche here suggests we take one actually breaks out of the circle of all conventional beliefs in what is more of a leap than a step (cf. aphorisms 94 and 262):

The limit of humility. – Many no doubt attained to that humility which says: *credo quia absurdum est* [I believe *because* it is absurd] and sacrificed their reason to it: but, so far as I know, no one yet has attained to that humility which says: *credo quia absurdus sum* [I believe *because I am* absurd], though it is only one step further.

Knowledge of good and evil is not revealed to men, rather, the belief in our knowledge of morality gives way to so-called revelatory experiences that actually *arise* through the agency of immorality (the self-regarding and unenlightened qualities of lust for power, vanity, impatience, terror, and delusion both rapturous and terrible). When one sees this in oneself, according to Nietzsche, the evidence for the moral God’s existence ‘evaporates’. This is because the revelatory experiences that provided the powerful evidence for the original belief in God no longer occur after we recognize that our initial claim to moral knowledge was little more than an immoral or arrogant pretence fueled by all sorts of further immoral qualities “deep down” (but hardly so deep down that we cannot see them if we look; and we must keep in mind here that by “immoral” is meant what is deemed immoral in the opinion of the moral man; when one sees the illusory quality of morality and its origin in immorality that entire dichotomy ‘explodes’: nothing is either moral or immoral in truth but only as falsely interpreted by the moral man). Moreover, we necessarily re-interpret the revelatory experiences of our past as

having been, more than likely, the products of those same immoral qualities. He who conducts the investigation into the history of his own soul and the manner in which the belief in God has arisen and acquired such weight and importance thereby wipes the slate clean for himself inasmuch as he comes to lack any rational or heartfelt reason to posit such a God; one can posit the existence of whatever one fancies, but one must have *reasons* to believe in the existence of the thing posited if one is truly to believe in it and thus seriously to posit it as true. Were such an atheist to bring a faithful opponent to the same conclusions concerning their moral convictions and their immoral origins, they too, in principle, would come to wipe the slate clean in the manner of the opposing atheist and thereby make the moral God a (mere) hypothesis, and moreover one with very questionable evidence in favor of its truth. With this in mind we can look again to the climactic and definitive aphorism ninety-five:

Historical refutation as the definitive refutation. – In former times, one sought to prove that there is no God – today one indicates [*zeigt*, signals, points to] how the belief that there is a God could arise [*entstehen*] and how this belief acquired its weight and importance: a counter-proof that there is no God thereby becomes superfluous. – When in former times one had refuted the ‘proofs of the existence of God’ put forward, there always remained the doubt whether better proofs might not be adduced than those just refuted: in those days atheists did not know how to make a clean sweep.

The Future Atheism of the West:

Towards a Daybreak

Book I of *Daybreak* ends with a return to the theme of the future and includes Nietzsche’s call to atheists of the world (or at least, atheists of Europe) to unite. The final aphorism, aphorism ninety-six, is titled, “*In hoc signo vinces*” (*In this sign thou shalt conquer*). The title therefore alludes again to revelation and the question of revelation,

for these words were heard by the Emperor Constantine and adopted as his motto after he had a vision of a cross in the heavens, and this just before his decisive battle with Maxentius in A.D. 312, signaling the doom of the Roman Empire and the inheritance of the earth by the “meek”. Nietzsche’s use of the motto is thus ironic, for he aims at bringing to an end the Christian reign over Europe and installing in its place a more ancient pathos (above all, a more Greek pathos). More, Nietzsche refers in his open but hidden way to the preceding aphorism and its concealed argument as to the relation between moral prejudices and revelatory experiences (i.e., the former being the cause of the latter). Nietzsche’s argument is concealed only to those who have been reading Book I more or less carelessly up to that point, but his arguments are very clear to those patient readers who are his friends, which is in keeping with his claim to have completely unlearned silence (*Daybreak, Preface*, aphorism 1). The final aphorism of Book I (aphorism ninety-six), reads as follows:

‘In hoc signo vinces’.—However much progress Europe may have made in other respects, in religious matters it has not yet attained to the free minded naivety of the ancient Brahmins: a sign that there was more thinking, and that more pleasure in thinking was customarily inherited, four-thousand years ago in India than is the case with us today. For those Brahmins believed, firstly that the priests were more powerful than the gods, and secondly that the power of the priests resided in the observances: which is why their poets never wearied of celebrating the observances (prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices, hymns, verses) as the real givers of all good things. However much poetizing and superstition may have crept in here between the lines, these propositions are *true*! A step further, and one threw the gods aside – which is what Europe will also have to do one day! Another step further, and one no longer had need of the priests and mediators either, and the teacher of the *religion of self-redemption*, the Buddha, appeared: -- How distant Europe still is from this level of culture! When, finally, all the observances and customs upon which the power of the gods and of the priests and redeemers depends will have been abolished, when, that is to say, morality in the old sense will have died, then there will come – well, what will come then? But let us not speculate idly: let us first of all see to it that Europe overtakes what was done several thousands of years ago in India, among the nation of thinkers, in accordance with the commandments of reason! There are today among the various nations of Europe perhaps ten to twenty million people who no longer ‘believe in God’ – is it too much to ask that they should *give a sign* to one another? Once they have thus come to *know* one another, they will also have made themselves known to others – they will at once constitute a *power* in Europe and, happily, a power *between* the nations! Between the classes! Between rich and poor! Between rulers and subjects! Between the most unpeaceable and the most peaceable, peace-brining people!

Now, does Nietzsche really believe there to be some ten to twenty million atheists in Europe? We have no reason to suspect otherwise if by atheism Nietzsche means merely that these people believe themselves to have dismissed the idea of God. These deny God with their tongues but not with their heart: the shadows of God find numerous hiding-places in such souls. More than likely, Nietzsche was the only through and through “atheist” of his time, having conquered both the moral God and his shadows in himself. But even to have consciously dismissed the idea of god is, for Nietzsche’s purposes, progress along this track to the total de-deification of the world (understanding the deity here to be the moral God). For what matter is it whether men become atheists through good arguments or otherwise? What matters is that the future generations be more and more deeply atheistic and it is of no consequence whether their ancestors acted from philosophy or just the sheer folly of the ‘spirit of their times’; that is, having established to his own satisfaction that the Biblical God is untrue Nietzsche can aim for his further refutation through history – that is, the refutation of God through his sheer *irrelevance* in the human future – and is willing to employ all means, such as conjecture, mockery, polemic, sophistry, rhetoric, and more, to bring about that desired irrelevance in the future.

Nietzsche takes a cue from India as to the stages of progression that await Europe. In India, the priests were held to be more powerful than the gods and their power was thought to lie in the observances. This had the effect of making the gods superfluous as a matter of primary concern, since the priests had the real power through the observances. But since the observances, then, were the real key to power the stage was set for the Buddha and his teaching of self-redemption: here, the observances remain but the priests

and mediators now become superfluous as one can observe the observances oneself.

Nietzsche asks¹³¹:

When, finally, all the observances and customs upon which the power of the gods and of the priests and redeemers depends will have been abolished, when, that is to say, morality in the old sense will have died, then there will come – well, what will come then?

At this point a teaching of self-redemption will emerge that will exceed in power and rationality even the self-redemptive teaching of the Buddha: man, or European man at least (though for Nietzsche Europe is almost fated to pilot the human future), will have to give himself laws and obey his self-imposed laws. This much is clearly in *Daybreak*, as was made clear in our discussion of Nietzsche's medicinal project. Will he also, as he moves further out of the shadow of God's corpse, create new gods for himself? That he will do so is *not* in *Daybreak*: Nietzsche himself has not yet reached this point in his thinking and destiny, though he will do so very soon. For what will the new morning be like without a god for its sun? Is man a star sufficient to the task of alone lighting up a glorious horizon? Can there be meaning and beauty in human life when severed from God? *Can man be man* without a God? But be that as it may, Nietzsche here encourages European man to first do what was done thousands of years ago in India and expel the belief in the moral God; without this real historical move our speculations will remain idle speculations which, though not necessarily lacking value for us on that account, will necessarily fail to benefit our fellow men. To the extent, then, that they are charitable in this respect – and moreover to the extent that they agree with Nietzsche – it falls upon all thinkers concerned with the future of Europe (whether for Europe's sake or the world's in general), to heed Nietzsche's call and advance European atheism. Whether this endeavor

¹³¹ And we note here once again the clear formulation of his fundamental thesis, namely, that all the powers of gods and priests, including above all the inspirational powers of the former – and in particular of the Biblical God and the Christian priests – rest in *morality*, i.e., in our moral prejudices.

be honest or otherwise each human being must attempt to learn for themselves.

Conclusion

The Prefatory Character of the Work

To summarize, as concerns Nietzsche's denial of the Biblical God, all that we have traversed so far, the Biblical God is denied by Nietzsche as unintelligible, unevidenced, and irrelevant (that is, even were he to exist). To begin with his unintelligibility, the "revealed" God is judged unintelligible because his morality demands unconditional sacrifice and obedience to his moral will at the threat of punishment, and yet his will as moral is unknowable according to Nietzsche. Morality is *not* unfulfillable because we are too sinful in our nature to fulfill it; morality, goodness, the Christian life *as such* is unfulfillable because it demands unconditional love and unconditional hate for something essentially unknown and unknowable, namely, good and evil. Thus it is not even to be deemed "unfulfillable", as though there were even any progress: morality has no feet even to get off the ground. Man is promised reward and threatened with punishment for obedience or disobedience to a will he cannot know.

By our inability to know good and evil and thus to know and love God's will, the punishing and rewarding God is condemned by his own morality: his claim to being a just judge who provides us the means to our own salvation or damnation must be deemed *dishonest*. This insight is grounded on an insight into *our* dishonesty, for our claims concerning the exaltedness of our life in the faith, our claims concerning our morality and moral knowledge, prove in the end to be *dishonest claims* born of *immoral* affects and opinions: the moral man, according to Nietzsche as a once-moral-man, neither knows nor loves good and evil. Were the God to reward or punish he would appear tyrannical or

unjust: he cannot give anyone what they deserve because men are entirely incapable of *deserving* anything. In fact even if we *could somehow* deserve anything we could not know the *basis* of that deserving, for our failure to know it is inseparable from His inability to communicate it to us. The actions and preferences of such a Deity would thus be essentially unintelligible; even were such a God to truly exist, we could not possibly *know how to comport ourselves to Him*. That is, even were He to exist He would have to be practically irrelevant, since one cannot possibly know what thought and actions could earn His favor or His disfavor. To go further, were such a God *proven* to exist it is difficult to see how life under his Lordship (or tyranny) could even be endured.

It remains that we summarize similarly Nietzsche's related claim that the God is *unevidenced*. Aside from his attack on the Bible as text, as doctrine, as revealed, and as historically trustworthy, the very core of Nietzsche's investigation of the theological is, as we have seen, his investigation of the innermost psychological testimonies of believers. But if, as Nietzsche argues, the Biblical God is unintelligible, unevidenced, and irrelevant were he to exist, why then do we deem God and feel God to be intelligible, evidenced, and supremely relevant? Out of the will to power, according to Nietzsche. Or, as it is put in *Daybreak*: out of vanity, lust for power, impatience, terror, and enraptured and fearful delusion on the part of men (*Daybreak*, aphorism 93). And according to Nietzsche, when one no longer *opines* the presence of righteousness in pious beliefs and actions, one no longer *feels* or experiences such beliefs and actions as righteous, holy, or inspired. At this point, the case for the God appears to *lack evidence*. In this manner Nietzsche leaps right *over* all necessarily inconclusive arguments for and against Biblical truth which take their bearings from the Bible as text (revealed or otherwise) or as history (trustworthy or

otherwise). Nietzsche's is *not* a rationalist's nor a positivist's investigation into the theological if by that we mean that the religious life is held up to the standard of some humanly posited, 'rational' system of thought, whether it be historiographical analysis, psychological analysis, comparative ethnological analysis, modern natural scientific analysis, or any other such. Rather, Nietzsche's investigation into the origin of religious experiences allows the believer full reign to give an account of himself on the basis of his own self-understanding, for it is based on Nietzsche's own honest investigation into his own moral and religious opinions and experiences. He only requires of the believer one small thing which he himself has done relentlessly, namely: that they inquire honestly into their opinions concerning good and evil.

On the basis of the preceding, then, we can say with confidence that the scholarly literature hitherto has missed the mark as concerns the reasons for Nietzsche's atheism. True, Nietzsche does argue that moral opinions and sentiments can be traced causally to immoral origins in the soul, but his argument is not for that reason 'reductionistic' or "sophistical" (as claimed above all – and in passing – by Eugen Fink): Nietzsche's investigation into morality and religion is neither axiomatic nor eristic but rather, is truly philosophic inasmuch as he approached moral-religious questions as serious and genuine questions, bringing, as we have seen from the discussion of this dissertation, all of his tremendous powers of heart and mind to bear on his treatment. And whereas both Eugen Fink and Giles Fraser argue that Nietzsche's understanding of "truth" as subservient to "life" caused him to not even ask the question as to the truth of religion, we have seen that, on the contrary, Nietzsche's advancement of *life* (conceived by him as will to power) as the ultimate standard of value comes with a thoughtful and simultaneously

advanced denial of all moral-religious standards of truth and value (all of which hinge on the existence of the God who supposedly grounds and reveals such standards). The same holds true, clearly, for Walter Kaufmann's claim that Nietzsche's opposition to the Christian faith is *ultimately* reducible to the contrast between strength and weakness as developed by his philosophy of power.

To continue along this track, as opposed to Charles M. Natoli's argument, we have seen that Nietzsche does not commit the 'genetic fallacy,' nor is his treatment merely axiomatic, and as opposed to R. Motson Thompson's claims, I have shown that Nietzsche's atheism is not to be understood as the mere product of insanity, prejudice, and mockery. As concerns Morgan Rempel's valuable treatment, wherein he isolates Nietzsche's psychological-historical examinations – especially the examination of Paul – as the key to his entire treatment of Christianity, I have shown that Rempel still did not go far enough on this track: of utmost importance is Nietzsche's psychological-historical examination into *himself* and the conclusions he draws thereby concerning the revelatory experiences that constitute our best evidence for the truth of our faith. Lastly, I believe I have shown that Nietzsche's analysis of Christianity is not thoughtfully understood as the strange and resentful product of his own 'closet-Christianity,' nor as the product of his peculiar childhood (both of which are argued, for example, by Giles Fraser).

Above all, however, I believe I have demonstrated the deepest character of Nietzsche's historical method and the manner in which Nietzsche deemed it a refutation of the Biblical God. Contrary to Schacht, Dannhauser, Lowith, Fraser, and Fink, the arguments provided on Nietzsche's behalf in the preceding dissertation have shown, I believe, that Nietzsche's speculations concerning the history of moral-religious illusion

over time are in fact grounded on a more fundamental historical analysis: the history of moral-religious illusions in the soul and above all in the soul of Nietzsche himself.

The final statement of the preceding aphorism offers the perfect thread by which to discuss explicitly and for the last time the issue of the meaning of Nietzsche's affirmation of Dionysus. Throughout the preceding work, the primary emphasis has been to show that Nietzsche's self-knowledge (gained through the psychological-historical examination of himself) is in fact the ultimate and most serious ground for his arguments concerning the human past and the role of morality in that past. But Nietzsche's self-knowledge (as this work has also repeatedly argued), inasmuch as the self-investigation into his origins (in every respect) not only revealed his morality and the totality of his person to be will to power – thus “refuting” the Biblical God in the manner laid out in the entirety of this work – but likewise revealed every thought he could possibly have concerning the “external” world – and likewise the best explanatory principle by which to explain the subjective information those subjective thoughts *were providing him* of the external world (Nietzsche did not *ignore* the information provided by the modern sciences but rather, employed those findings in the advancement of his own doctrine; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 3, 4, 14, and 36) – to be will to power, is also the ground of the Dionysian future he hopes to help actualize. The inner possibilities of Nietzsche's soul as the basic eternal text *homo natura*, as known and experienced by him in his lived life, and above all *self-reflectively* lived life, lay out the terrain of the human

destiny from the entirety of where it has come from to the opening of a new horizon to which it *may* go to in the future. However, it *may not* go there as well¹³². Nietzsche, as is well known, poses the “immediate” future paths available to man as that of the last man and the Dionysian overman. But what will the Dionysian overman be like in his aspect as Dionysian?—We can only know Nietzsche’s answer to this by looking to Nietzsche’s answer to the question of his own person and the manner in which he experienced himself as *Dionysian*. Moreover, another and intimately related question naturally arises: is it fair to say that Nietzsche calls out for something that could be called *religion*, albeit Dionysian “religion?” Let us, then, offer a summary response to these questions that encapsulates the work’s argument.

As we have seen, as Dionysian the overman will not judge the universe by any standard outside of the universe, and will hold all events to be necessary and hence innocent. He will not orient himself to the world with a posture of wanting to take revenge on it for the suffering it has inflicted on him through its dangerousness and, above all, through his and its fleetingness, for he has willed the world he knows and the life he actually has as it is and without hope of anything other (being strong enough to do so) and moreover has willed their eternity. This willing of eternity is not a “feel-good-ideal” that the overman takes upon himself but rather, an insight into the character of his own essence, his own *self-reflectively lived life*, that reveals to him from the heart of Being that he *is* this eternally loving pathos, and likewise that everything else that lives – which is everything, on this thinking – is this pathos as well. He will believe in destiny

¹³² In aphorism 203 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, an aphorism that displays one of the most personal discussions of himself in all of his written works (since it speaks not of what he *has* suffered and lived through but to the very innermost and most concealed aspects of what he *was* suffering and living through as he wrote the words themselves—and in all likelihood, continued to suffer to the end of his life), Nietzsche tells us of his terrible concern for the human future.

and fate but as an eternity that is given without intention by Being, and *not* as what is *prewritten* by an intelligent and forethoughtful Deity. He will call everything on earth *divine* and *holy* just as Nietzsche had his Zarathustra pronounce all things thus, and it is in this aspect of seeing all things as being divine and holy (i.e., eternal and lovable in the exaltation of their nature), that Nietzsche's Dionysian pathos can be called *religious*. For as we have discussed, will *as will* puts forth a possibility or ideal of itself that is loved or revered and which it seeks to actualize, and not only actualize but actualize as something eternal, and it does this as power-maximizing-ideating-striving for eternal self-enhancement. On the one hand the will seeks to actualize a possibility as eternal, but no sooner has it attained to that possibility (or its closest attainable approximation) than it seeks to actualize itself as yet another and more powerful ideated possibility of itself. This dual nature of will as a kind of eternal pregnancy (i.e., as always giving birth to its own pregnancy) is paradoxical, to be sure, but one must not allow this to forbid them from thinking on the essential unity of this "eternal pregnancy," or "religious instinct." But these matters have already been discussed at great length in the work itself.

Before leaving the issue of Dionysian religion (cf. the discussion of Lorraine Lampert and *The religious essence* in chapter two of this work), the following question should be responded to: what will (or would) the character of the future Dionysian religion be like? Now there is a sense in which the question, as I myself have formulated it, is itself wrongheaded and misleading, and in order to understand Nietzsche's thinking on this matter a rather subtle distinction must be drawn between what Nietzsche calls "the religious instinct" or "the god-forming instinct" at aphorism 1038 of *The Will to power* and "religion" as the body of commands dictating the opinions and actions toward which

to relate oneself to the divine. In a sense, there can be no “Dionysian religion”: the religious instinct (i.e., the Dionysian pathos) is the instinct of Being and *it creates* a conventional “religion”, which religion, in turn, inasmuch as it advances itself as true and unconditional, is but a mask of Dionysus’ employed in the service of the religious instinct that he (it) *is*. In a sense, and expressed in necessarily paradoxical language, there can be no Dionysian religion and yet every religion that ever was has been Dionysian in essence.

Now, inasmuch as a religion whose adherents consciously understood themselves to be engaged in something artful and highly conditional would seem incapable of drawing forth from common people the requisite passion by which to *live for* that religion, one can only assume that the philosopher-legislators will understand this distinction between the religious instinct and the conventional religion, and that the followers will hold their new religion to be unconditionally true and binding. But can we say anything about what the particularities of such possible religions will be like? Absolutely not (and thus Nietzsche never ventures to say so). But we know that the philosopher-legislator will give them the best religion applicable that approximates the truth of will to power/eternal return. Thus we know something not about the specific rules and doctrines – the letter – of those future religions but we do or at least can know very much about their *spirit*. The spirit of those future religions will be Dionysian, which means, essentially, the points laid out in the first two-thirds of the immediately preceding paragraph. Let us, then, leave for good the explicit and thematic topic of Nietzsche’s affirmation of Dionysus and return in conclusion to the primary theme of the work: Nietzsche’s claimed “refutation” of the moral God.

Having concluded our some four-hundred page analysis of Nietzsche's "atheism," we can say that we have seen the reasons for (the *why*), and character (the *how* or manner) of, Nietzsche's denial of providence or the moral God, that we have given Nietzsche "his say". Or have we? In the first place, our arguments have been partial and sometimes even severed almost entirely from the whole phenomenon which they are addressing, and this even on the specific level of analysis or within the specific 'realm' in which they are addressing it. Distortion, perhaps even gross distortion, is inescapable at every turn when one argues in this manner. This is especially relevant to Nietzsche's psychological-historical method, which continually seeks the "*why*" (and "*how*") of our religious feelings and evaluations. For Nietzsche, to ask "*why*?" is to inquire after reasons, and in his psychology this means primarily to inquire into opinions, affects, and motives or drives (i.e., all the elements of our *experiences*; these are the surface and depths and grounds of our experiences in Nietzsche's thought, all of which become synthesized in the metaphysical ground that is the *will to power*; Heidegger later claims that experience must be thought on – if we are truly to understand it *fundamentally* – existentially): he asks, "*why* do you think this or that?" and "*why* do you feel this or that way?" and "*how* do you feel when you do this or that action?" and "*why* do you think that action best?" and so forth, and in so doing asks us to ask ourselves. Yet as Nietzsche would himself teach, we rarely if ever "do anything" out of "*one* motive" (*Daybreak*, aphorism 134; nor do we ever have only *one* feeling about a thing; nor one opinion about a thing). Yet so often in our discussions we have had to isolate one judgment or one

feeling or one motive (or very few), and so we do injustice to the phenomenon in question (that is, the phenomenon of moral experiences, whether manifesting themselves in pity, romantic love, noble actions, or so forth). Such arguments can only begin to be plausible when integrated into the work as a whole.

Secondly, not only have our arguments in the preceding work been partial in the ways indicated when taken individually, taken as a whole they do not even approach anything like an exhaustive account of Nietzsche's treatment. That said, my intention has been to provide enough of Nietzsche's argumentation to establish the essence of his argument against the moral God, and in this I may perhaps have succeeded.

This too must be noted thirdly: Nietzsche's stance towards the moral God can never be understood by collecting together all of his arguments, not even if one added to this all of the arguments he had at his disposal but did *not* put in writing (which would far, far outweigh those he put into writing). Indeed, ultimately, any writing that does not point beyond itself and all mere "arguments" to what is truly decisive but cannot be written at all is chatter. Nietzsche's writings are not chatter. — Born from his experiences, Nietzsche's philosophy of life, as written, points beyond itself and its author "Herr Nietzsche" to the hermit Nietzsche and those lived experiences; the action, the lived life of Nietzsche, is his essential "argument," and it says "will to power" (alternatively, it speaks of his *Dionysian* experience of life). Consider for example aphorism 102 of *Daybreak*:

The oldest moral judgments. – What really are our reactions to the behavior of someone in our presence? -- First of all, we see what there is in it for *us* – we regard it only from this point of view. We take *this* effect as the *intention* behind the behavior – and finally we ascribe the harboring of such intentions as a *permanent* quality of the person whose behavior we are observing and thenceforth call him, for instance, 'a harmful person'. Three-fold error! Three-fold primeval blunder! Perhaps inherited from the animals and their power of judgment! Is the *origin of all morality* not to be sought in the detestable petty conclusions: 'what harms *me* is something *evil* (harmful in itself): what is useful *to me* is something *good* (beneficent and advantageous in

itself): what harms me *once or several times* is the inimical as such and in itself; what is useful to me *once or several times* is the friendly as such and in-itself'. *O pudenda origo!* Does that not mean; to imagine that the paltry, occasional, often chance *relationship* of another with oneself is his *essence* and most essential being, and to assert that with the whole world and with himself he is capable only of those relationships we have experienced with him once or several times? And does there not repose behind this veritable folly the most immodest of all secret thoughts: that, because good and evil are measured according to our reactions, we ourselves must constitute the principle of the good?

How could one possibly give an exhaustive account of this argument, and how could such an exhaustive account begin to be compelling? One has to experience *oneself* making this moral-ontological judgment, i.e., the judgment, “a thing is *in itself* as I experience it: good *because* it benefits me and evil *because* it harms me” with its attendant feelings twelve-dozen times a day, and not only with respect to persons as such but also with respect to things, actions, judgments, and all that in any way is. One has to self-consciously experience this “false, inverted positivity” (*Daybreak*, aphorism 118) as manifested *in life* to really appreciate Nietzsche’s argument, the necessary condition of one’s being genuinely open to the possibility of finding it persuasive, or of refuting it. The experience of shame and disgust at prior moral beliefs (and their attendant feelings) now become unbelievable because shown to be immoral in their origin (and in the best case, because they no longer serve life and are thus enervating or tasteless beliefs), that is a “refutation” on Nietzsche’s account.

It is clear, then, that the way through the writing and to the man Nietzsche is through oneself, through one’s own lived experiences and above all the lived experience of one’s philosophizing. Only then is a friendship possible between the reader and the hermit Nietzsche. Such friends do not appropriate one another’s ‘truths’ nor one another’s experiences of life nor one another’s autonomy or freedom; rather, shared insights and experiences (both of which can be similar but never identical) and above all a shared *pathos* is what unites such friends, together with a shared respect for and caution

before what divides them (their dissimilarities). If one is to learn from Nietzsche the goal of reading Nietzsche must never be to win him for oneself but rather to win oneself for oneself, tunneling and mining and undermining the depths and grounds of one's own soul, open to the possibility of being aided by one who knows how it is done because he has done it himself. In this sense as well as others Nietzsche, acting as catalyst, can be dynamite. Any other approach to a great thinker is mere curiosity, treating the thinker's thoughts as something objective that can be laid out, approached, dissected, taken in, digested, and reported upon in books, journals, dissertations, newspapers, and all the myriad ways in which what is profound in a thinker's thinking is reduced to chatter or idle talk when approached by those who are not "predisposed" and "predestined" for such an approach (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 30). As Nietzsche says (*Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 43; cf. aphorism 213): "In the end it must be as it is and always has been: great things remain for the great, abysses for the profound, nuances and shudders for the refined, and, in brief, all that is rare for the rare." What, then, are the rest of us to do, we who are not great? — For we must decide on great matters and cannot allow the decision to be made for us.

We may say, then, and this with the utmost caution, that we have given Nietzsche his say. But what can be said as testimony *against* Nietzsche? The preceding work has for the most part and deliberately ignored such counter-arguments, burying them in silence or near silence. The reasons for this are several. First, I have attempted to give Nietzsche's argument its full due by allowing it to unravel in its full force; only then, after Nietzsche "has by this means become a god with shining weapons" (*Daybreak*, aphorism 431), would it be appropriate to attack him. Having put Nietzsche's argument

forth for some three hundred-sixty pages, similar works of proximate length would be required in order to give the powerful counter-arguments to Nietzsche's *their* full due. This entails that this entire work has been in a manner prefatory, for our primary concern has never been Nietzsche as Nietzsche (that is, in the subjectivity of his "ipsissimosity"; *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 207), but only the philosophical-religious question itself, a question that could be explored in many more works without a one of them ever losing their prefatory character; which is to say, without the question readily ceasing to be a *question*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dannhauser, W. (1974). *Nietzsche's View of Socrates*. UK: Cornell University Press.
- Fink, E. (2003). *Nietzsche's Philosophy*. New York: Continuum.
- Fraser, G. (2002). *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief*. New York: Routledge.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and Time*. trans. Stambaugh. USA: SUNY Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1977). *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. USA: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Heidegger, M. (1991). *Nietzsche Volumes One and Two*. USA: Harper San Francisco.
- Heidegger, M. (2004). *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. USA: Indiana University Press.
- Jaspers, K. (1967). *Philosophical Faith and Revelation* trans. E.B. Ashton. New York, Harper & Row.
- Kaufmann, W. (1974). *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Knight, G. W. (1948). *Christ and Nietzsche: An Essay in Poetic Wisdom*. Great Britain, Staples Press Limited.
- Lampert, Laurence. (1996). *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lampert, Laurence. (2001). *Nietzsche's Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Löwith, K. (1997). *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. USA: University of California Press.
- Natoli, C. (1985). *Nietzsche and Pascal on Christianity*. New York : P. Lang.
- Nietzsche, F. (1966). *Beyond Good and Evil* trans. Kaufmann. USA: Random House.
- Nietzsche, F. (1968). *The Will to Power* trans. Kaufmann. USA: Random House.

- Nietzsche, F. (1968). *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ* trans. Hollingdale. USA: Penguin Books.
- Nietzsche, F. (1962). *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. USA: Henrey Regnery Company.
- Nietzsche, F. (1969). *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* trans. Kaufmann. New York: Modern Library.
- Nietzsche, F. (1969). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* trans. Hollingdale. USA: Penguin Books.
- Nietzsche, F. (1974). *Gay Science* trans. Kaufmann. USA: Random House.
- Nietzsche, F. (1982). *Daybreak* trans. Hollingdale. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1996). *Human, All Too Human* trans. Hollingdale. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1983). *Untimely Meditations* trans. Hollingdale. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Rempel, M. (2002). *Nietzsche, Psychohistory, and the Birth of Christianity*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Strauss, L. (1983). *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*. USA: University of Chicago Press.
- Thompson, R.M. (1951). *Nietzsche and Christian Ethics*. New York: Philosophical Library.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02956 4022