VIRTUE BEYOND MORALITY:
NIETZSCHE'S ETHICAL NATURALISM

by

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ABSTRACT

I set out to show in this study that Nietzsche deserves to take his place in the ranks of such ethical thinkers as Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes and Hume, Kant and Mill. For he has important contributions to make in a number of areas, both critical and constructive. He shows us why and how we need to move from "the peculiar institution" of Christian-Kantian morality to an ethical approach that is aretaic and naturalist. He has intriguing things to say about the genealogy of our moral concepts, the death of God and its implications, and what is at stake in embracing egoism and determinism. His ideas about "life" and "value" are still relevant to the naturalist meta-ethical project. His ambivalent reflections on contractarian justice are a worthy supplement to Hobbes and Hume. He challenges us to think critically about pity and altruism, and his treatment of the sentiments of benevolence is richer and more subtle than is generally acknowledged. And I would argue, he is the greatest philosopher of virtue since Hume - if not Aristotle - with original and instructive things to say about intellectual honesty, the modern virtue of autonomy, the world-affirming ideal of amor fati, and the outlook of abundance which is central to the motivation of all the virtues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The origins of this thesis go back a long way. I first read Nietzsche when I was sixteen. I enjoyed his criticisms of Christian religion, his celebration of individuality, and his intellectual daring and honesty. For my early interest in philosophy and related subjects, I must thank my mother, Betty Beam, and my brother, David Beam, both of whom were going to university while I was growing up.

As an undergraduate at Brock University, I encountered Nietzsche again in the context of existentialism and intellectual history. The philosophy department there was very continentally oriented. Several professors fed my interest in Nietzsche, each interpreting him quite differently. I particularly wish to thank John Mayer and Monica Hornyansky for their continuing friendship.

At Waterloo, I became very interested in ethics. Jan Narveson got me thinking about liberalism and contract theory. I did an ethics area with Jim Horne, with a focus on recent neo-Aristotelian ethics and the moral philosophy of Hume. I became committed to virtue ethics and to naturalism, and found that my work in ethics afforded me new insights into Nietzsche. While the literature on him is voluminous, little of it is informed by a knowledge of ethical theory that is very deep or wide-ranging. As I began to plan my thesis, it became clear that if I was to deal convincingly with Nietzsche's virtue ethics, I would have to cover a lot more ground than is typically done in a dissertation. I would have to show how the various constructive themes of his ethics are related to his naturalism, and this would involve me in a discussion of the will to power and other topics. I would also have to distinguish the ethical ideas that Nietzsche embraced from those he rejected - meaning that I would have to give an analysis of his criticisms of morality. And I would have to say something about my reasons for interpreting Nietzsche in "ethical" and "naturalist" rather than "postmodern" terms. With Nietzsche, more than with most thinkers, it is hard to deal adequately with the parts except in relation to the whole.

The structure of Virtue Beyond Morality remains pretty much as I first envisioned it in the spring of 1996, but the writing of it was a longer and more arduous process than I anticipated. There are several individuals whom I wish to thank. My co-supervisors, Richard Holmes and Jim Horne, allowed me to choose a topic that bridged their areas of expertise and to pursue it in my own way. Richard was expeditious in arranging my oral defence in mid-summer. The other members of my committee were Margaret Moore, Bill Abbott, David Davies, and the external examiner, Frithjoh Bergmann.

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To the memory of my father
CARLTON BEAM (1925-1996)

Who worked hard in a factory
and was proud of his children

Hasn't the time come to say of morality what Master Eckhart said: "I ask God to rid me of God." (GS 292)

Beyond Good and Evil. - At least this does not mean "Beyond Good and Bad." (GM I:17)

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REFERENCE KEY

References to the following works by Nietzsche are incorporated in the text and are given by aphorism or section number. This system has three advantages: it greatly reduces the need for endnotes, it makes it possible for users of any edition or translation to locate my references, and it is consistent with the most commonly followed conventions of Nietzsche scholarship. The majority of Nietzsche's books consist of short sections that are numbered consecutively. Roman numerals are used to designate the Essays of the Genealogy and the parts of other books that are not numbered consecutively (including TI where I have substituted numerals for titles). Since the sections of UM are too long to be conveniently located in this manner, I have here supplied both page and section numbers. "P" always refers to a Preface or Prologue written by Nietzsche.

BT The Birth of Tragedy (Der Geburt der Tragödie, 1872), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967).

UM Untimely Meditations (Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, 1873-76), trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Cited both by page number in UM and by section number in particular essays, namely:

- DS David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer (1873)
- HL On the Uses and Disadvanatges of History for Life (1874)
- SE Schopenhauer as Educator (1874)

HA Human, All Too Human (Menschliches, Allzumenschliches, 1878), trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Volume II:1 and II:2, which were added later, are cited as follows:

- AO Assorted Opinions and Maxims (1879)
- WS The Wanderer and his Shadow (1880)

D Daybreak (Morgenröthe, 1881), trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

GS The Gay Science (Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, 1882), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974). Book Five was added in 1887.

Z Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Also Sprach Zarathustra, 1883-85), trans. Walter Kaufmann in The Portable Nietzsche (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954). Four Parts with individual sections.

BGE Beyond Good and Evil (Jenseits von Gut und Böse, 1886), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966).

GM On the Genealogy of Morals (Zur Genealogie der Moral, 1887), trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967). Three Essays with individual sections.

TI Twilight of the Idols (Götzen-Dämmerung, 1889), trans. Walter Kaufmann in The Portable Nietzsche. Ten Parts with individual sections.

A The Antichrist (Der Antichrist, 1895), trans. Walter Kaufmann in The Portable Nietzsche.

EH Ecce Homo (1908), trans. Walter Kaufmann (with the Genealogy). Four parts with individual sections.

WP The Will to Power (Der Wille zur Macht), trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J Hollindale (New York: Random House, 1967). Selections from the notebooks of 1883-1888.

References to Nietzsche's letters and other Nachlass material are given in the notes.

INTRODUCTION

1. Nietzsche and Contemporary Ethics

The philosophy of Nietzsche has received a good deal of attention in recent years, although there is little agreement concerning its nature and significance. Frequently, Nietzsche has been read through the lens of postmodernism, as a precursor of such figures as Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty. The postmodern or "New Nietzsche" is not merely an anti-metaphysician, but an anti-philosopher who is too playful and skeptical to be interested in theorizing about human nature, ethics, or how we should live. Yet at the same time, Nietzsche has increasingly been taken seriously as a moral philosopher. Interest in this topic can be attributed to several factors.

First, Nietzsche's work is now more potentially relevant to Anglo-American ethics than it ever was in past decades. Early in the 20th century, the field was strongly influenced by the intuitionism and anti-naturalism of G.E. Moore. Around mid-century, it was dominated by logical and linguistic analysis. When normative theory began to re-emerge in the sixties and seventies, utilitarian and Kantian theories (mostly of an abstract and rationalistic nature) came to monopolize the mainstream. Throughout all these periods, Nietzsche was largely ignored. None of the above methods of ethics provided much incentive to study Nietzsche - a harsh critic of utilitarian and Kantian morality whose concerns are remote from the analytic paradigm.

However, recent developments in the world of English-speaking ethics have begun to alter this situation. Starting with G.E.M. Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy" and continuing in the works of Bernard Williams, Martha Nussbaum, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and Michael Slote, there has been a turn away from utilitarian and deontological moral theory in favour of a more Aristotelian, virtue-ethical approach. This Aristotelian turn in ethics is in some ways also a turn to Nietzsche. Like Aristotle, Nietzsche can best be understood as a naturalist and a virtue ethicist. Philosophers influenced by Aristotle and Greek ethics, such as Williams, Nussbaum, and MacIntyre, tend to take Nietzsche

seriously and engage with his thought. They share his concern with the classical question of "How should one live?" (Nussbaum) or "What sort of person am I to become?" (MacIntyre), rather than merely "What is our moral duty?" or "What rules ought we to follow?"[1] They share his interest in moral psychology, and in the history of our moral concepts. The idea of linking Nietzsche with Aristotle may seem strange to Thomists or Postmodernists. But among Nietzsche scholars, it goes back at least to Walter Kaufmann, who argued that Nietzsche is a naturalist, and that his ethical ideal owes something to Aristotle's great-souled man. More recently, an Aristotelian reading of Nietzsche's ethics has been defended by Robert Solomon, while Lester Hunt has written a study of Nietzsche as a virtue-ethicist.[2]

Contemporary neo-Aristotelians also share with Nietzsche an interest in criticizing modern moral philosophy. Some of their arguments resemble points that Nietzsche made a century ago. For example, Anscombe is well-known for arguing that "ought" in the categorical sense of moral obligation is a relic of the divine law conception of morality, which makes little sense in the absence of a divine lawgiver.[3] This (perhaps unconsciously) echoes Nietzsche's claim that "there is no longer any 'ought'; for morality, insofar as it was an 'ought', has been just as much annihilated by our mode of thinking as has religion" (HA 34). Williams' ethical thought is even more clearly related to Nietzsche. His critique of "Morality, the Peculiar Institution" in Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy makes use of several Nietzschean ideas. Williams argues that morality - as a special system, completely pure, which transcends inclination, determinism, and luck - involves many philosophical mistakes and is an expression "of a deeply rooted and still powerful misconception of life."[4] In Shame and Necessity, he follows Nietzsche in turning to the ethical ideas of the Presocratic Greeks, which he regards as particularly relevant to our "ethical condition that lies not only beyond Christianity, but beyond its Kantian and its Hegelian legacies."[5]

Another major trend in recent ethics has been the re-emergence of contract theory, in the work of such figures as John Rawls and David Gauthier. This development is more relevant to Nietzsche than

one might suppose. Although few commentators have dealt with the subject (and none of them in any detail), Nietzsche does take a contractarian view of justice, not only in the Second Essay of the Genealogy of Morals, but elsewhere.[6] Nietzsche, of course, would have many disagreements with contemporary contractarians. He would object to Rawls' egalitarianism, and to Gauthier's reliance on economic man and economic rationality. Like Hume, he would refuse to reduce all of ethics to contractarian terms.[7] Nevertheless, in their conceptions of justice at least, Nietzsche and Gauthier are both tough-minded neo-Hobbesians. For Nietzsche, justice is a human artifice, applying only between parties of approximately equal power. It is grounded in their need to come to terms with one another, and to compel weaker parties to make peace (GM II:8). Such a theory warrants comparison with those of other figures within the contractarian tradition.

In fact, Gauthier even presents the need for contract theory as arising out of a Nietzschean problematic.[8] He sees morality as facing a foundational crisis, which Nietzsche was one of the first to recognize. This crisis, he argues, requires recourse to contractarianism. In an era when the will to truth has rendered the notion of an objective "moral law" unbelievable and undermined the authority of tradition, we are faced with a situation in which an appeal to contract - based on people's non-moral desires, needs, and interests - is one of the few ethical approaches that remain viable.

The renewal of interest in Nietzsche's ethical thought has been made possible by the waning of his old image (prevalent several decades ago in the English-speaking world) as a dangerous thinker and a menace to all that is decent or humane. This development owes a great deal to the work of Walter Kaufmann. Today, memory of Nietzsche's use and abuse by the Nazis (and by anti-German war propagandists) no longer colours his reception as it once did. Nietzsche still has his detractors, but even most of them treat him as an influential and challenging thinker, who is worthy of respect.[9] Consider, for instance, Allan Bloom's treatment of Nietzsche in The Closing of the American Mind. His Nietzsche is both a philosopher of the highest order (with many insights,

especially concerning the problem of the "last man") and a teacher of dangerous, subversive ideas. His main charges against Nietzsche are that he is an anti-rationalist (in opposition to both Plato and the Enlightenment) and a relativist, who reduces good and evil to "values," none of which are rationally or objectively preferable to any others.[10] Bloom treats Nietzsche as the prophet of our morally uncertain age - a prophet whose corrosive thinking (passed down through such German figures as Max Weber and Sigmund Freud) has eroded the old-time moral faith.

Nietzsche plays a similar role in MacIntyre's After Virtue. For MacIntyre, Nietzsche is the philosopher who most clearly reveals the bankruptcy of the "Enlightenment project" of rationally justifying morality. He is the arch-unmasker, who condemns moral judgements as masks "worn by the will-to-power of those too weak and slavish to assert themselves with archaic and aristocratic grandeur."[11] MacIntyre's Nietzsche is an emotivist in holding moral judgements to be subjective, and an existentialist in holding them to be expressions of arbitrary will. Moreover, he is a thinker who comprehends more fully than anyone else the destructive impact of such conclusions on our inherited structures of moral argument and belief. This makes him "the moral philosopher of the present age"[12] - an age which MacIntyre sees as one of emotive disagreement and moral confusion.

MacIntyre asks us to choose between "Nietzsche or Aristotle?" For him, these philosophers represent radically different options. To choose "Nietzsche" is to accept that all attempts to justify morality are doomed to failure, and that values must be created or willed into existence by individuals. To choose "Aristotle" is to embrace the Aristotelian tradition of the virtues (as explicated by MacIntyre). It is to find one's telos in practices with internal standards of excellence, in the narrative unity of a human life and a moral tradition, and in social communities bound together by shared visions of the good.

MacIntyre, of course, wants us to choose Aristotle. He thinks that Nietzsche's critique (while successful against modern ethics) leaves the Aristotelian tradition totally unscathed, and that Nietzsche's positive ethical ideas are of little value. He calls

Nietzsche a moral solipsist, accusing him of envisioning people as isolated atoms who are forced to create their own standards in a void.[13] His Nietzsche represents the final, radical unfolding of liberal individualism. No basis for ethics is left standing, and nothing remains but arbitrary, atomistic, autonomous will. It is as an alternative to this bleak prospect, that MacIntyre offers us his version of Aristotelian ethics.

2. The Plan of this Study

The above survey brings home several points. It shows that Nietzsche has emerged as an important figure in some of the most influential ethical and political works of the 1980's. It suggests that Nietzsche was right when he predicted - in light of the "death of God" and the strength of our "will to truth" - that morality would gradually become a problem, and that those forms of it which were bound up with theological or metaphysical assumptions would have to follow God to the grave (GS 343-345). However, much of what Nietzsche has to offer remains neglected. In view of the depths and complexities of his ethical thought, mainstream moral philosophers have only begun to scratch the surface. With a few exceptions, they have yet to give the kind of careful and detailed attention to Nietzsche that has been given to the ethics of Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes and Hume, Kant and Mill. Nietzsche has usually been treated as a critical and destructive (or deconstructive) force, not as a thinker with insights that might help us think about ethics in a fruitful manner.

This study is an attempt to remedy this. I will proceed from the premis that Nietzsche's ethical thinking is coherent, and that it deserves a place near the centre of our reflections on moral philosophy. My focus will be on the constructive rather than the purely critical side of Nietzsche's contribution. While it is true that a majority of his ethical writings are devoted to critique (with Thus Spoke Zarathustra being a notable exception), this does not show that his teaching is predominantly negative. Rather, the temples of the old morality must be destroyed, so that more naturalistic and affirmative structures can be built (GM II:24). This study itself is essentially constructive. It aims to explore,

from the ground up, several of the strands of thought out of which a Nietzschean ethic can be developed, and to look at how they might fit together.

I do not claim that Nietzsche wants to erect a systematic "ethical theory" in any strong sense. As a perspectivist, he tends to think in terms of concrete particulars, and to force us to confront multiplicity. His many aphoristic books offer flashes of insight, criticism, and analysis which are brief but brilliant, and which are frequently presented in the context of some historical or personal observation. Thus Spoke Zarathustra, which he regarded as his most important book, is a dramatic narrative. Even his Genealogy of Morals departs from the usual conventions of theory-construction, providing us instead with three critical-historical accounts of three different aspects of morality.

However, there is no reason why ethical theorizing must be conducted in the manner of Aquinas or Kant. The simple dichotomy between "traditional theory" and "postmodern anti-theory" is a false one. Writers such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Voltaire, and Dostoevsky (all of whom Nietzsche admired) present ethical ideas in the context of the historical, personal, and particular. Their thinking is ethically significant, even if they are not "theorists" in the narrow sense. Nietzsche valued such writers over more abstract speculators. His own style of philosophizing, which makes use of aphorism, narrative, polemic, history, and autobiography, reflects the tradition of such figures rather than any sort of proto-postmodern break with the past. Like Plato or Hume, Nietzsche is concerned with fundamental questions of philosophy and ethical theory.

Moreover, his interest in exploring different perspectives does not prevent him from having, or at least aspiring towards, a unified view of things. In his Preface to the Genealogy of Morals, he presents the work as the culmination of a lifetime of ethical reflection, guided by the question: "under what conditions did man devise these value judgements good and evil? and what value do they themselves possess? Have they hitherto hindered or furthered human flourishing? [menschliche Gedeihen]" (GM P:3). Its main ideas, he says, have become more firmly entwined and interlaced with one

another over time. They are not merely isolated observations, but spring

> from a common root, a fundamental will to knowledge, pointing imperiously into the depths, speaking more and more precisely, demanding greater and greater precision. For this alone is fitting for a philosopher" (GM P:2).

Nietzsche develops a number of lines of thought which, taken together, and elaborated or qualified when necessary, provide the basis for a reasonably coherent and defensible ethics. The major strands of his ethical thought include:

(1) his critique of morality the peculiar institution, including its reliance on God, free will, and non-egoism (2:1--2:6)
(2) his naturalistic meta-ethic (3:1--3:2)
(3) his contractarian account of justice (3:3--3:4)
(4) his rejection of pity, with qualified support for other benevolent sentiments (3:5)
(5) his conception of virtue or human excellence, including such ideals as autonomy and amor fati (3:6--3:8)

Chapter One of this study paves the way for an analysis of Nietzsche's ethics by engaging with some rival interpretations, particularly those of MacIntyre and Nehamas. The former is a great stimulus for considering Nietzsche in relation to the history of ethics; the latter is a useful foil when discussing such postmodern themes as truth and rhetoric. Against MacIntyre, I argue that Nietzsche does not reject the "Enlightenment project" or the "Aristotelian tradition," at least in the sense in which these paradigms are best understood. Rather he carries them forward in his own way, and is in many respects an ally of Hume and Aristotle (though not of Kant and Aquinas). Nietzsche's emphasis on the individual is not a form of "moral solipsism" but an attempt to incorporate the modern value of autonomy within a classically aretaic ethics.

I then take on the postmodernists, defending my ethical focus against their very different reading of Nietzsche. I argue that perspectivism is not a form of radical skepticism or relativism; that it does not imply that one's views are only "true" for oneself, or that statements about ethics and human life cannot be

generally valid. Rather it involves a denial of non-perspectival knowledge (of "the thing-in-itself") and an emphasis upon employing a multiplicity of perspectives. I also examine the function of Nietzsche's style or rhetoric. It serves not just to illustrate his perspectivism, but to attract and win over free spirits. Like much else about Nietzsche's thought, its function is best understood in broadly ethical terms.

Chapter Two deals with Nietzsche's rejection of "morality, the peculiar institution." I focus on those elements of morality that he rejects, not merely because they conflict with his ideals, but because they are non-naturalistic or anti-natural - because they are based on metaphysically queer notions, or bad psychology, or resentment against life. On this basis, Nietzsche rejects Christian and Kantian morality, and goes after such targets as God, the moral law, free will, the unegoistic, and slave morality. In section 2:1, I argue that naturalism is at the centre of Nietzsche's critique of morality. This critique proceeds at three levels - the ontological, the evaluative, and the genealogical. At once, Nietzsche questions the truth, the value, and the origins of morality.

In 2:2 and 2:3, I discuss the meaning of the death of God and its consequences for morality. These include both the psychological implications of this event for a culture that has come to depend on God as a source of meaning and obligation, and its meta-ethical implications for the moral law conception of ethics. Nietzsche thinks that without a divine lawgiver, notions like the moral law or the categorical imperative are no longer defensible, and one cannot resurrect them by appealing to conscience or reason. All in all, he looks forward to the demise of the old religion and the old morality with hope.

In 2:4 and 2:5, I look at how Nietzsche's determinism and egoism puts him at odds with morality. To the extent that morality is identified with acts that are metaphysically free and utterly selfless, morality rests upon a mistaken view of human agency and motivation. Nietzsche dismisses the doctrine of free will as a theologians' artifice, invented to justify blaming and eternally punishing people for their sins. He unmasks moral retribution as a form of revenge, while not denying that punishment has its uses.

And he seeks to revalue egoism. To preach against our inclinations and demand that we surrender the ego - whether in the name of God, moral duty, or service to others - is to preach a form of ascetic self-denial. Instead of telling people that concern with the self and its interests is wicked, we should realize that the self is fluid and potentially expansive, and that self-interest is worth as much as the person who has it.

In 2:6, I finish off this chapter with an analysis of slave morality. What is distinctive about slave morality as presented in the First Essay of the Genealogy is not that it serves the interests of the weak and oppressed, but that it inverts noble values out of ressentiment. While the noble mode of valuation is aretaic, based on the non-moral distinction between good and bad (or admirable and contemptible), slave morality seeks to condemn and take revenge on the nobles and their values. It invokes a rewarder-punisher god as the ultimate sanction of morality and moves life's centre of gravity into the beyond. Ressentiment gives birth to a morality that is otherworldly and passive aggressive. This means that slave morality is subject to naturalist critique.

Chapter Three develops the constructive element of Nietzsche's ethical thought, treating him as a naturalist, a contractarian, and a virtue theorist. In 3:1, I discuss his naturalistic standard of value - how he defines value in terms of the flourishing of life and the enhancement of power. I compare Nietzsche's understanding of "will to power" to Mill's concept of pleasure, Plato's concept of eros, and Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, emphasizing the fact that there are qualitatively different levels of power, and that power tends to become ennobled as one moves from deficiency to abundance. This gives content to Nietzsche's naturalism, but it leaves open various ethical possibilities, depending on what human needs and motives, or what level of power, one takes to be central. Among the options are contract theory, care theory, and virtue theory, each of which, in its most plausible and naturalistic form, is grounded in a particular range of human needs and motives.

In 3:2, I deal with radical nihilist and radical relativist objections to Nietzsche's standard of value. The radical nihilist either denigrates earthly life or holds that existence is without

worth. The fallacy here is that outside of life there is no standard of value, so that attempts to pass judgement against life as a whole must appeal to a concept (i.e. value) which supervenes on life. Radical relativism is a view, sometimes attributed to Nietzsche, which claims that there is no such thing as human nature or that everything about us is socially constructed. However, the fact of human variability - the fact that we are historical and individual as well as biological beings - does not mean that human nature and human flourishing are empty concepts. Indeed, Nietzsche continually appeals to a standard of flourishing, without which his charges of "value-inversion" would make little sense.

In 3:3 and 3:4, I look at contract theory, interpreted not as an idealizing device, but as a tough-minded, neo-Hobbesian argument which sets out to justify a mimimalist ethic on the basis of the most minimal of assumptions. Contractarianism seeks to derive a concept of justice from our need for security and survival. It appeals, or at least ultimately depends, on such motives as fear of death and fear of punishment. Like many skeptical naturalists before him, Nietzsche subscribes to a contractarian view of justice. He holds that justice is conventional, that relations of justice are only necessary between parties of approximately equal power, and that the terms of justice may change historically as the balance of social power changes. However, for Nietzsche contract thinking is only one part of ethics, or one perspective on ethics. He uses it to explain the origins of justice and to justify the basic five or six "I will not's" on which any social order depends. But he also tries to resist the way in which contract thinking points towards some form of equality, and he is critical of all anthropologies which see human beings as fundamentally concerned with safety, comfort, or the fearful calculation of advantage.

The upshot of this is mixed. Hobbes claims that all human beings are equal because the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest - a claim that represents a formidable challenge to Nietzsche's aristocratic sympathies. Nietzsche need not accept this argument as it stands. But his own best thinking about the modern situation - his awareness of the political force of the "weak," the fact that subordination is increasingly becoming unacceptable, as

well as the critical and individualistic tendency of his thought, all prevent him from evading the logic of neo-Hobbesian liberalism in any coherent way. But this does not mean that contractarianism is the last word on ethics. For Nietzsche, beyond the artifice of justice there are other virtues, and beyond the bleak Hobbesian view of human nature there are more generous motives. Hobbes leaves us with the choice between the pursuit of gain or glory, leading to sub-optimal conflict, and such uninspiring ends as safety and comfort. But Nietzsche, with his more fluid concept of power, takes us beyond this dichotomy. He offers us an ideal which appeals, not just to prudential fear, but to our higher aspirations.

In 3:5, I consider Nietzsche in light of another ethical possibility - that of grounding ethics in our capacity for caring and mutual concern. I examine his view of such incentives as pity, sympathy, and love. Nietzsche's position on benevolence is both more complex and more positive than is generally acknowledged. His attack on pity is chiefly aimed against those, like Schopenhauer, who focus on human misery in a way that is nihilistic and turns us against life. He also seeks to combat the idea that virtue consists essentially in altruism or service to others. However, Nietzsche is no enemy of the sympathetic affects. Such qualities as sympathy and magnanimity are counted by him as virtues, and there is even room in his thought for the tender sentiments appealed to by care ethicists. His ultimate paradigm of benevolence is the gift-giving virtue, which is grounded not in suffering-with or self-sacrifice, but in a feeling of power and overflowing abundance.

In 3:6-3:8, I examine Nietzsche's virtue theory, the approach that he most clearly favours. This approach is distinguished by its interest in human excellence and self-actualization. An <u>aretaic</u> ethics is concerned, not merely with prudence and survival, or with sympathy for others, but with the higher reaches of human nature, higher forms of power, and the aspiration to "become who we are." I begin with an attempt to catalogue the Nietzschean virtues. In addition to justice and sympathy, my list includes <u>courage</u>, <u>honesty</u>, <u>discipline</u>, <u>pride</u>, <u>autonomy</u>, and <u>amor fati</u>. After giving an account of each virtue, I take up the question of what they have in common. I argue that there are two poles to Nietzsche's ideal -

the ancient noble and the free-spirited philosopher. The overman is envisioned as a synthesis of these somewhat diverse types.

What unifies Nietzsche's concept of virtue is the fact that it is based on ideals of psychological health and power. At the root of the Nietzschean virtues is the feeling of abundance - the sense of being strong and rich enough to be magnanimous towards others; to take courage, dealing with obstacles without becoming resentful; to honestly face up to the truth, being able to affirm life without illusion; to sublimate one's darker passions, turning them to one's advantage; to question the convictions of the herd, daring to think for oneself; and to approach all happenings in a spirit of amor fati. Nietzsche's understanding of virtue is distinctive, but does not depart all that radically from that of earlier theorists in the tradition. In common with Aristotle and Hume, he upholds the virtues as constituents of flourishing which are valued for their own sake, and insists that a genuine virtue must be beneficial to its possessor.

There are several sources of tension in Nietzsche's account of virtue. First, he rejects the unity of the virtues, insisting that they are likely to come into conflict. Each wants to be the ruler of our whole spirit. The conflict he is most concerned with is that between intellectual honesty or truthfulness and the other virtues. Second, the modern virtue of autonomy gives rise to special challenges for virtue theory. In valuing autonomous individuality, Nietzsche does more than add another virtue to the catalogue. He undercuts all conformist notions of excellence which are based on adherence to some standardized ideal. But Nietzsche does not allow autonomy to become the whole of virtue, as some commentators think. Autonomy is one virtue among others. And it is a capacity that must be cultivated and educated - not something that just requires that a person be left alone. Finally, Nietzsche subscribes to what I will call the "pearl principle" - the idea that the development of personal excellence requires us to overcome obstacles, and that pain and evil can be a source of growth and insight. This principle shows us how to turn hardships to our advantage. But when it is carried over into the political realm, it gives rise to some of the more problematic aspects of Nietzsche's ethical thought.

3. Needs, Motives, and Ethical Stages

The organization of this study follows a particular logic. After dealing with some basic historical and interpretive issues, examining Nietzsche's critique of morality, and establishing his naturalism, the treatment of ethical options is organized roughly in terms of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. Proceeding from the most basic to the highest, these are:

(1) Physiological needs (food, shelter)
(2) Safety needs (security, stability, freedom from fear)
(3) Love needs (affection, belongingness)
(4) Esteem needs (respect, recognition, achievement)
(5) Self-Actualization (fulfilling one's potential)[14]

I think that Maslow's framework is useful for thinking about ethical motivation and comparing the major alternatives. Contract theories appeal to our need for safety, and to the fact that our physiological needs can best be satisfied in a condition of peace. Care theories appeal to our need and capacity for love. And virtue theories, depending on how much they value autonomy, appeal either to our aspiration for esteem or for self-actualization.

Understanding the motivational basis of these theories in this way has several advantages. It allows us to see them as competing naturalistic approaches to ethics, not as theories which are non-naturalistic (and hence non-starters) or mutually incommensurable. This is helpful in coming to terms with Nietzsche, for he is at once a naturalist, a contractarian, and a virtue ethicist. A good account of his ethical position must find a way to fit these together - to allow room for both his tough-minded realism and his affirmative ideals. Here Maslow's framework is useful, for it has room for a wide range of perspectives on human nature. It is concerned with ideals of human excellence, in the tradition of Aristotle and Nietzsche, but also recognizes our need for security and belongingness. This makes it a good basis for dialogue, not only between Nietzsche and other ethical naturalists, but between different strands of his own thought.

When interpreting Nietzsche's ethics, it is appropriate to focus on the issue of human needs and motives. By the time that he and his predecessors, such as Hume, are through with their meta-

ethical critiques, such needs and motives are pretty much the only starting-points for ethics that remain viable. Moreover, Nietzsche gives a fair bit of attention to the subjects of human nature and moral psychology. In Human, All Too Human 94, he proposes the following hierarchy of moral motives:

> The three phases of morality hitherto. - It is the first sign that animal has become man when his actions are no longer directed to the procurement of momentary wellbeing but to enduring wellbeing, that man has thus become attuned to utility and purpose; it is then that the free domination of reason first breaks forth. An even higher stage is attained when he acts according to the principle of honour; in accordance with this he orders himself with regard to others, submits to common sensibilities, and that raises him high above the phase in which he is diverted only by utility understood in a purely personal sense; he accords others respect and wants them to accord respect to him ... Finally, at the highest stage of morality hitherto, he acts in accordance with his own standard with regard to men and things: he himself determines for himself and others what is honourable and useful ... (HA 94)

It is at the first phase that contract theory operates, for it directs its arguments at the person who is concerned with private utility (material and safety needs), but who understands that his long-term interest requires him to forego the straightforward maximization of his desires. This interpretation is supported by the context, for in the preceding sections (HA 92-93) Nietzsche presents a classically contractarian view of justice.

Beyond this level, we arrive at the phase of honour and custom. This second phase is dominated by the need for respect and for the approbation of others. This is the phase of social and traditional virtue, which receives further attention in HA 96-98, under such headings as "pleasure in custom" and "pleasure in the social instinct."

With the final phase, we advance to a more autonomous virtue-ethic and to self-creation. The goal here, as Nietzsche explains in

HA 95, is "to make of oneself a complete person." This "morality of the mature individual" is a matter, not of impersonal constraint or "pity-filled agitations" but of personal growth and development.[15] The move from phase one to three - from prudence to autonomous virtue - is not a move from inclination to duty, or selfishness to self-sacrifice. Concern with self remains, but it becomes ennobled:

> let us work for our fellow man, but only to the extent that we discover our own highest advantage in this work: no more, no less. All that remains is what it is one understands by one's advantage; precisely the immature, undeveloped, crude individual will understand it most crudely. (HA 95)

What this amounts to is a rough outline of a theory of moral stages, of the sort which Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg have developed. Nietzsche's first phase - that of long-term advantage and contractual justice - is akin to Kohlberg's preconventional stages (one and two), in which people are moved to behave morally through fear of punishment or instrumental calculation and exchange. However, when it comes to the higher stages, their accounts diverge radically. Kohlberg's ideal is rationalist and essentially Kantian. For Kohlberg, the highest conventional stage (stage four) involves "doing one's duty in society"; the highest postconventional stages (five and six) involve "upholding the basic rights, values, and legal contracts of a society" and adherence to "universal ethical principles that all humanity should follow."[16] In contrast, Nietzsche envisions the higher phases of morality in virtue-ethical terms. Phase two is concerned with honour and respect - conventional virtue - while phase three is concerned with autonomous virtue.

Such a virtue-ethical view of the higher phases of ethics has at least a couple of advantages over Kohlberg's theory. First, as Kohlberg's own studies show, only a minuscule number of people are good Kantian impartial reasoners, who score at stage six.[17] Most people are "stuck" somewhere at the conventional level. This is a real embarrassment for Kantianism, with its insistence that morality is universal, required of all, and within the capacity of all - not the preserve of a small cognitive elite. Aristotle and

Nietzsche may propose ethical ideals which only a few human beings have the potential to realize, but then they do not speak in terms of universal obligations or pose as egalitarians.

If most people do not think about morality in Kantian terms, the next question is "Why should they?" Kant's notorious answer is that we should put aside inclination and act out of respect for the moral law, for only what is done from duty has any moral worth. This austere doctrine is not very satisfactory from the perspective of naturalistic ethical psychology. It leaves us with an integrity problem and a motivation problem.[18] It severs the person, with its desires, needs, and projects, from the moral ideal, which is universal and impartial (the integrity problem). It also fails to provide us with adequate reasons and motives to act morally (the motivation problem), unless one happens to find the abstract "moral law" a compelling object of worship or enjoy tyrannizing over one's nature. Thus, Nietzsche detected a whiff of ascetic cruelty in the categorical imperative, and in Kant's pitting of duty against inclination (D 339, GM II:6).

The way to solve the motivation problem is to overcome these dichotomies, and find a way of linking virtue with actual human needs and motives. Here Maslow's framework has the advantage, for each level of his hierarchy of human needs provides the basis for a particular ethic supported by a particular incentive. Nietzsche's thinking follows a similar pattern. In HA 94, phase three is no more opposed to self-interest than is phase one. Moreover, the difference between them is not a matter of reasoning (as it is for Kohlberg), aside from the original shift from short-term to long-term utility. It is a matter of underlying motives or orientations, moving from private utility, to concern with honour and respect, to "becoming what one is."

At this point some may suspect me of over-interpreting a few isolated aphorisms. Nietzsche never developed this sketch into any sort of precise theory. However, in his subsequent works, he does return to the topics of contractarianism and virtue ethics, and consider their underlying motivational psychology; he does continue to rank a virtue-ethical orientation above a merely contractarian one, and autonomous virtue above an orientation which is rooted in

the desire for honour or approval.

Consider the structure of Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals. This work, "on the origin of our moral prejudices," explicitly takes up ideas that "received their first, brief, and provisional expression" in Human, All Too Human (GM P:2).[19] The Genealogy takes up both virtue-ethical and contractarian themes, treating them separately. The First Essay gives us an account, largely positive, of the aretaic "noble mode of valuation," and then describes how such healthy, affirmative values were inverted, and how "good and bad" was moralized into "good and evil." The Second Essay gives us an account, also largely positive, of a basic sort of contractual justice, and then describes how the notion of "debt" was moralized into "guilt" and "bad conscience." In other words, the First Essay concerns itself with concepts of the good and virtue-ethical modes of evaluating persons, while the Second Essay deals with the domain of the right, including such topics as justice and retribution. The division of topics between these essays is quite natural, and resembles a similar division in Hume's Treatise of Human Nature. The Genealogy treats virtue-ethical and contractarian themes independently, much as Hume divided his account of virtue into separate analyses of the natural virtues and the artificial virtue of justice.

In understanding the Genealogy, two points are important. First, it is not merely an exercise in negation. The predominant mode of the work is critical, but its targets are various strands of Christian (or Christian-influenced) morality. These are the dubious and harmful "moral prejudices" that Nietzsche wants to attack. Among these are "slave morality," "guilt," and the "ascetic ideal." However, the Genealogy is quite approving of other, more primordial ideas concerning virtue and justice. It can be read, in part, as an inquiry into the basis of a naturalistic ethics.[20]

Another point concerns the structure of the Genealogy, and the relation between its three essays. Clearly, these essays do not form a sequential narrative. They run parallel to one another, giving us an account of the origin, and then the inversion or perversion, of various ethical concepts. They cover much the same historical ground, but focus on different types of ethical

phenomena. Each of the essays does, however, relate roughly to one of the three phases of morality outlined in Human, All Too Human.

The Second Essay deals with justice at the most basic level, corresponding to what Nietzsche earlier called the first phase of morality. It recounts how memory was taught through the cruel punishment of transgressions, teaching human beings to reflect beyond their momentary wellbeing - to become responsible individuals, capable of keeping the promises on which the social contract depends (GM II:1-3). In contrast, the First Essay deals with the ethical phase above this. The noble masters of this essay are concerned with honour and excellence of character, not amoral utility-maximization. They are, at least among themselves, "resourceful in consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride, and friendship" (GM I:11).

The underlying theme of the Third Essay is the need for a goal or purpose, through which human beings can find meaning. The structure of this essay differs from that of the others. Here the critical target is the ascetic ideal, but Nietzsche does not see it as arising from the perversion of a more primordial ethical idea. Rather, the problem is the lack of a counter-ideal - the fact that apart from the ascetic ideal (in its many guises), human suffering has lacked meaning and life has been without a powerfully inspiring goal (GM III:23-28). It is at this point that Nietzsche directs us to Zarathustra, the man "who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism" (GM II:24-25).[21] It is Zarathustra, Nietzsche's most constructive work, which gives us the best idea of what he earlier called "the highest stage of morality." Here, more than anywhere else, he dwells at length on the themes of virtue, autonomy, and affirmation of life.

We have seen that the structure of the Genealogy tends to fit with Nietzsche's earlier conception of ethical stages (HA 92-98). These themes will be taken up in some detail in chaper three. Now, however, let us take up the debate with MacIntyre.

CHAPTER ONE
MACINTYRE AND POSTMODERNISM

1. Nietzsche and the Enlightenment Project

My understanding of Nietzsche and of his relation to the ethical tradition runs counter to that of Alasdair MacIntyre. MacIntyre asks us to choose between "Nietzsche or Aristotle?" He sees these figures, along with the "Enlightenment project," as representing three radically distinct alternatives.[22] If I were to adopt a competing slogan for this study, it would be "Nietzsche and Aristotle and Hume" - thus establishing a Triumvirate of ethical naturalists, in alliance against the long-dominant Christian and Kantian conception of morality.

MacIntyre sets up a sharp contrast between Nietzsche and "the Enlightenment project of justifying morality." However, there are many continuities between Nietzsche and Enlightenment philosophy. Nietzsche saw himself as the heir of 17th and 18th century thinkers in his hostility to the church, his suspicious will to truth, and his interest in the real origins of morality. Thus, he dedicated the first edition of Human, All Too Human to Voltaire, whom he regarded, "in contrast to all who wrote after him, a grandseigneur of the spirit" (EH III:HA). He admired Spinoza as a precursor who shared his denial of freedom of the will, non-egoism, and a moral world order.[23] His own interest in moral psychology was stimulated by such French moralists as Montaigne, La Rochefoucault, La Bruyère, and Chamfort, whose works he said "contain more real ideas than all the books of German philosophers put together: ideas of the kind which produce ideas" (WS 214).

What is most decisive for my case, however, is that Nietzsche saw his Genealogy of Morals as a kind of "Enlightenment project." Its intellectual ancestors are certain "English psychologists, whom one has also to thank for the only attempts hitherto to arrive at a history of the origin of morality" (GM I:1). These English genealogists bear some resemblance to Hobbes, Mandeville, and Hume, although their precise identity is unclear.[24] And Nietzsche's evaluation of them is quite generous. He takes issue with their theories, but respects their courage, their intellectual integrity,

and their willingness

> to sacrifice all desirability to truth ... even plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth. - For such truths do exist. (GM I:1)

If it makes sense to speak of anything as a distinctive "Enlightenment project" in ethics, it is the project of coming to terms with our ethical condition in a post-Christian world. This project is at once critical and constructive. It involves getting rid of moral concepts that are ontologically queer, inquiring into the genesis of our ethical ideas, and on the basis of those which survive scrutiny, developing an ethical position which is as coherent and compelling as possible. Not all Enlightenment thinkers were bold enough for such a project. But Hume and Hobbes certainly subscribe to a version of it, and so does Nietzsche. If MacIntyre fails to see any affinity between these thinkers, it is because he focuses on the critical side of Nietzsche's genealogy, contrasting it with the constructive ambitions of the Enlightenment project, which he understands in rationalist and foundationalist terms, as a project of justifying morality.[25]

Several objections can be made against MacIntyre's conception of the Enlightenment project. First, if this project is simply concerned with justifying an ethics, it is hard to see how it differs from what Socrates was up to when he argued with the Sophists and tried to deal with the problems posed by the Ring of Gyges. Such a project is in some ways as old as philosophy, and even the best answers are unlikely to "succeed," if success means eliminating moral disagreement or showing that virtue always pays.

What MacIntyre sees as really distinctive about Enlightenment attempts to justify morality - and what dooms them to failure in his eyes - is the rejection of any teleological view of human nature. Without a telos, without some notion of what human beings are and what it is for them to flourish, MacIntyre thinks that all attempts to justify an ethic must fail. Here MacIntyre makes a valid point against some latter-day analytic ethicists, but not against the Enlightenment project at its best. Enlightenment thinkers may reject any metaphysically given telos, but this does not prevent them from having conceptions of human nature that play

the same role. For example, consider Hobbes. He denies that there is any utmost aim or summum bonum. But he treats death and civil war as a summum malum, and fear of death as a fundamental human motive.[26] He thus appeals to the telos of survival in order to justify a minimal contractarian ethic. Or consider Hume, who develops an ethic largely on the basis of natural sentiments, natural virtues, and human sociability. It is hard to see how his position (properly understood) is any less cogent than that of Aristotle.[27] And Nietzsche, as we will see, is yet another thinker whose naturalism gives direction to his ethics.

What is really novel in the situation of Hume and Hobbes, is something that they share with Nietzsche. It is the challenge of developing a naturalistic view of ethics, and of doing so in a culture whose ethical concepts had been shaped by a decidedly non-naturalist metaphysics and theology. MacIntyre is unfair to Hume, and other Enlightenment philosophes, when he presents them as out to justify a set of shared moral beliefs which they had inherited from their Christian past.[28] The fact that Hume may have agreed with the tradition in upholding promise-keeping and justice (MacIntyre's examples) is not much to build a case on, in light of Hume's views on suicide, or the way he pillories the "monkish virtues" and other aspects of the religious tradition. Hume tries to strip morality of a great deal of metaphysical baggage, and of various Christian notions that had become woven into its structure. He goes so far as to argue that the modern concept of morality has been warped by Christianity:

> In later times, philosophy of all kinds, especially ethics, have been more closely united with theology than ever they were observed to be among the Heathens; and as this latter science admits of no terms of composition, but bends every branch of knowledge to its own purpose, without much regard to the phenomena of nature, or to the unbiassed sentiments of the mind, hence reasoning, and even language, have been warped from their natural course, and distinctions have been endeavoured to be established [between virtues and talents, vices and defects], where the difference of the objects was, in a

> manner, inperceptible. Philosophers, or rather divines under that disguise, treating all morals, as on a like footing with civil laws, guarded by the sanctions of reward and punishment, were necessarily led to render this circumstance, of voluntary or involuntary, the foundation of their whole theory.[29]

Hume is here rejecting a view of morality which is proto-Kantian - a view which sharply distinguishes "moral virtue" from other forms of human excellence, as something utterly voluntary. This view reduces the ethical domain to conformity with some sort of "moral law" - a law whose violators, being utterly free, are also utterly culpable. Hume's critical stance here is quite Nietzschean, and the concept of morality that is his target is also Nietzsche's target.

There is one noteworthy difference between Nietzsche and earlier moral philosophers engaged in the Enlightenment project. This difference is verbal, although it is capable of causing endless confusion. Hume and Hobbes offer us theories of morality - that is, of genuine morality - and they reject opposing systems of morality as mistaken, whatever currency they might have among the "vulgar." Nietzsche's treatment of the term "morality" is much more provocative. Unlike Hobbes in the 17th century, he feels no political need to preserve the illusion of continuity with Biblical morality. For Nietzsche, "morality" (in his prevailing use of the term, particularly in his latter works) just is something Christian or Kantian; something which is entangled with many errors, and which is inimical to life. Therefore, he can reject morality, without rejecting all possible varieties of ethical thought.[30] His "immoralism," when properly understood, leaves room for virtue-ethical and contractarian concepts, and for standards of human flourishing, which provide the basis for what we might call an "ethics beyond morality." Nietzsche's position, although radical, is thus not as wholly original as some of his rhetoric suggests. It is continuous with earlier versions of the Enlightenment project, since Nietzsche leaves intact, and makes use of, the very sorts of naturalist and contractarian arguments on which Hume and Hobbes relied.

Nietzsche, no doubt, would repudiate any attempt to link

Kant's ethics with genuine Enlightenment. The reasons for this are instructive. It is precisely because Kant conforms to MacIntyre's concept of the Enlightenment project, that Nietzsche regards him as the antithesis of enlightened ethical inquiry. In Nietzsche's eyes, Kant is a philosophical labourer who wanted to rationalize the shared moral beliefs of his Pietist Christian culture. He is "in the end, an underhanded Christian" (TI III:6). He "wanted to prove, in a way that would dumbfound the common man, that the common man was right" (GS 193). He went "back to 'God,' 'soul,' 'freedom,' and 'immortality,' like a fox who loses his way and goes astray back into his cage" (GS 335). In other words, Kant turned away from the inquiring, tough-minded, naturalist, genealogical temper of the Enlightenment at its best. His moralism represents

> retrogression for knowledge of moral phenomena. What is the whole of German moral philosophy from Kant onwards, with all its French, English, and Italian branches and parallels? A semi-theological assault on Helvetius and a rejection of the open views or signposts to the right path which, gained by long and wearisome struggle, he at last assembled and gave adequate expression to. (WS 216)

Nietzsche sees himself as carrying forward the project of French philosophes like Helvetius and of the English genealogists. This does not make him a mere partisan of the 18th century. For the Enlightenment project to be carried forward, Nietzsche thinks it must be conducted with a better historical sense and more psychological acuity - qualities which are part of the legacy of early 19th century German thought. There is here a historical irony which is the subject of Daybreak 197. The German Romantics tried to invoke bygone ages (especially the medieval world of faith and folklore), and set up a cult of feeling in opposition to the Enlightenment. But out of their invocation of the past arose a more powerful historical sense, and out of their focus on feeling came a deepened psychology. Those very powers originally conjured up against the Enlightenment - "the study of history, understanding of origins and evolutions, empathy for the past, newly aroused passion for feeling and knowledge" - soon emerged "as new and stronger genii of that very Enlightenment against which they were first

conjured up" (D 197). In particular, Nietzsche sees these new powers of Enlightenment as emerging in his own thought. This gives him an advantage over previous genealogists of morality, in whom "the historical spirit itself is lacking" (GM I:2).

2. Nietzsche and the Aristotelian Tradition

Nietzsche is the heir of the Ancients, at least as much as he is the heir of the Enlightenment. In self-consciously using ancient modes of ethical thought to critique modern ones, he is in fact the precursor of neo-Aristotelians like MacIntyre and Straussians like Bloom. Early in his career, when he was still a professor of classical philology, Nietzsche wrote:

> only so far as I am the nursling of more ancient times, especially the Greek, could I come to have such untimely experiences about myself as a child of the present age. (UM p.60, HL P)[31]

For Nietzsche, the Greeks are both the source of inspiration and the embodiment of some of his most central ideas. When he sums up "What I Owe to the Ancients" at the end of Twilight of the Idols, his list of debts includes realism, will to power, and Dionysian affirmation. He admires the realism of Thucydides, who represents "the last revelation of that strong, severe, hard factuality which was instinctive with the older Hellenes" (TI X:2). It is Thucydides and the Greeks of the Tragic Age who give Nietzsche access to a perspective beyond Platonism and moralism - a standpoint from which such "idealism" can be evaluated and found wanting.

For Nietzsche, the Greeks are also exemplary because of their healthy will to power. Looking back on what he owes them, he says:

> I saw their strongest instinct, the will to power ... I saw how all their institutions grew out of preventive measures taken to protect each other against their inner explosives. ... And with festivals and the arts they also aimed at nothing other than to feel on top, to show themselves on top. (TI X:3)

Nietzsche argues here, as he does in the early essay "Homer's Contest," that the competitive spirit, and the desire to excel, is at the root of Greek cultural excellence. It manifests itself both

in the destructive form of fights of annihilation (as in the Iliad and the Peloponnesian War), and in the sublimated form of contests, such as those between Olympic athletes, political orators, and tragic dramatists, not to mention the philosophical agon of Socrates' dialectic (TI II:8).

Perhaps most of all, Nietzsche admires the Greeks for their ability to affirm life, while facing up to suffering and to the fragility of human existence. Such affirmation he regards as the essential point of Greek tragedy:

> Saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems, the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its highest types - that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. (TI X:5)

The Dionysian affirmation of the Greeks provided Nietzsche with an model - a model of how life might be affirmed in the face of pain, and in the absence of any otherworldly faith. Thus Nietzsche calls himself a disciple of Dionysus. In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the quest to affirm and justify existence in purely this-worldly terms is a central theme.[32]

There is another affinity between Nietzsche and the Ancients, which runs at least as deep as the others. This is their aretaic view of ethics. Nietzsche's critique of morality is not "unsuccessful" against the Aristotelian tradition, as MacIntyre claims, for Nietzsche is himself a virtue-ethicist. He is actually part of the "Aristotelian tradition" - not in the narrow sense of being an Aristotelian scholar, but in MacIntyre's broader sense of being part of a tradition of the virtues, whose classic exemplar is Aristotle. This does not mean that Nietzsche upholds the same catalogue of virtues, or has the same concept of what constitutes a virtue, as Aristotle or anyone else. On such matters, members of the virtue-ethical tradition disagree. Aristotle upholds different virtues from Homer; Hume defines virtue differently from Aristotle; and Nietzsche departs from them all on some points. What is really at the core of virtue ethics, for Nietzsche, is the identification of the ethical with achieving personal excellence. It is this which

sets "antique virtue" apart from modern "German morality":

> 'Man has to have something which he can obey unconditionally' - that is a German sensation, a German piece of consistency: it is to be encountered at the basis of all German moral teaching. How different an impression we receive from the whole morality of antiquity! All those Greek thinkers, however varied they may appear to us as individuals, seem as moralists like a gymnastics teacher who says to his pupil: 'Come! Follow me! Submit to my discipline! Then perhaps you will succeed in carrying off a prize before all the Hellenes.' Personal distinction - that is antique virtue. To submit, to follow, openly or in secret - that is German virtue. (D 207)

Greek ethics is about achieving arete. It exemplifies the noble mode of valuation of the masters which is described in the First Essay of the Genealogy. "German morality" is fundamentally Kantian and Christian. It is about obedience to the moral law, or the categorical imperative, or (further back in history) the will of God. Hence it is not aretaic, for it speaks of "virtue" only to subordinate it to other, deontic concepts. Nietzsche is equally vehement in rejecting the "English morality" of the utilitarians, which tries to reduce virtue to maximizing the general utility.

Why does MacIntyre not see any affinity between Nietzsche and Aristotle? It is because he reads Nietzsche's positive ideal very uncharitably, attributing to him errors and absurdities which are easy to skewer. MacIntyre claims (1) that Nietzsche's ideal is the archaic aristocrat of the Homeric world, (2) that Nietzsche unhistorically projects his own 19th century individualism back on to heroic societies which were actually governed by role-based moralities, and (3) that Nietzsche's individualism is solipsistic, leaving no room for tradition or the virtues.

However, Nietzsche's virtue-ethics can as properly be linked with Aristotle as with the Archaic Age. The Nicomachean Ethics (no less than the Iliad) is a fine example of Nietzsche's noble mode of valuation. The ideals of Aristotelian ethics are noble in both a political sense (they are modelled largely on the Athenian

gentleman), and an ethical sense (they involve nobility of spirit). For Aristotle, as for the masters of Nietzsche's Genealogy, "good" is understood in terms of excellence or nobility, while "bad" is usually defective or despicable. Both affirm many of the same virtues. Thus, Aristotle considers pride or greatness of soul to be the crown of the virtues. He regards courage as a central virtue, and considers it noble and honourable (but does not mention its utility). He values truthfulness, for it is "noble and worthy of praise," and "to care less for truth than for what people will think, is a coward's part."[33]

The same goes for Aristotle's treatment of the other-regarding virtues. Traits which are celebrated by the moderns - like pity, care, or altruism - are not part of the Aristotelian catalogue of excellences. Aristotle, however, does speak highly of friendship and friendliness. He values the "gift-giving virtues" of liberality and magnificence (which have nothing to do with pity or self-sacrifice). His great-souled man would rather confer benefits than receive them, for this is a mark of superiority. And he is magnanimous, "for it is not the part of a proud man to have a long memory, especially for wrongs, but rather to overlook them."[34] In every case, these positions have their parallels in the ethics of Nietzsche, and in his account of the noble mode of valuation.

Aristotle does depart from Homer in important ways, but then so does Nietzsche. Aristotle and Nietzsche are both philosophers who value the life of the mind; their highest ideal is not merely the hero, or the gentleman, or the unreflective man of honour, but the philosopher. Both devote a fair amount of attention to the intellectual virtues, although with a difference. For Nietzsche, the intellectual virtues are not a distinct set of excellences, concerned directly with the exercise of reason (as they are for Aristotle). They are traits like intellectual honesty, intellectual courage, intellectual justice - qualities which require the strength to question one's convictions, to face up to harsh truths, to look at things from many perspectives in order to give them their due. These differences reflect the fact that Nietzsche is more deeply anti-Platonic than Aristotle. His view of what it is to think and philosophize well is inclusive of the passions, the will

to power, and other cognitive interests of the human animal. Thus he does not treat "reason" as something divine or as a realm apart, and certainly would not glorify pure contemplation as Aristotle seems to do in Book X of the Ethics.

MacIntyre is justified in presenting Nietzsche's celebration of individuality and autonomy as a departure from the values of Homer or Aristotle. However, Nietzsche knows better than to present archaic nobles as romantic individualists. He actually agrees with MacIntyre in seeing the moralities of the earliest societies as based on custom and tradition. Nietzsche calls this the period of the "morality of mores" (Sittlichkeit der Sitte). In such societies "everything was custom, and whoever wanted to elevate himself above it had to become lawgiver and medicine man and a kind of demi-god" (D 9). All the basic activities of human life were minutely regulated by taboos, and one was expected to conform "without thinking of oneself as an individual" (D 9). Nietzsche regards the reflective, autonomous individual as a historical achievement. As Zarathustra says:

> First, peoples were creators; and only in later times, individuals. Verily, the individual himself is still the most recent creation. ... The delight in the herd is more ancient than the delight in the ego; and so long as the good conscience is identified with the herd, only the bad conscience says: I. (Z I:15)

Nietzsche sees the Greeks (and the masters of the Genealogy) as having advanced beyond the "morality of mores" (GS 149), although he does not portray them as individualists. The virtues of these masters do not include self-creation or leading an examined life. But Nietzsche need not and probably would not accept MacIntyre's view of the Homeric world (the world of the self-assertive Achilles and the wily Odysseus) as being totally immersed in an unreflective role-morality.

Nietzsche's concern with autonomy is best understood, not as a rejection of the tradition of the virtues, but as a development of this tradition. For Nietzsche, as for many 19th and 20th century people influenced by liberal or romantic individualism, the ideals of autonomy, authenticity, or self-actualization are central to any

conception of the good life. This creates an interesting challenge for virtue-ethics. For if autonomous individuality is central to human excellence, then standards of virtue cannot be set down and enforced in the manner of many pre-modern ethical codes. To do so would be to negate such goods as exercising autonomy, thinking for oneself, and cultivating one's individuality (not to mention the other-regarding correlates of these, like tolerance and respect for otherness). For this reason, modern liberals have often rejected virtue-ethics in the name of autonomy. Their strategy, typically, is to protect the negative liberty of the individual behind a bulwark of Lockean rights, while taking an officially neutral line on questions of the good life. MacIntyre preserves this dichotomy but takes the other side, upholding tradition, community, and virtue, while taking an unsympathetic and uncompromising stand against individualism.

Nietzsche helps us to see how this dichotomy might be overcome; how the modern value of autonomy might be incorporated within a classically aretaic ethics. He is certainly no moral solipsist. Unlike some contractarians and existentialists, his individualism is not dependent on an ontologically dubious view of the self. Like MacIntyre, Nietzsche is a historical thinker whose philosophy grows out of an engagement with the tradition. He does not try to "create values" in a vacuum.[35] He wants to displace the Christian tradition, but he does this by breathing new life into themes originating in Ancient Greece and in the Enlightenment. Nietzsche values autonomous individuality - not as an ahistorical or asocial possession of the individual, but as something which has developed through history, and which requires cultivation like any other virtue.

Ultimately, the way Macintyre constructs the "Aristotelian tradition" is problematic. He excludes such modern pagans as Hume and Nietzsche, but is sympathetic towards Augustine and regards Aquinas as its culmination. This Nietzsche could never abide. He says that one need only read Augustine's works to smell what an unclean lot the early Christians were (A 59). For him, Augustine represents the negation of naturalism and nobility of spirit. A Nietzschean critique of MacIntyre's historiography would parallel

the Humean critique developed by Annette Baier:

> the real enemies of Aristotelianism are neither Hume nor Marx nor Nietzsche, but St. Paul and St. Augustine. The City of God is what subverted the Aristotelian earthly city, dissolved its ties, and drained its practices of meaning. Hume tried to make something of the fragments of true Aristotelianism still alive in his culture and did that realistically ... In his life and his writings, he tried to show that a good life was still possible, and possible without splitting the human person into masochistic sinful desires demanding to be scourged, and sadistic reason, or conscience, glad to oblige. ... Hume attacked not Aristotelianism, but what he saw as the puritan religious perversion of Greek and Roman morality. Were a Humean historian to retell the narrative MacIntyre has given us, then the fall from Aristotelian grace, the original sin, would occur precisely with the doctrine of original sin.[36]

3. Interpretations: Ethical versus Postmodern

By this point, readers of a postmodernist persuasion (if they are still with us) are probably quite dissatisfied. They might wonder: "What about Nietzsche's perspectivism?" What about his literary styles, his rhetoric, his playfulness? Why are you reading him in terms of the ethical tradition, while ignoring the French and their 'New Nietzsche'?"[37]

Such objections to my enterprise deserve an answer; or rather, the several answers that they require. To address them fully would require a lengthy treatise on Nietzsche's epistemological views, and on various interpretive issues. Fortunately, several such works exist, the best of which is probably Maudemarie Clark's Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy. Clark and a number of other Anglo-American interpreters deny that Nietzsche was a proponent of radical relativism or nihilism.[38]

Let us start with the issue of interpretation. As Clark points out, at the root of disagreements between Postmodernist and (some) Anglo-American interpreters of Nietzsche are not issues of textual

scholarship, but issues of philosophy:

> Reasonable interpretation clearly demands that we attribute to a text the best position compatible with the relevant evidence about its meaning. But only what the interpreter takes to be true or reasonable can function as the standard for the best position. Appeal to the interpreter's own standards will be necessary not only when there are two equally plausible interpretations of a given text, but also for the purpose of selecting which texts to interpret or consider as evidence. No interpretation can take explicitly into account every preserved sentence Nietzsche wrote. Interpreters can choose passages to consider in terms of their centrality to Nietzsche's main points, of course, and should also consider passages that appear to conflict with their interpretations. But this means that the choice of passages upon which to base an interpretation is informed by what one takes to be reasonable, if not correct, positions on questions dealt with in the text.[39]

In other words, if we want to learn from a text, or engage with it in dialogue (and not merely to score cheap debater's points against its author), interpretation requires a principle of charity. This is especially true in the case of a writer like Nietzsche, who is at once brilliant and unsystematic, subtle and rhetorical. To interpret Nietzsche charitably - to develop the most powerful, compelling, and relevant reading of his philosophy that we can - requires us to bring our own perspective to bear on the text. Understanding, as Gadamer says, requires a fusion of horizons.[40] We begin by reading an author, and trying to make sense of him from the horizon of our own knowledge and values. The more we respond to his philosophy, the more it in turn shapes our horizon, influencing both the direction of our future reading and what we bring to it.

For instance, a person (such as myself as an undergraduate) may respond to what Nietzsche says about ethics, religion, and human life. This becomes part of his horizon or perspective. He goes on to learn more about these subjects, with Nietzsche as part of his cognitive equipment. He reads classic and contemporary

philosophers with one eye on Nietzschean themes, and a nose for how they may have influenced, or been influenced by, Nietzsche. Once again, that which he responds to becomes part of his horizon. When he eventually returns to Nietzsche, the encounter seems fresh. His viewpoint has expanded and sharpened. He immediately becomes aware of intricacies that he had missed - of unstated implications and connections, of objections and ways of countering objections. The perspective from which he understands Nietzsche's ethics, for example, now incorporates the categories and concerns of all the moral philosophers who have shaped his thinking. He naturally "sees" these things in Nietzsche's texts, much as when a jet roars over his house he "hears" a plane (not auditory sense data).

His intellectual conscience then demands: "Suppose you had responded to other themes and focused on other philosophers - the postmodernists, for instance. Would you not "see" different things? Perhaps you are just reading things into Nietzsche's texts? What makes you think your interpretation is "truer" than others?" How could he answer the challenge and overcome his self-doubt?

To begin with, the accusation of reading things into a text makes little or no sense if it involves some ideal of "immaculate perception." All knowledge is perspectival, and all interpretation involves some presuppositions. Objectivity is not something negative - a kernel of purity, to be gotten at by peeling away layers of subjectivity, and somehow putting aside our interests and values, and all that we have learned from other philosophers. As Nietzsche insists, such "objectivity" is impossible. And efforts to be "objective" in this manner are liable to induce cognitive sterility (Z II:15, GM III:12).

What divides my reading of Nietzsche from that of the postmodernists is not such spurious ideals of objectivity. Rather, it is the philosophical perspectives we employ, and what we take to be Nietzsche's fundamental concerns. Postmodern readings of Nietzsche are deeply indebted to French poststructuralist thought. They tend to focus on issues of truth, language, and textuality, rather than broader issues of human concern. The temper of their philosophizing (when it is not "just gaming") is overwhelmingly negative, doing all that it can to clip the wings of constructive

thought. Admittedly, postmodernists do find a certain amount of grist for their mills in Nietzsche's texts, and they make some interesting points. However, as is the case with pretty near all interpretations (of any work or author), they illuminate some features of their subject while casting shadows over others.

The problem is that what postmodern interpreters obscure includes much of what is most central, valuable, and important in Nietzsche's philosophy; namely, his concern with ethics in the broad sense, including questions of value, religion, human nature, and the good life. All of Nietzsche's published works give these themes a prominent place. Those wanting to emphasize other themes have often had to base their interpretations on his unpublished writing, such as the early fragment "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" (presenting a view of truth that the mature Nietzsche seems to have abandoned), or the cosmological and metaphysical speculations of the Nachlass (which have few if any any parallels in Nietzsche's books).[41] Moreover, my conviction that Nietzsche's guiding concern is with ethics and human life is shared by many commentators:

> it is above all upon 'man' - upon human nature, human life, and human possibility - that his attention focuses. His interest in other matters and the extensiveness of his treatment of them are for the most part almost directly proportional to the significance he takes them to have for philosophical anthropology so conceived.[42]
>
> Despite the recent emphasis on his claims about truth, few would deny that Nietzsche's ultimate importance is connected to what he has to say about values, especially to the challenge he offers to received values.[43]
>
> (The) sense of practical importance, which animates contemporary ethical theory and has always animated much of great literature, is absent from the writings of many of our leading literary theorists. One can have no clearer single measure of this absence than to have the experience of reading Jacques Derrida's Éperons after reading Nietzsche. Once one has worked through and been suitably (I think) impressed by Derrida's perceptive and

> witty analysis of Nietzsche's style, one feels, at the end of all the urbanity, an empty longing amounting to a hunger, a longing for the sense of difficulty and risk and practical urgency that are inseparable from Zarathustra's dance. A longing for some acknowledgement of the fact that Nietzsche saw a crisis at hand for Europe, for all human life; that he thought it mattered deeply whether one lived as a Christian or in some other as yet unspecified way; and that he dedicated his career to imagining that way. Nietzsche's work is profoundly critical of existing ethical theory, clearly; but it is, inter alia, a response to the original Socratic question "How should one live?" Derrida does not touch on that question.[44]

If one can be persuaded that Nietzsche's main concerns are broadly ethical, it makes sense to read him with the best that has been thought and said about ethics in mind (at least when it is relevant to his concerns). For instance, if Nietzsche is in some sense a virtue-ethicist, and if we want to attend to his teachings on the subject from as sharp, as subtle, and as sophisticated a perspective as possible, then we clearly could benefit from reading Aristotle. If Nietzsche has something to say about contract theory, then it is worthwhile becoming acquainted with Hobbes. Nietzsche once wrote: "Ultimately, nobody can get more out of things, including books, than he already knows" (EH III:1). If we are to develop the best possible interpretation of his ethical thought, we must enrich our perspectives with materials of the utmost quality.

4. Perspectivism and Truth

As interpreted by postmodernists, Nietzsche's perspectivism is a stumbling-block for ethical and naturalistic interpretations of his philosophy. For if perspectivism means that nothing is true (in any meaningful sense of the term), that all is subjective opinion, that there is no basis for judging some perspectives to be better than others, then all of Nietzsche's constructive philosophizing sinks into a Pyrrhonian morass. Naturalism becomes just another way of looking at things. It no longer makes sense to explain or

critique religio-moral concepts (like "sinfulness" or "redemption") in terms of physiology or psychology, as Nietzsche does in the Genealogy (GM III:16-17). And there are no grounds for accusing Christianity of "inverting values" - only, as Rorty would say, of "redescribing" them.[45]

To avoid such conclusions, we need to reject the "received view" of perspectivism and interpret it in a manner that makes more sense of Nietzsche's work. Perspectivism really involves two claims. First, as Clark argues, it involves a neo-Kantian rejection of "the thing-in-itself" or "the view from nowhere." All knowing, and all valuing, proceeds from some perspective - it is never non-perspectival. Since we are humans, our knowing is human knowing, shaped by our cognitive capacities and interests: "the belly of being does not speak to humans at all, except as a human" (Z I:3). In other words, knowledge is species-relative (in the absence of inter-species communication), and so are values.

With the realization that all truths are human truths, two different reactions (and ways of speaking) are possible. One might skeptically deny knowledge, because it is "all-too-human" and does not correspond with things-in-themselves. Nietzsche takes this line in many passages in his early and middle works, but later he seems to have moved beyond it. Clark maintains that Nietzsche's final works (beginning with the Genealogy) exhibit an "unambiguous respect for facts, the senses, and science" and contain no hint of the view that human knowledge falsifies reality.[46] His famous account of "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable" (written in 1888) triumphantly concludes:

> The true world - we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one. (TI IV)

This means that when we get rid of the "true world" (and its metaphysical successors), we no longer have any basis for denigrating the natural world as apparent or illusionary. And likewise, if all knowing is perspectival, there is no "knowledge-in-itself" or "view from nowhere," and hence no standard of metaphysical realism from which the internal human point of view can be denigrated as false.[47]

So far, we have outlined the anti-metaphysical aspect of perspectivism. Our truths are human truths, our values are human values. But beyond this is the fact of multiplicity. There are many sorts of people, many competing values, and many interpretations of the world. Perspectivism, in this second sense, urges us to consider a thing from all relevant angles, or all relevant points of view. If we are to think well, we must not assume that our own personal or historical nook is the only window on the world, and we must be suspicious of systems erected on the basis of a few partial insights. However, perspectivism does not imply that all points of view are of equal value. Nor does it imply that different points of view are incommensurable. Nietzsche is no egalitarian, and he prides himself on his ability to understand and bring into play a vast array of perspectives.

Consider Nietzsche's major statement of perspectivism, the locus classicus for the doctrine, in its context:

> Suppose such an incarnate will to contradiction and antinaturalness [the ascetic ideal] is induced to philosophize: upon what will it vent its innermost contrariness? Upon what is felt most certainly to be real and actual: it will look for error precisely where the instinct of life most unconditionally posits truth. ... To renounce belief in one's ego, to deny one's own "reality" - what a triumph! not merely over the senses, over appearance, but a much higher kind of triumph, a violation and cruelty against reason - a voluptuous pleasure that reaches its height when the ascetic self-contempt and self-mockery of reason declares: "there is a realm of truth and being, but reason is excluded from it!" ...
>
> But precisely because we seek knowledge, let us not be ungrateful to such resolute reversals of accustomed perspectives and valuations ... to see differently in this way for once, to want to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future "objectivity" - the latter understood not as "contemplation without interest" (which is a nonsensical

absurdity), but as the ability to control one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a variety of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge. ...

There is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective "knowing"; and the more affects we allow to speak about one thing, the more eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be. (GM III:12)

Perspectivism here appears as an aside - an aside to Nietzsche's analysis of the ascetic ideal.[48] This is much as one would expect, given Nietzsche's broadly ethical priorities. It is the ascetic perspective which is under examination - a perspective which is characterized as "contrary" and "anti-natural." Here and throughout the Genealogy, Nietzsche confronts us with opposing perspectives. These include noble and base, powerful and weak, healthy and sick, this-worldly and otherworldly, affirmative and resentful. Each one of these contrasts is also part of a broader contrast, between "perspectives and valuations" which are life-enhancing, and others which are bad or life-negating. (Life, as sections 2:1 and 3:1 will argue, is Nietzsche's standard of value.) A major theme of the Genealogy is the "reversal" of these perspectives and valuations. At one level, the work is a critical history of how "natural" values were inverted and theologized; at another, it is a testament to its author's ability to reverse and get behind accustomed perspectives. Thus, in Ecce Homo, the first reason why Nietzsche is "so wise" is his "dual descent" - the fact that he has had the longest training in

Looking from the perspective of the sick toward healthier concepts and values and, conversely, looking again from the fullness and self-assurance of a rich life down into the secret work of the instinct of decadence ... Now I know how, have the know-how, to reverse perspectives: the first reason why a "revaluation of values" is perhaps possible for me alone. (EH I:1)

In GM III:12, Nietzsche goes on to draw a more general lesson concerning "objectivity." The ascetic's reversal of perspectives,

as well as the challenge of thinking it through, gives us an opportunity to learn the "discipline" needed to "employ" and "dispose of" a variety of perspectives. The emphasis here is upon multiplicity. The more perspectives we can use to observe a thing, Nietzsche says, the more complete our "concept" of it and our "objectivity" will be. The passage moves in a pluralist direction, from concern with opposing perspectives (of opposite value for life), to how perspectives can be complementary. Nietzsche's perspectivism thus teaches us not only to revalue values but to learn to see, which is "one of the three tasks for which educators are required":

> Learning to see - accustoming the eye to calmness, to patience, to letting things come up to it; postponing judgement, learning to go around and grasp each individual case from all sides. That is the first preliminary schooling for spirituality: not to react at once ... Learning to see, as I understand it, is almost what, unphilosophically speaking, is called a strong will: the essential feature is precisely not to "will" - to be able to suspend decision. (TI XIII:6)

These are not the words of someone who thinks that human beings are inevitably trapped within their own biases, or that all claims to knowledge are just the devices of arbitrary will. Nietzsche, most likely, would have contempt for "decadents" who interpret him in this fashion, much as he does for any weak, sickly, and self-doubting form of skepticism (BGE 208). When he stresses the value of seeing things from a multiplicity of perspectives, he does not intend his readers to go away and lament: "There is no omni-perspectival seeing; nobody can look at things from all possible perspectives, so knowledge and objectivity are out of reach." Human beings may not have access to all possible perspectives, but we can acquaint ourselves with a wide variety of paradigms and points of view, becoming multi-perspectival thinkers. We can aspire to "learn to see" - to be more perceptive. In doing this, we need not concern ourselves with every possible perspective - only those which are in some way relevant to our cognitive interests as human beings.[49] Within any domain, the number of relevant, valuable, and distinct

perspectives is finite, and thus more or less manageable. Such a premis, I believe, is implicitly upheld by Nietzsche, for without it (or some equivalent) there could be no standards of judgement. Epistemic progress would then be simply a matter of quantity - the more perspectives one assimilates the better, with no basis for choosing quality views over those which are irrelevant, narrow, or confused.

It may be asked whether perspectivism is itself a perspectival claim. To this question of self-reference, one has little choice but to answer in the affirmative. To deny the perspectival character of perspectivism would be to make it an exception to its own rule. So the doctrine must itself be a perspectival claim. The implications of this are problematic for postmodernists, due to their reading of the doctrine. If perspectivism is "just another interpretation" - if there are always competing viewpoints which are as true (or as false) as our own, then what grounds have we for preferring perspectivism over dogmatism?[50] However, upon a better interpretation, the doctrine is not self-refuting. Perspectivism has two faces - it denies the possibility of non-perspectival knowing, and speaks in favour of multi-perspectival knowing. The former claim is generally valid (i.e. no competing claim is true). While it proceeds from a human perspective, the same goes for all attempts to deny it.

Nietzsche's emphasis on multiplicity is perspectival in a more radical sense. While Nietzsche suggests that the power to employ a variety of perspectives is generally valuable, it is hard to see how it is equally valuable in every domain. Some domains are more deeply perspectival than others. Ethical and interpretive issues, in particular, are multidimensional. Many different viewpoints, considerations, and paradigms are relevant to them. Perspectivism is thus an insight that should come more easily to someone like Nietzsche - a classical philologist by training with an abiding concern with ethical matters - than to someone who works on well-defined problems, relying on well-established scientific principles and techniques. A typical engineer, for example, probably will not see any great need to view structural dynamics through a multitude of different points of view. Zarathustra remarked that he "did not

come to warn against pickpockets" (Z III:V); in the same way, he did not worry about the epistemic outlook of engineers.

Matters are different in the ethical domain. Here Nietzsche's emphasis on perspective, as well as his attempts to cultivate multi-perspectival thinking in his readers, are most worthy of attention. Just consider the potential scope of ethical inquiry. Questions about ethics lead inevitably, for a naturalist like Nietzsche, to questions about our nature and what is required for beings such as ourselves to flourish. This is about as multifaceted as issues get, because every discipline (with the exception of those dealing only with mathematical symbols or non-living matter) is of some relevance. We are biological beings, cultural beings, and highly individuated beings. Within each discipline are competing paradigms, and history gives us access to a variety of additional perspectives. The challenge here is to "learn to see" and understand ourselves from all of these angles, while resisting the lure of a simple reductionism or a simple relativism.[51]

Nietzsche's perspectivism is the opposite of reductionism. For he speaks of human nature and human history; of the importance of physiology and the power of philosophical ideas; of naturalistic self-unfolding and artistic self-creation. Such perspectives are treated as complementary, or at least compatible, rather than as opposites. And as we have seen, his ethical thinking owes something to the Greeks, something to the Enlightenment, and something to 19th century intellectual currents. He is at once an ancient, a modern, and a supposed precursor of postmodernism - bringing elements of MacIntyre's "Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry" into engagement <u>within</u> his thought.

What are the implications of perspectivism for ethics? It stands clearly opposed to any unconditional, one-size-fits-all type of ethical theory. There are different sorts of people, living in different historical conditions, motivated by different passions and ideals.[52] But this does not mean that everyone is just "different," all is radically relative, and there is nothing more to say. Here, as before, the number of relevant and distinct considerations is not infinite. Although no single foundational argument may have the power to capture the field or deal adequately

with all ethical phenomena, one can explore our various needs and motives, and the ethical approaches which follow from them. Thus, Nietzsche reflects upon contract theory, sentiments such as pity, and virtue ethics. He considers the differences between the few and the many, the implications of power and weakness, and many other factors. He can be as realistic and tough-minded, or as sensitive and noble-minded, as any other thinker one cares to mention.

5. Nietzsche's Rhetoric

Finally, the issue of Nietzsche's style remains. This issue is at the centre of many postmodernist readings, including Nehamas' Nietzsche: Life as Literature. For Nehamas, "Nietzsche's thinking is inseparable from his writing" and "coming to terms with his style is essential to understanding him at all."[53] He further holds "that Nietzsche's stylistic pluralism is another facet of his perspectivism: it is one of his essential weapons in his effort to distinguish himself from the philosophical tradition" (Nehamas p.20). In other words, Nietzsche's style allows him to present views without claiming them to be universally binding or true. It allows him to undermine the philosophical tradition without "being obliged to construct positions that are merely negative" or, on the other hand, merely giving rise to "one more philosophical project of the traditional sort" (Nehamas p.4).

Nehamas also considers the rhetorical function of Nietzsche's writing. He thinks that Nietzsche's many genres and styles are intended to make his presence as an author unforgettable to his readers, and that Nietzsche's use of hyperbole (or exaggeration) is the "single most pervasive feature of his writing, which attracts a certain kind of reader to him, repels another, and causes still a third to alternate between comprehension and blankness" (Nehamas p.22). Such rhetoric seeks to attract attention, not only to what it says, but to the person behind it. As Nehamas observes: "the one reaction Nietzsche cannot tolerate is indifference, and this is what his use of hyperbole is designed to eliminate" (p.28).

Much that Nehamas says is persuasive. There is a link between Nietzsche's style and his perspectivism, and his attention-seeking rhetoric does seek to win over a certain type of reader. But the

implications of this are not particularly postmodern. Rather, Nietzsche's "multifarious art of style" reflects an emphasis on employing a variety of perspectives. It requires us to confront multiplicity. If we are to properly understand it, we must "learn to see." Thus, in one of his prefaces, Nietzsche presents himself as a philologist who wants to instruct us in the art of slow and careful reading. He asks that we read his work "slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers" (D P:5).[54]

Moreover, by writing in a highly personal and concrete manner, Nietzsche reminds us that all knowing is human knowing and proceeds from a particular perspective. Nietzsche says that "every great philosophy so far" is "the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir" (BGE 6). This does not mean that such philosophies are merely subjective or nothing but opinion. Nietzsche rejects such dichotomies between "the personal" and "the objective." The philosophies he refers to are "great philosophies." Among those mentioned in the previous and subsequent sections are those of Spinoza, Epicurus, and the Stoics - thinkers that Nietzsche held in some esteem.

Nietzsche does express contempt for "the hocus-pocus of mathematical form with which Spinoza clad his philosophy," for he regards it as a false pose, concealing the real root of his thought beneath the "mail and mask" of Euclidean deduction (BGE 5). He suggests that Epicurus may have been motivated by "rage and ambition against Plato" (BGE 7). And he is critical of the Stoic conception of nature, which he sees as a projection of Stoic morality and ideals, an example of how philosophy "creates the world in its own image" (BGE 9).

However, this section should not be read as a sweeping, reductionist attempt to debunk the great philosophers of the past. For Nietzsche includes himself among the greats. His philosophy, like theirs, is rooted in the personal and the human. What makes him wiser than his predecessors is that he is aware of this. As a perspectivist, he refuses to present his ideas as the conclusion of a divinely unconcerned dialectic. Thus, when Nietzsche points a finger at Epicurus and the Stoics, he is equally pointing towards

himself. For does he not regard himself as a rival of Socrates and Plato? And does he not read his own values into the world when he speculates about the will to power in nature?

This does not mean that Nietzsche intends his views to be taken as merely true or good for himself, without implying that they are true or good for anyone else (contra Nehamas p.33, p.72). Some of Nietzsche's views do seem to have this idiosyncratic character. Consider his rather unpleasant remarks concerning "woman as such" in Beyond Good and Evil. Preceding them Nietzsche admits that they are only his truths, part of "the great stupidity we are ... what is unteachable very 'deep down'" (BGE 231). Thus, he brackets what he is going to say as an expression of personal feeling or prejudice, which he, at least, is honest enough to recognize as such.[55] Similarly, we should be reluctant to attribute a cosmological interpretation of the will to power to Nietzsche, considering how he mocks the Stoics for projecting their own ideals into nature, and how he virtually admits that he is tempted to interpret nature in terms of power, because he values power (BGE 22). He explores such cosmological ideas in his notebooks (The Will to Power) and in hypothetical form (BGE 36), but he is really too naturalistic a thinker to insist upon them in print.[56]

Such cases are special. The fact that Nietzsche labels some of his views as merely personal, or hypothetical, or otherwise limited in scope, proves nothing about the status of other ideas which he upheld cogently and unambiguously in book after book. Thus, I disagree with Nehamas when he tells us that Nietzsche uses "vehement and outrageously partisan language" in the Genealogy in order "to show that interpretation, which is what genealogy also is, is essentially value laden and polemical" (Nehamas p.19). In this case, I do not think that Nietzsche's rhetoric is intended to undercut his arguments - to show us that his ethical naturalism and his rejection of Christianity are really only his truths. They are "his truths" - not in the sense of being idiosyncratic opinions without general validity, but because they are the fruit of a lifetime of reflection concerning the origins and value of morality (GM P:2-3). He does use vehement rhetoric, but then so have many other thinkers and writers.

Just because Nietzsche makes us so aware of the personal dimension of his thinking and presents multi-faceted ideas in an (apparently) unsystematic form, we need not jump to the conclusion that he is trying to teach us a lesson in postmodernism. Perhaps a bit of reverse psychology is intended, as is suggested by the following aphorism:

> From the thinker's innermost experience. - Nothing is more difficult for man than to apprehend a thing impersonally: I mean to see it as a thing, not as a person ... He traffics even with ideas, though they be the most abstract, as if they were individuals with whom one has to struggle, to whom one was to ally oneself, with whom one has to tend, protect and nourish. We have only to spy on ourselves at the moment when we hear or discover a proposition new to us. Perhaps it displeases us because of its defiant and autocratic bearing; we unconsciously ask ourselves whether we shall not set a counter-proposition as an enemy beside it, whether we can append to it a 'perhaps', a 'sometimes'; even the little word 'probably' does us good, because it breaks the personally burdensome tyranny of the unconditional. If, on the other hand, this new proposition approaches us in a milder shape, nice and tolerant, humble, and sinking as it were into the arms of contradiction, we try another way of testing our autocracy: what, can we not come to the assistance of this weak creature, stroke and feed it, give it strength and fullness, indeed truth and even unconditionality? Can we possibly be parental or knightly or pitying towards it? - Then again, we behold a judgement here and a judgement there, separated from one another, not regarding one another, making no impression one upon the other: and we are tickled by the thought of whether here a marriage might be arranged, a conclusion drawn, in the presentiment that, if a consequence should proceed from this conclusion, the honour of it will fall not only on the two married judgements but also on those who arranged the marriage. (AO 26)

Nietzsche is aware that "autocratic" propositions and systems of thought provoke resistance among the independent-minded (while perhaps getting uncritical assent from mere believers). One thinks of Kierkegaard's resistance to Hegel's system. Nietzsche appeals instead to our sense of charity and autonomy. He wants us to "stroke and feed" his propositions and play matchmaker among his judgements. In this way we may feel the resulting thought-children to be partly our own, giving us all the more reason to nurture and defend them - perhaps even unconditionally.

The major purpose of Nietzsche's rhetoric, I believe, is not to illustrate his perspectivism. Rather, it is to attract readers, and in particular, to attract the sort of readers that he wanted. Nehamas is on the right track when he emphasizes Nietzsche's use of hyperbole and his desire to win our attention. In this regard, the comparison between Nietzsche and Socrates that he develops is very fitting. Both figures, he observes,

> are intensely personal thinkers, actively engaged in changing, in one way or another, the moral quality of the life of the people around them, though they pursue their goals in radically different ways. (Nehamas p.25).

Socrates pursued his goals in conversation; Nietzsche pursues his in writing. Socrates was able to exercise his will to power on the course of subsequent thought "by virtue of creating a single disciple who in turn created the Socrates with whom we have all become more or less familiar" (p.29). Nietzsche exercises his will to power directly through his writings. He serves as his own Plato, creating a magnificent literary character out of himself. Socrates was a master of irony which involves saying "too little"; Nietzsche uses hyperbole which says "too much" (p.26). These devices serve the same function, in that they provoke their audience and engage its attention. They differ in that Socratic irony is self-effacing, appearing to subordinate personality to argument, while Nietzsche's style "never lets his readers forget that the argument they are getting involved in is always in more than one sense personal" (p.27).

Unfortunately, Nehamas goes astray and spoils the comparison when he interprets Nietzsche in aesthetic terms. His Nietzsche is

ultimately more like Proust's narrator in Remembrance of Things Past than he is like Plato's Socrates. He is primarily interested in creating himself as a textual character and turning his life into literature. Thus, Nehamas attributes to Nietzsche the view that writing is not only "the most important part of thinking" but also "the most important part of living" (Nehamas p.41). And in engaging with Nietzsche's works, he claims, "we are not engaging with the miserable little man who wrote them but with ... the magnificant character these texts constitute and manifest" (p.234).

Such prioritizing of writing over lived experience is foreign to Nietzsche, as is any sharp dichotomy between a textual artifact and the flourishing of its author. Literature and philosophy exist to serve life, not the other way around.[57] Thus, Nietzsche may have been a "miserable little man," but his works are (among other things) a record of how he sought to come to terms with suffering and overcome the spirit of revenge. Unfortunately, Nehamas has little regard for Nietzsche's positive ethical teachings. He calls them banal and vague, and claims that they are inconsistent with perspectivism (Nehamas pp.221-222). His Nietzsche is first and foremost a perspectivist and an opponent of "dogmatism," which he wrongly equates with an opposition to all general truth-claims.[58] Beyond this, the rest is literature or literary self-creation.

However, I think that Nietzsche has more ambitious reasons for wanting to attract our attention. Like the ancients who were his models and rivals, he aspires to win over gifted minds. His works are addressed, not to scholars and academic philosophers, or to a mass audience, but to the "free spirits" whom he expects will come some day (HA P:2) and the "philosophers of the future" whom he seeks to create or cultivate through his works (BGE 42-44). He desires such readers, not merely so that they can admire his literary self-creation, but because he is concerned with the future of human life.

Much could be written about Nietzsche's efforts to win over his desired readers - from the bracing atmosphere of his writings, to his aphorisms which stick in one's memory. Alcibiades (in the Symposium) says of Socrates' philosophy that it "clings like an adder to any young and gifted mind it can get hold of, and does

exactly what it likes with it."[59] This describes the effect that Nietzsche seems to want to have upon his free-spirited readers.

Nietzsche's rhetorical intentions explain much about the presentation of his ethics. One problem and source of frustration for Nietzsche was his lack of a readership. The Birth of Tragedy was not well received by the scholarly community. His subsequent works met with little success during his productive lifetime. Like Hume's Treatise, they "fell deadborn from the press." After Zarathustra, he even resorted to self-publication.[60] Perhaps this helps to explain the shrillness and polemical excesses of some of his later writing. As he once remarked:

> Formerly, one wished to acquire fame and be spoken of. Now that is no longer enough because the market has grown too large; nothing less than screaming will do. As a consequence, even good voices scream till they are hoarse, and the best goods are offered by cracked voices. (GS 331)

Another challenge for Nietzsche was that of presenting positive ideals without appearing to be just another tiresome "preacher of virtue" of the sort which he despised, and which would be sure to repel any free-spirited reader. Nietzsche says that preaching morals is a kind of reverse alchemy, turning gold into lead. It would be better to offer the finest things as "concealed secrets of solitary souls" and to seek to win over "the kind of people who alone matter: I mean those who are heroic" (GS 292). Nietzsche here denies that he wants to promote any morality. This does not mean, however, that he has no interest in promoting his own aretaic ideals. In a related passage from his notebooks, he reflects:

> In the end: what have I achieved? Let us not hide from ourselves this most curious result: I have imparted to virtue a new charm - the charm of something forbidden. It has our subtlest honesty against it, ... it smells old-fashioned and antique, so that at last it lures the refined and makes them inquisitive ... We have removed its scowl and its cowl, we have rescued it from the importunity of the many, we have taken from it its absurd

> rigidity, its vacant expression, its stiff false hair, its hieratic muscular system. (WP 328)

Nietzsche cultivates an image as a daring thinker, who faces up to hard truths and tolerates no humbug. He challenges the reader to do likewise - appealing to our courage, our honesty, and our sense of intellectual adventure. There is a certain amount of swagger in his stance, but also a kind of modesty, or taste. Nietzsche dislikes high-minded phrases and comforting euphemisms. He seeks to resist the "tartuffery of words" and "the shamefully moralized way of speaking which has gradually made all modern judgements of men and things slimy" (GM III:19). (Imagine what he might say about "politically correct" speech!) He proclaims himself an "immoralist" rather than redefining morality in terms of his own ideals (as most original ethical thinkers do). He speaks bluntly of "slave morality." He defends "cruelty" - on psychological grounds, because he thinks that much of "higher culture" is based on spiritualized cruelty (BGE 229). His chief example of this is his own intellectual conscience. As he explains:

> Indeed, it would sound nicer if we were said, whispered, reputed to be distinguished not by cruelty but by "extravagant honesty," we free, very free spirits - and perhaps that will actually be our - posthumous reputation. Meanwhile - for there is plenty of time until then - we ourselves are probably least inclined to put on the garish finery of such moral word tinsels: our whole work so far makes us sick of this taste and its cheerful luxury. These are beautiful, glittering, jingling, festive words: honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for knowledge, heroism of the truthful - they have something which swells our pride. But ... under such flattering colors and make up as well, the basic text of homo natura must again be recognized. (BGE 230)

The above features of Nietzsche's rhetoric tend to have much the same effect. They run the risk of misleading the unwary reader. For blunt words invite crude misunderstanding, and exhilarating rhetoric is liable not only to attract but to intoxicate. Nietzsche may intend to win over free spirits but he cannot avoid addressing

all and sundry. Writing, as the Phaedrus observes,

> drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it, but equally of those who have no business with it; it doesn't know how to address the right people, and not address the wrong.[61]

Nietzsche was aware of the potential for abuse inherent in some of his ideas and rhetoric. Consider the incident at the beginning of the Second Part of Zarathustra. After leaving his disciples for "months and years," Nietzsche's alter ego has a dream in which a child comes up to him with a mirror:

> "O Zarathustra," the child said to me, "look at yourself in the mirror." But when I looked into the mirror I cried out, and my heart was shaken: for it was not myself I saw, but a devil's grimace and scornful laughter. Verily, all-too-well do I understand the sign and admonition of the dream: my teaching is in danger; weeds pose as wheat. My enemies have grown powerful and have distorted my teaching till those dearest to me must be ashamed of the gifts I gave them. (Z II:1)

The way Nietzsche tries to guard his teaching against abuse is by means of a counter-rhetoric. After winning our attention, he offers us interpretive advice, warning us not to misunderstand him. He does this throughout his writings - in whispered asides, in prefaces, and in Ecce Homo. Particularly instructive is his response to two of the earliest reviews of his work, one which treated Zarathustra "as an advanced exercise in style," and the other which expressed "respect for the courage I had shown in my attempt to abolish all decent feelings." (EH III:1) The first appears as a prototype of the postmodern reading of Nietzsche, with its emphasis on style over positive content. He replies that "good style in itself" is a pure folly - the point of good style, rather, is to communicate an inward state (EH III:4). The other anticipates those who regard Nietzsche as a teacher of evil. He rejects it as an almost perfect inversion of the truth, and is equally scornful of those who see him as a (Social) Darwinist or as the advocate of a "real and genuine Junker philosophy" for which the ultra-right merely lacked the courage (EH III:1).

Nietzsche's subtlest means of discouraging crude misreadings involves an appeal to his reader's pride. He asks us to read him with care, and suggests that crude and shallow people will of course understand him crudely and shallowly. Consider what he says concerning "the difference between the exoteric and the esoteric, formerly known to philosophers":

> Our highest insights must - and should - sound like follies and sometimes like crimes when they are heard without permission by those who are not predisposed and predestined for them. (BGE 30)
>
> There are occurrences of such a delicate nature that one does well to cover them up with some rudeness to conceal them ... Every profound spirit needs a mask: even more, around every profound spirit a mask is growing continually, owing to the constantly false, namely shallow, interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives. (BGE 40)

What are we to make of this? In the absence of any key, technique, or method for distinguishing between Nietzsche's exoteric masks and his real teaching, such remarks serve, in practice, as an artful invocation of the principle of charity. Do some of Nietzsche's words sound like "follies" or "crimes" to us? Then we should think twice, aware that something more subtle or plausible is likely intended. Does his bluntness and hyperbole strike us as "rude"? We must not be deceived by it, on pain of revealing the rudeness of our own understanding.

If Nietzsche is an esoteric writer, his "art of writing" takes a peculiarly modern form. It certainly is not esoteric in the Straussian sense; it does not conceal dangerous truths beneath a cloak of sober rhetoric and a pious exoteric teaching.[62] Nietzsche is "extravagant" in his honesty. He almost revels in the "mask" of notoriety which superficial interpretations of his words are bound to create. Yet, Nietzsche also intimates that the real nature of his thought is something exquisitely subtle and noble, and that if we are to be worthy readers we must be attentive, thoughtful, and ultimately "charitable."

Nietzsche's rhetoric is more artful than many of his critics

realize. In courting adventurous young minds, it does invite abuse. But it is not irresponsible. It tries to counter this effect - and with some success, for despite Nietzsche's overheated rhetoric and the misfortune of having his literary estate fall into the hands of his sister, many first-rate people have defended him against the cruder sort of misreading. Some even complain that Nietzsche has been "whitewashed" by apologetic commentators. As Arthur Danto protests, the Genealogy of Morals "was not written for Nietzsche scholars, capable of handling even deadly poison with the long forceps of Wissenschaft."[63]

However, Nietzsche does desire to be read carefully, and he wants readers who are subtle and strong enough to handle "deadly" materials. One is reminded that "one man's meat is another man's poison," and that a pharmacist utilizes certain "poisons" in the service of health. As to the question of where genuine charity ends and whitewash begins, there are no easy answers. One may sell Nietzsche short in many different ways. Some, out of a misguided charity, may make him out to be a more conventional thinker than he really is. Others may insist upon the terrible "truth" - not out of intellectual courage, but in order to saddle Nietzsche with indefensible views, and thus to evade the real ethical challenge posed by his thought.[64]

CHAPTER TWO

BEYOND MORALITY: NIETZSCHE'S CRITIQUE

1. Rejecting the Peculiar Institution

A systematic treatment of Nietzsche's ethics must begin with his critique of "morality" and his stand "beyond good and evil." Various questions much be addressed, such as: Just what does Nietzsche reject when he rejects morality? On what basis does he reject it? And what sort of ethical ideas remain viable following his critique?

There is considerable agreement that Nietzsche does not intend to reject "morality" in the broadest possible sense of the term. For he clearly regards morality as harmful as well as false - a judgement which implies recourse to some extra-moral standard of evaluation. Many, therefore, have interpreted his "immoralism" in a qualified sense, as a rejection of particular types or theories of morality and their replacement with others. This view is not exactly wrong, but it does not go to the (meta-ethical) heart of the matter, or square with Nietzsche's prevailing use of terms. Nietzsche repeatedly rejects "morality," and does so most clearly in the Genealogy and his later works. His critical target is not just Christian or Kantian morality, but a particular cluster of concepts which for him constitute "morality as such." Morality, in this sense, is not synonymous with all modes of valuation, or even all varieties of ethical thought. It is a particular conception of the ethical, rooted in dubious presuppositions and a perverted scheme of values.

To some, Nietzsche's use of terms may seem odd. They might ask: Why not define morality more broadly, instead of identifying it with outmoded views that you reject?[65] But the "morality" that Nietzsche attacks has considerable currency: he is not alone in defining it along such lines, criticizing it, and seeking to replace it with other ethical ideas. Thus, Bernard Williams rejects "Morality, the Peculiar Institution." He thinks, much as Nietzsche does, that "many philosophical mistakes are woven into morality," and that these mistakes "are only the most abstract expressions of a deeply rooted and still powerful misconception of life."[66]

Michael Slote thinks that we should proceed From Morality to Virtue, abandoning specifically moral concepts in favour of aretaic ones.[67] And J.L. Mackie elaborates an "argument from queerness" against the objective and prescriptive concept of morality, and then puts some more modest ethical ideas in its place.[68]

Like these analytic critics of morality, Nietzsche is not simply out to substitute one set of ideals for another. His meta-ethical stance is more radical. He wants, not to "naturalize morality," but to reject the moral on the basis of the natural. As Frithjof Bergmann says:

> Nietzsche wanted to abolish the strictly moral, and ... to put a set of purely natural codes into its place. To put this another way: Nietzsche did not think that the privileged status - together with the greater dignity and weight - that we still assign (from earlier religious habit) to the moral could be rationally justified.[69]

Since Nietzsche attacks morality on many different fronts and for a variety of reasons, we must make some distinctions. First, I shall distinguish between features of morality that Nietzsche rejects, and can properly reject, on the basis of his naturalistic meta-ethics, and other ideals which cannot be disposed of so neatly. What I call his "naturalistic meta-ethics" includes (1) his denial of God, the "true world," and objective "moral law," (2) his view of human agency and motivation, and (3) his naturalistic standard of value, together with his theory that certain moral concepts and ideals are the product of value-inversion. This is the backbone of Nietzsche's critique of Morality - a critique which began in his "positivist" period and culminates in his Genealogy of Morality.[70] Here, more than anywhere else, Nietzsche is an heir of the radical Enlightenment and a precursor of contemporary critics of "the peculiar institution."

Nietzsche is also critical of a variety of modern ideals and values - from egalitarianism, to the modern emphasis on compassion, to the pathetic ideal of the last man. The issues here, however, are not really meta-ethical. Such modern values do not stand or fall with the Christian or Kantian concept of morality. They do not depend on any non-natural standard of value or mistaken view of

human agency. Thus, I shall distinguish Nietzsche's critique of Morality - our subject in this chapter - from his criticisms of rival modern ideals that (in their most plausible form) can be defended in naturalistic terms. While there is some continuity between the "Christian" and "modern" views which Nietzsche rejects, his quarrel with each set of views is quite distinct. Thus, the Genealogy has little to say about modern equality or pity, while on the other hand, the last man (for whom God is dead) does not appear to suffer from guilt, resentment, or ascetic self-denial.

I

One may criticize morality at three different levels, which I will call the ontological, the evaluative, and the genealogical.[71] Ontological critics deny the truth of morality, arguing that it relies on a dubious metaphysics and that moral values are not part of the fabric of the universe. This sort of view has been defended by analytic philosophers, most notably by J.L. Mackie. Since it implies nothing about the value of our ethical practices, it is compatible with a strong allegiance to custom and convention.[72]

Evaluative critics are more revolutionary. They claim that morality, or at least some of its features and demands, is harmful, evaluating it in terms of a broader standard of value (which may or may not be made explicit). Many variations on this theme are possible, from 19th century aestheticism and Marxism, to the milder positions of Susan Wolf and Bernard Williams.[73]

At the genealogical level, critics seek to uncover the origins of morality, exposing its fraudulent or shameful beginning. They may argue that it was invented by some people in order to dupe and control others (Bernard Mandeville), or that much of it grew out of theological claims that are no longer credible (G.E.M. Anscombe).[74] The genealogical mode of criticism cannot stand alone, for to object to a moral code simply because of its origins would involve a genetic fallacy. Rather, it must work in conjunction with criticism at another level, by providing an "error theory" or giving an account of how harmful values came to rule.

What makes Nietzsche's criticism of Morality so radical, and sometimes so hard to sort out, is that he attacks it at all three levels. Like an ontological critic, Nietzsche denies "that moral

judgements are based on truths," and then adds:

> It goes without saying that I do not deny - unless I am a fool - that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged - but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided for other reasons than hitherto. (D 103)

Nietzsche speaks as a naturalist, wanting to replace error-ridden "morality" with a more enlightened view of ethical phenomena. Thus, he equates morality with alchemy, and earlier compares those who believe in "the moral significance of existence" with those who once believed in the music of the spheres (D 100). Throughout his later writings he insists that

> there are altogether no moral facts. Moral judgements agree with religious ones in believing in realities which are no realities. Morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena - more precisely, a misinterpretation. (TI VII:1)

> In Christianity neither morality nor religion has even a single point of contact with reality. Nothing but imaginary causes ("God," "soul," "ego," "spirit," "free will" - for that matter "unfree will"), nothing but imaginary effects ("sin," "redemption," "grace," "punishment," "forgiveness of sins"). Intercourse between imaginary beings ("God," "spirits," "souls"); an imaginary natural science (anthropocentric; no trace of any concept of natural causes); an imaginary psychology (nothing but self-misunderstandings ...); an imaginary teleology ("the kingdom of God," "the Last Judgement," "eternal life"). (A 15)

In the first passage, Morality is dismissed as utterly false. It is not just an "interpretation," in the manner of all human attempts to make sense of the world. Morality is a "misinterpretation," a mistake. Like religion, it depends on claims which are untrue, not merely in some abstruse sense, but in terms of our best "internal realist" view of reality. When some of these claims are enumerated (in the latter passage), we see that all of them depend on either

a supernatural ontology ("God," "eternal life"), or an erroneous view of human agency ("free will," "sin").

Nietzsche devotes more attention to questioning the value of Morality than to denying its truth. But the two themes are related, and do not contradict one another.[75] Just as he has a naturalistic view of reality, he has a naturalistic standard of value. By the former, I mean that he tries to understand humans as continuous with the rest of nature, that he rejects all "true worlds" and transcendent claims, and that he respects science (without holding that physical science methodology holds the key to every question or problem).[76] He wants

> To translate man back into nature; ... to see to it that man henceforth stands before man as even today, hardened in the discipline of science, he stands before the rest of nature, with intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at him all too long, "you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!" (BGE 230)

Such naturalism demands that we understand ethical motivation in the same terms as we understand the rest of our motivational psychology. It leaves no room for "non-natural" moral sources.

In saying that Nietzsche has a naturalistic standard of value, I mean that he defines "value" in terms of life, or more precisely, in terms of the flourishing of human life [menschliche Gedeihen]. Thus, in the Preface to the Genealogy, he insists that "we need a critique of moral values"; that we must question the very value of these values, asking whether they further "the advancement and flourishing [Gedeihlichkeit] of man in general," or as he suspects, whether "precisely morality would be to blame if the highest power and splendor actually possible to the type man was never in fact attained" (GM P:6). Here, Nietzsche understands "flourishing" in terms of the actualization of human potential. He is concerned both with humanity in general, and with those individuals who have the highest potential.

These concerns, of course, may diverge. The interests of the few may conflict with those of the many; the goal of fostering

excellence may conflict with that of satisfying basic needs. Such issues are ethically important, but are marginal to Nietzsche's rejection of Morality. This is because modes of valuation which are otherworldly, resentful, or ascetic do not really profit anyone. They may be more detrimental to "higher human beings" than to "the herd," but they are generally detrimental to all. (This will be a major theme of my analysis of slave morality in section 2:6.)

The idea that Nietzsche has a naturalist standard of value faces a challenge from those, like Jürgen Habermas and Edward Andrew, who think that Nietzsche wants to replace morality with aesthetics.[77] Such an "aesthetic" reading, however, depends almost entirely on a few ambiguous fragments from The Will to Power, and on aspects of The Birth of Tragedy which Nietzsche repudiated (in "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," his 1886 preface to the second edition). For the mature Nietzsche, aesthetic value must be understood in naturalistic terms. Thus, he argues that judgements of beauty begin with the healthy human being:

> Nothing is beautiful, except man alone: all aesthetics rests upon this naivete, which is its first truth. Let us immediately add the second: nothing is ugly except the degenerating man - and with this the realm of aesthetic judgement is circumscribed. (TI IX:20)

The ugly is that which weakens and depresses, reminding us of decay, danger, and impotence. Beauty, on the other hand, stimulates our courage, our pride, and our will to power. It fuels our eros. Thus, Nietzsche sides with Plato against Schopenhauer and Kant. The function of aesthetics is not to "redeem" us from the will or to reduce us to a state of "disinterested" contemplation. Rather, "all beauty incites procreation ... from the most sensual up to the most spiritual" (TI IX:22).

Nietzsche is a naturalist, not an aesthete. While he values art more than traditional religion and morality, he looks at art from the perspective of life, which means that he looks at it in broadly ethical terms. Habermas oddly sees him as "an advocate of l'art pour l'art."[78] For Nietzsche, however, "art for art's sake" makes as little sense as "duty for duty's sake." Art is not purposeless, but is "the great stimulus to life" (TI IX:24). This

is the message of The Birth of Tragedy. The value of tragic art is that it demonstrates fearlessness in the face of that which is fearful and questionable; that it glorifies "courage and freedom of feeling before a powerful enemy, before a sublime calamity, before a problem that arouses dread" (TI IX:24). It offers us, not metaphysical comfort, but this-worldly comfort.

II

There is nothing all that original about Nietzsche's standard of value. Many ethical naturalists have challenged accepted moral codes in the name of human flourishing. Hume, for example, defined a virtue as any quality "useful or agreeable to ourselves or others," and on this basis he declared the "monkish virtues" to be vices.[79] What sets Nietzsche apart is that his characteristic objection to Morality is more radical. He may criticize some codes (like herd morality) and some values (like those of the last man) simply because they do not advance humanity, or enable its most promising specimens to attain their full stature. However, he accuses Morality of devaluing life and inverting values. More precisely, Nietzsche rejects "moral values" insofar as they reflect (1) the "metaphysical" negation of earthly life, the body, and the world (in favour of "the beyond"), or (2) the "moral" negation of pride, nobility, and human excellence (in favour of slave morality and self-denial).

Thus, Nietzsche questions the value of Morality. He thinks that "almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached" is anti-natural, in that it turns "against the instincts of life: it is a condemnation of these instincts, now secret, now outspoken and impudent" (TI V:4). Concerning this subject, Nietzsche says that he had to come to terms with his "great teacher Schopenhauer":

> What was especially at stake was the value of the "unegoistic," the instincts of pity, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, which Schopenhauer has gilded, deified, and projected into a beyond for so long that at last they became for him "value-in-itself," on the basis of which he said No to life and to himself. (GM P:5)

Schopenhauer's denigration of life and the ego, and the way he used

suffering as an objection against existence, led Nietzsche to develop the value-inversion hypothesis which is at the core of his evaluative criticism of Christian morality. Nietzsche rejects both the "true world," and such moral notions as sin, guilt, and self-denial. But for him, these are not simple errors, and they are not unrelated. As The Antichrist 15 (quoted above) continues:

> This world of pure fiction ... falsifies, devalues, and negates reality. Once the concept of "nature" had been invented as the opposite of "God," "natural" had to become a synonym of "reprehensible": this whole world of fiction is rooted in hatred of the natural (of reality!); it is the expression of a profound vexation at the sight of reality.
>
> But this explains everything. Who alone has good reason to lie his way out of reality? He who suffers from it. But to suffer from reality is to be a piece of reality that has come to grief. (A 15)

Nietzsche here proposes a unified explanation of metaphysical and moral error. Those afflicted with suffering have an incentive both to "lie their way out of reality" and to resent those who are powerful and successful. In denigrating this world, they also denigrate the values of this world. Their God, who stands as a counter-concept to this world, also serves as a lever by means of which "worldly" (i.e. natural or noble) values can be inverted.[80]

Nietzsche's genealogical critique of Morality underwrites his criticisms of its truth and value. Genealogy provides an "error theory," an account of how various metaphysical errors and warped values came to be a part of our conception of morality. As Mackie points out, those who question morality need to develop such a theory if they are to challenge "ordinary moral thought and language" - if they are to explain how so many people could be so wrong about something so important to human life.[81] This is what Nietzsche's Genealogy (more than any other work) seeks to do. It not only denies the value of humility and self-denial, but sets out to explain the mystery of how such things ever became values.

Genealogy stands opposed to ordinary language philosophy and intuitionism. In our culture, for example, the meaning of moral

terms may include a claim to objective, intrinsic, prescriptivity. But this proves nothing about the validity of such claims, especially if a plausible error theory can be developed.[82] The same goes for many elements of "common sense morality." Our moral concepts have been historically conditioned. They have evolved, changed, and been hijacked for various purposes. To analyze such concepts, we must first know something about their origins and the forces which have shaped them. Consider what Nietzsche says about punishment:

> the concept "punishment" possesses in fact not one meaning but a whole synthesis of "meanings": the previous history of punishment in general, the history of its employment for the most various purposes, finally crystallizes into a kind of unity that is hard to disentangle, hard to analyze and, as must be emphasized, totally indefinable. (Today it is impossible to say for certain why people are really punished: all concepts in which an entire process is semiotically concentrated elude definition; only that which has no history is definable.) (GM II:13)

This shows, better than anything in G.E. Moore, why "good" is so hard to define. For like all ethical concepts, "good" is a concept with a history, possessing "a whole synthesis of meanings." To analyze it, we must trace its development and try to disentangle its various strands - in this case distinguishing "good and bad" from "good and evil."[83]

Genealogy is at once a form of conceptual analysis and a form of critical history. Nietzsche's concern with the origin of moral concepts, of course, is neither purely analytic nor antiquarian. He is convinced that our understanding of ethics has been imprinted with non-naturalistic notions. His genealogical analysis thus seeks to pry apart the different elements of our ethical inheritance, and to distinguish that which is positive ("natural," "noble," "Greek") from that which has been warped by otherwordly, resentful, or ascetic values. The critical function of genealogy is twofold. It uncovers alternatives to modern moral philosophy, much as Alasdair MacIntyre does in After Virtue. It also helps us to recognize

features of our moral concepts that we might otherwise take for granted. Although we are far removed from the spiritual and moral world of the early Christians, and although the origins of a thing are logically independent of its value (as Nietzsche acknowledges in GS 345), our morality still bears the marks of its history. We are haunted by the shadows of dead gods, often in ways which we can only recognize in the light of genealogy.

2. The Death of God

God is dead. This is Nietzsche's most famous slogan, and the theme has been taken up by countless existentialists and radical theologians. It resonates in the angst-ridden souls of those who long for faith, but can no longer believe; who suffer from the loss of God, feeling that without Him, human existence has been emptied of its meaning. Who can forget Nietzsche's account of "the madman" who ran into the marketplace seeking God? In response to the laughter of those assembled, he proclaims that we have killed God, and asks:

> How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? (GS 125)

For the madman, the death of God is a catastrophe which plunges the world into nihilism. The assumption here is that without transcendent meaning, there are no meanings; that without transcendent value, there are no values. Such a reaction to the decline of Christian faith is not uncommon. One is reminded of Dostoevsky's nihilistic characters, who assume that without God, "everything is permitted." One is reminded of Heidegger, for whom Nietzsche's word that "God is dead" heralds an age of nihilism - an age in which Being has withdrawn, "values" are subjective, and the planet is ruled by "technology" and "will to power." Heidegger's final word (in his posthumously published Spiegel interview) is that "only a god can save us," and that we must "prepare readiness,

through thinking and poetry, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god during the decline."[84] One is reminded of Beckett's Waiting for Godot.

I

However, it would be a mistake to equate the opinions of the madman with those of Nietzsche. He is, after all, a madman,[85] and his anguished reaction to God's death is presented in a book called The Gay Science. This book lives up to its title; among Nietzsche's works, it is perhaps the brightest and most cheerful. "The Madman" appears in Book Three, in the midst of a series of passages dealing with the implications of naturalism and atheism. As this section opens, Nietzsche announces that "God is dead," but adds that "we still have to vanquish his shadow, too" (GS 108). This marks the first appearance of this theme in Nietzsche's writing. The news is presented without any trace of pathos or regret.

In speaking of God's "death," Nietzsche refers not to any metaphysical event, but to the fact "that the belief in the Christian god has become unbelievable" (GS 343). The causes of this deity's demise are multiple. As Zarathustra says: "when gods die, they always die several kinds of death" (Z IV:6). First, God has run afoul of our will to truth, which "in the end forbids itself the lie in faith in God" (GS 357, GS 344). Second, the Christian God's harsh and judgemental qualities have come to offend against our "good taste in piety":

> How angry he got with us, this wrath-snorter, because we understood him badly! But why did he not speak more clearly? And if it was the fault of our ears, why did he give us ears that heard him badly? If there was mud in our ears - well, who put it there? He bungled too much, this potter who had never finished his apprenticeship. But that he wreaked revenge on his pots and creations for having bungled them himself, that was a sin against good taste. There is good taste in piety too; and it was this that said in the end, "Away with such a god!" (Z IV:6)[86]

Elsewhere, Nietzsche suggests a more sociological explanation: "our modern, noisy, time-consuming industriousness, proud of itself, stupidly proud, educates and prepares people, more than anything

else does, precisely for 'unbelief'" (BGE 58). Here he refers, not to the unbelief of free spirits, who care about truth and good taste, but to the irreligion of the masses, who are so caught up in busyness that they have no time to ponder ultimate questions. This may explain the mocking reaction of the people in the marketplace to the madman. As people of the marketplace, they have no concern with the religious dimension of life.

Some might wonder whether the reports of God's death have been greatly exaggerated. First, we must keep in mind that Nietzsche thought the process would take a couple of centuries (GM III:27). Second, the death of God does not mean that religion will simply wither away. It is primarily the Christian God and Plato's two-worlds theory that Nietzsche has in mind when he speaks of God's demise. Zarathustra tells us that the pagan gods met a very different end. They laughed themselves to death when one of their number, an old grimbeard of a god and a jealous one, declared:

> "There is one god. Thou shalt have no other god before me!" As the pagan gods laughed and rocked in their chairs, they cried: "Is not just this godlike that there are gods but no God?" (Z III:8)

In the light of contemporary trends, one might see these words as prophetic. Perhaps the twilight of the Christian God will usher in, not godlessness, but an era of pagan pluralism, of "free-spiriting and many-spiriting," in which there are many competing myths and many ultimate ideals (GS 143). We must sort out what is living and what is dead in our religious life. Consider the following passage:

> "The father" in God has been thoroughly refuted; ditto, "the judge," "the rewarder." Also his "free will"; he does not hear - and if he heard he still would not know how to help. Worst of all: he seems incapable of clear communication: is he unclear? This is what I found to be causes for the decline of European theism ... 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. (BGE 53)

Many aspects of Christian belief are no longer live options for thoughtful and sensitive modern people (regardless of how much the

fundamentalists may rant). But the religious instinct is far from dead; indeed, that which we most value and revere is leading us beyond traditional theism.[87]

Such elaborations of the "God is dead" theme are not to be found in Book Three of The Gay Science. Here, Nietzsche simply takes the death of God as his starting point. His real concern here is with vanquishing God's shadow. This involves moving towards a thoroughly naturalistic view of the world and rooting out various patterns of feeling and expectation, and various moral assumptions, which are ingrained in our cultural legacy. As Nietzsche asks:

> When will all these shadows of God cease to darken our minds? When will we complete our de-deification of nature? When may we begin to "naturalize" humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature? (GS 109)

Nietzsche warns us to beware of projecting our moral and aesthetic anthropomorphisms onto nature. He wants to free our view of the universe from the "shadows" of divine purpose and divine law. And in subsequent passages, Nietzsche develops these ideas. He moves from the "de-deification" of physical nature (GS 109-115), to the challenge of "naturalizing" our view of humanity. He examines, in particular, the lingering effects of Christianity on our self-image and our sense of life:

> The Christian resolve to find the world ugly and bad has made the world ugly and bad. (GS 130)
>
> The founder of Christianity thought that there was nothing of which men suffered more than their sins. That was his error ... But the Christians have found a way of vindicating their master since then and of sanctifying his error by making it "come true." (GS 138)
>
> The metaphysical need is not the origin of religions, as Schopenhauer supposed, but merely a late offshoot. Under the rule of religious ideas, one has become accustomed to the notion of "another world (behind, below, above)" - and when religious ideas are destroyed one is troubled by an uncomfortable emptiness and deprivation. ... But what first led to the positing of

> "another world" in primeval times was not some impulse or need but an error in the interpretation of certain natural events, a failure of the intellect. (GS 151)

Here, we get some idea of the "shadows" that otherworldly religion has cast over human life. It has taught us to feel ourselves to be "sinners," to feel disgust at our nature, and to feel the need for some kind of metaphysical "salvation." Such feelings are the product of a certain kind of theology, but they may persist long after this theology has become unbelievable.

This is the lesson of GS 125. The madman illustrates how those who have come to depend on God may feel deprived and disoriented in a godless world. Without "metaphysical comfort," the madman feels the world to be a cold, dark, and empty place. His existential condition is much like that of a woman who has abandoned her career and her friends for the sake of a jealous and demanding lover - only to find, one day, that the object of her devotion has forsaken her. At first, she is desperate. She may search for him (like the madman), or passively await his return (like the later Heidegger). Soon she realizes that her lover is not coming back, and that the entire affair was based on self-deception and delusion. But despite her "unbelief," the "shadows" of her affair remain. There is a great void in her existence, not only for the obvious and immediate reason, but because she has given up her independence and the people and activities that once sustained her. Now she faces a crisis. She may sink into despair, or project her fantasies onto some new lover (who will probably prove a disappointment). But her story need not end like this. Perhaps she will be strong enough to pull her life together; perhaps she will come to see her loss as a liberation, enabling her to rediscover her own path.

The madman carries a lantern in "the bright morning hours." He feels that some sun has set, and that darkness and emptiness are closing in.[88] But for Nietzsche, the consequences of God's death are quite the opposite:

> Indeed, 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. (GS 343)

The solar metaphor also plays a role in Twilight of the Idols, where Nietzsche recounts how the "true world" (represented by the old Platonic sun) gradually became paler and more obscure, and how a new Enlightenment dawned. Here, the hour when the "true world" is finally abolished is represented as "noon; moment of the briefest shadow; end of the longest error" (TI IV). The demise of the "old god" and the "true world" thus go hand in hand. Christianity is, after all, essentially "Platonism for 'the people'" (BGE P).

II

Now we are ready to look at the implications of God's death for Morality. These implications are dramatic, and are presented in several prominent places in Nietzsche's writings. The penultimate section of the Genealogy concludes:

> As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness - there can be no doubt of that - morality will gradually perish now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe - the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles.- (GM III:27)

The point here is that Christian morality, like Christian theology, is bound to wither in the light of our will to truth. This is part of a lengthy process. With the Enlightenment, and with the rise of modern physics, modern biology, and modern historical scholarship, our will to truth has gradually eaten away at Christian theology and metaphysics. Nietzsche takes note of this, and pronounces God to be dead. His concern is not just with refuting the old faith, but with thinking through the implications of this event. For him, the demise of the old faith is like the demise of an old tree - it may continue to stand for some years, appearing much the same as ever, although it is dead and must decay and collapse, endangering all that lives beneath its canopy. Thus, Nietzsche says that only a few strong and subtle spirits know that God is dead, and even fewer 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. (GS 343)

In such passages, Nietzsche's tone is at once celebratory and apocalyptic. Unlike most freethinkers, who make every effort to show that morality does not depend on religion, Nietzsche takes a much more provocative stand. He insists that the death of God will undermine "our European morality"; that one cannot simply reject Christianity and expect, morally speaking, that everything will remain as it is. Thus, in commenting on George Eliot (and various unnamed English freethinkers), Nietzsche is quite scathing:

> They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality. ... In England one must rehabilitate oneself after every little emancipation from theology by showing in a veritably awe-inspiring manner what a moral fanatic one is. That is the penance they pay there.
>
> We hold otherwise. When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one's feet. ... Christian morality is a command; its origin is transcendent; it is beyond all criticism, all right to criticism; it has truth only if God is the truth - it stands and falls with faith in God. (TI IX:5)

Upon a cursory reading, one might be tempted to group Nietzsche with the sort of religious apologists who insist that without God, there can be only nihilism and moral chaos. This, however, would be a mistake. For Nietzsche, like most freethinkers, looks forward to the demise of Christianity with <u>hope</u>. What sets him apart is his determination to plumb the ethical implications of unbelief to the bottom; his awareness of how deeply our morality is bound up with Christian concepts; his expectation that the death of God will, for many, be a profoundly disorienting event; and his refusal to soft-pedal his views for the sake of caution.

The ethical implications of God's death can be divided into two categories. First, there are what could be called "withdrawal symptoms" - the <u>psychological and cultural effects</u> of a relatively sudden loss of religious faith among people who have been brought up as devout Christians. This is not a question of meta-ethics, but a question of moral psychology. If some people behave badly after

breaking away from Christianity (as Smerdyakov does in The Brothers Karamozov), we should not blame atheism for their transgressions.[89] Rather, we must keep in mind that they were trained in Christian morality. Perhaps they were taught that morality is a matter of self-denial - of renouncing bodily enjoyment for the sake of the soul, or sacrificing oneself for the sake of others. Perhaps they were taught to regard God's word as the basis of all their duties, and to look upon otherworldly rewards and punishments as the chief moral incentive.

Given these facts, we should expect that those who cease to believe in the Christian God may feel duped by Christian morality, and may rebel against it. For neither its ascetic commands nor its otherworldly incentives make much sense from a naturalistic point of view. Morality thus may come to be seen as something dismal, illusory, or repressive.[90] Such a rebellious attitude does have its dangers. People may go too far, ignoring Nietzsche's warning that many actions called immoral should be avoided for perfectly good naturalistic reasons. In such cases, however, the Christian moral tradition must bear a good deal of the blame. Too much senseless prohibition leads people to suspect that all prohibitions are senseless; too much talk of self-denial leads people to assume that ethics is antithetical to self-interest; and the cause of virtue is harmed when it is made to depend on faulty arguments (GS 191).[91]

In addition, the Christian tradition leaves us with a series of dichotomies which must be rethought if they are to be adequately overcome. Consider sexuality. Christianity, in its more ascetic and otherworldly forms, offers us a choice between the archetypes of Virgin and Whore - between an ideal of total abstinence (demanded of nuns and priests), and a view of sex which sees it as something dirty, degrading, purely physical, and animalistic. In overcoming such teachings, it is not enough merely to swing from one archetype to the other. We must challenge the very archetypes themselves and find a way to recover what has been degraded. Nietzsche remarks that "Christianity gave Eros poison to drink: he did not die of it but degenerated - into a vice" (BGE 168). In other words, the Christian resolve to find sexuality dirty and degrading has contributed to making it so. If one rebels against puritanism by

delighting in violent pornography or engaging in mechanical and promiscuous sex, one's view of eros and one's pattern of feeling may owe more to the past than one realizes.[92]

Of course, when Nietzsche says that the great spectacle of morality's demise will be "terrible" (in GM III:27), he is not referring to a mere increase in private criminality or personal nastiness. Rather, he refers to "the advent of nihilism," which he believed would mark the history of the next two centuries (WP:P). Nihilism should not be seen as some sort of metaphysical doctrine that Nietzsche advocates, or as an evaluation of the world that he endorses. Contrary to the interpretations of some, Nietzsche is not himself a nihilist.[93] The "advent of nihilism" he refers to is connected with the demise of certain traditional doctrines, but the connection here is not logical but psychological. It is not that nihilism is the logical consequence of giving up belief in non-perspectival truth and value, but rather that the collapse of the Christian-moral interpretation of the world is likely to have certain effects on people's psyches. Thus, Nietzsche describes himself as "the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived though the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself" (WP:P). Nihilism, he says, is the price "we have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years" (WP 30). It is the cause of the madman's suffering. It is best understood, not as the inevitable result of metaphysical or moral doubt, but as a psychological and cultural phenomenon - the darkest shadow cast by a dying God.

Nihilism is related to our Christian legacy in two ways. As an otherworldly religion which negates life, Christianity is itself "nihilistic" (A 6-7). Nihilism did not begin when people ceased to believe in God and the "true world" - it began when people ceased to value this world, and projected their resentment and their inability to affirm life into fantasies of transcendence. Such religious nihilism may have represented a will to nothingness, but at least it gave meaning to our suffering. It may have promoted asceticism as its chief ideal, but at least it gave human beings a goal to will (GM III:28).

The collapse of the Christian-moral interpretation of the

world leaves people doubly forlorn. First, it deprives them of the otherworldly meanings and ascetic purposes to which they have become accustomed. Second, this is likely to be experienced as a loss rather than a liberation, because a long religious tradition stands between them and the recovery of a more naturalistic and affirmative view of life. As Martha Nussbaum writes:

> Nineteen hundred years of Christianity have, [Nietzsche] believes, made a tremendous difference in human self-conceptions. Now the human being is so radically alienated from natural bodily humanity, so thoroughly immersed in longing for a happy ending in another world, by contrast to which this one is seen as poor and loathsome, that the removal of religious hope creates a crisis of nihilism. Religious teleological patterns of desire are so deep in us, the horror of the body is so deep in us, that it is not clear that there is any vivid life in us that is not made in religion's image, nothing, therefore, to motivate us to construct a new life after its demise. The threat of nihilism is the prospect of the collapse of the will, the refusal to continue ordering and valuing.[94]

Such concerns may seem overblown. Some might ask: What is Nietzsche so afraid of? Why should the eclipse of traditional faith be such a traumatic event for Western culture? To answer these questions, we must turn to Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Here, Nietzsche takes the death of God (and the resulting problem of nihilism) as his starting point. Thus, unlike the madman of GS 125, Zarathustra does not proclaim that God is dead to the crowd in the marketplace. He does not even proclaim it to the old saint who sings and hums to himself in praise of God. Rather, alone, after leaving the saint, Zarathustra tells his heart:

> "Could it possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard anything of this, that God is dead!" (Z P:2)

These words come right before Zarathustra enters the marketplace, to preach to those assembled about the overman and the last man. Thus, it appears that we are intended to view these teachings against the background of God's death. Zarathustra's approach (in

contrast with that of the madman) is constructive and forward-looking. He tells the people: "The time has come for man to set himself a goal" (Z P:5). As a stimulus to their self-overcoming and their creative will, he offers them the ideal of the overman. This teaching is intended, not as some peculiar neo-Darwinian prophecy, but as an antidote to nihilism.

When the people respond with laughter, Zarathustra tries a new rhetorical approach. He appeals to their pride, and speaks to them of what is most contemptible - the last man. Here we get some idea of the nihilistic possibilities that Nietzsche fears the most. The last man is a complacent creature, lacking any sense of wonder or longing, who leads a life of comfort and conformity (Z P:5). In contemporary terms, he is the sort of person whose highest values are shopping and watching TV. He would be right at home in Huxley's Brave New World.

The last man is not the only upshot of nihilism that Nietzsche envisions. He may be contemptible, but he hardly seems terrible or scary enough to justify Nietzsche's warnings concerning "the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries" (GM III:27). Rather, one thinks of events such as World War One and Two, the dictatorship of Hitler and Stalin, and the peculiar combination of political idealism and ruthless immorality which has given rise to so many horrors in the 20th century. Indeed, in the forties and fifties, it was popular to blame such events on the decline of traditional religion and morality. In the wake of 1945, Heidegger wrote:

> If things had been different [i.e. if God had not died, if the supersensible world and the Christian God had not lost their effective force in history], would the First World War have been possible? And especially, if things had been different, would the Second World War have been possible?[95]

At the meta-ethical level, such attempts to link the death of God with political disasters are patently absurd. One gives too much credit to metaphysics if one thinks that only belief in an objective realm of values can make people behave themselves. War and oppression are certainly not unique to the 20th century. During

the ages of faith, Christianity gave rise to its share of Crusades and Inquisitions.

The psychological and cultural effects of the death of God, however, are another matter. Those who experience nihilism as the madman does may desperately seek some new idol or ideology to live for. Thus, it is probably no coincidence that in the 19th century, the rise of nationalism corresponds with a weakening of religious belief. For those looking to fill the void left by God's departure, the state gives them something bigger than themselves to revere. Thus, Zarathustra refers to the state as "the new idol":

> State is the name of the coldest of cold monsters. ... "On earth there is nothing greater than I: the ordering finger of God am I" - thus roars the monster. And it is not only the long-eared and short-sighted who sink to their knees. Alas, to you too, you great souls, it whispers its dark lies. Alas, it detects the rich hearts who would like to squander themselves. Indeed, it detects you too, you vanquishers of the old god. You have grown weary with fighting, and now your weariness still serves the new idol. With heroes and honorable men it would surround itself, the new idol! It likes to bask in the sunshine of good consciences - the cold monster! ...
>
> Indeed, a hellish artifice was invented there, a horse of death, clattering in the finery of divine honors. Indeed, a dying for many was invented there, which praises itself as life: verily, a great service to all preachers of death! (Z I:11)

When the state puts itself above all else (Deutschland, Deutschland über alles), or declares itself to be our proper object of ultimate concern, it becomes a dangerous idol.[96] In times of war it demands human sacrifice. What most troubles Zarathustra about state-worship is that its spell extends, not only to "the long-eared and short-sighted," but to those who are heroic, to those who have vanquished the old god. The teaching of the overman is, among other things, an antidote to the idolatry of the "overstate." It represents an ideal of individual excellence, in contrast to all nationalist, statist, and collectivist dreams.

On this point, Nietzsche is more perceptive than Heidegger. Although the latter has much to say about the death of God and the metaphysical roots of 20th century political events, he fell under the spell of "the new idol." In his Rectoral Address of 1933, he proclaimed that German students owe their nation Labour Service, Military Service, and Knowledge Service - each of which is equally primordial and of equal rank. Academic freedom and the quest for knowledge must be subordinate to "the spiritual mission of the German people."[97] And even after the war, Heidegger never fully renounced his illiberal nationalism.

It is perhaps unfair to single Heidegger out like this. For he is not the only thinker of his time to feel forlorn without God, and to hunger for some quasi-religious saving power. Communism, with its dreams of an apocalyptic revolution which will usher in the Socialist Millennium, held great appeal for many mid-20th century intellectuals. For some it was "the god that failed."[98]

3. The Death of the Moral Law

Now let us turn to the meta-ethical implications of God's death. In cultural terms, these are much less dramatic than the psychological implications discussed in the last section. People are not generally driven to nihilism or despair by high-level arguments concerning the basis of ethics. But in another sense, the meta-ethical implications of atheism are more substantive. For they pertain, not just to the psychological situation of a generation or the culture of a century, but to the type of ethics that remains viable in a godless world.

Nietzsche's rejection of the "moral law" conception of ethics is clear. In Human, All Too Human, he writes: "there is no longer any 'ought'; for morality, insofar as it was an 'ought,' has been just as much annihilated by our mode of thinking as has religion" (HA 34). He backs this up in terms of moral motivation. Knowledge, he says, "can allow as motives only pleasure and pain, utility and injury" (HA 34). Such an emphasis on these particular motives is uncharacteristic of the mature Nietzsche. But whether one speaks of pleasure or power, utility or self-development, the point remains the same: all motivation arises from within the human animal, and

has a naturalistic basis.

I

The concept of moral law (sometimes known as "natural law") may be understood in two very different ways. If seen as internal to the human agent, it may be understood in terms of practical reason or innate features of our psychology. If seen as external to the human agent, it can be seen as a divine command or a Platonic form. Nietzsche rejects both versions of the theory. It is the latter version, however, whose fate is clearly sealed by the death of God.

Nietzsche subscribes to a version of the Schopenhauer-Anscombe thesis concerning modern moral philosophy. This thesis was first elaborated by Schopenhauer, although it is often associated with the name of G.E.M. Anscombe, who introduced it into Anglo-American ethics in 1958. According to Anscombe:

> the concepts of obligation, and duty - moral obligation and moral duty, that is to say - and of what is morally right and wrong, and of the moral sense of "ought," ought to be jettisoned if this is psychologically possible; because they are survivals, or derivatives from survivals, from an earlier conception of ethics which no longer generally survives.[99]

This earlier conception of ethics was based on divine law and rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. But without a divine lawgiver, the notion of "moral law" no longer makes much sense, while "ought" becomes a word of mere mesmeric force.

Already in 1840, Schopenhauer had made the same argument against Kant. The concept of duty, together with those of law and obligation, taken in the categorical sense,

> has its origin in theological morals, and remains a stranger to the philosophical until it has produced a valid credential from the essence of human nature or that of the objective world. Until then, I do not acknowledge for it and its relatives any other origin than the Decalogue.[100]

On what basis, Schopenhauer asks, are we entitled to assume that there is such a thing as the moral law? The real and original

meaning of "law" is limited to civil law, which is a purely human institution. To speak of "natural law" is merely to use language metaphorically - unless one appeals to theology.

Perhaps because the point had already been made, Nietzsche does not spend much time arguing for this conclusion. But clearly, he follows Schopenhauer in rejecting the moral law conception of ethics. In a key section of The Gay Science, he warns:

> Let us beware of thinking that the world is a living being ... Let us even beware of believing that the universe is a machine: it is certainly not constructed for one purpose ... Let us beware of attributing to it heartlessness and unreason or their opposites; it is neither perfect nor beautiful, nor noble, nor does it wish to become any of these things; it does not by any means strive to imitate man. None of our aesthetic and moral judgements apply to it. Nor does it ... observe any laws either. Let us beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, nobody who trespasses. (GS 109)

Nietzsche here seeks to remove God's shadow from our understanding of nature (as discussed in section 2:2). He denies that there are any intrinsic purposes, values, or laws in nature. Such notions are all-too-human projections. People imagine nature to be governed by laws because they believe in a supernatural law-giver, or because they equate the regularities of nature with the regularities of conduct set forth in human law. The idea of "laws of nature" is, at best, a metaphor; at worst, a misleading anthropomorphism.

This realization poses no threat to modern physics. One can speak of "regularities of nature" instead of "laws of nature" with no real loss of meaning. Such regularities are necessities which do not require a regulator to enforce them. The law of gravity takes care of itself, even though there is noboby who commands and nobody who obeys.

In ethics, on the other hand, the notion of "natural law" is much more problematic. For such "laws" do not usually refer to any regularities of nature. It is neither always necessary, nor always

in our interest, to obey them.[101] In Nietzsche's view, the universe is not only "beyond good and evil" but also beyond such anthropomorphic categories as value, meaning, and purpose. The universe simply exists, following its own inner necessities. Thus, there is no room for an objective moral law that is external to human life. Indeed, the demand for such an external ground for ethics actually involves a category mistake. Value or obligation is not simply "out there" prior to all our desires and needs - it is something which human beings project onto the world. This idea is developed by Nietzsche in Daybreak:

> man has ascribed to all that exists a connection with morality and laid an ethical significance on the world's back. One day this will have as much value, and no more, as the belief in the masculinity or femininity of the sun has today. (D 3)
>
> 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)'. ... 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? (D 102)

The good-in-itself is an objectification of what appears to be good for beings such as ourselves. And by extension, the "moral law" is simply an objectified code of law from which the human legislator has been removed.

The concept of the moral law does not logically depend on the concept of God. But if there is no Divine Legislator, just what is the ontological status of such a law? As something objective and external, it could be envisioned as a Platonic Form. But this is no help. For with the death of God, such metaphysics is no more credible than Christian theology. If morality is made to depend on such a metaphysics, it becomes something "ontologically queer." One wonders: if the moral law is some sort of non-natural entity, just how are we supposed to acquire knowledge of it? Some would gesture

towards intuition.[102] But this is a poor excuse for an answer, and it is incompatible with Nietzsche's perspectivism. For if we have no access to the thing-in-itself, we have no way of discerning what is good-in-itself. All we have is our various points of view, our various desires and needs, our knowledge of psychology and history, and the various methods of ethics which are naturalistic.

One also wonders: if some sort of objective and prescriptive moral reality did exist, how could it ever hook onto the internal realm of our desires and needs? Beyond the problem of knowledge, there is a problem of authority. If God is not around to enforce the moral law, why on earth should we obey it? A law which is not enforced is, at best, an ideal; at worst, empty words. According to Hobbes: "where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice."[103] In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, God is the ultimate "common power" standing behind the moral law. With his demise, the only genuine laws are whose which are made and enforced by human beings. Such laws are a product of negotiation, which are shaped by contingencies of history and power. While they may offer themselves as absolutes which categorically must be obeyed, their force and influence ultimately depend on the police, the courts, and the informal sanctions of public opinion - all of which give people practical reasons for obedience. If one wants to avoid jail, one ought not to steal; if one wants to be trusted, one ought not to lie; and so on.

Such a line of thought appears to reduce ethics to fear of punishment and the various requirements of prudence. This is where a law-based concept of ethics leads - if one is a legal positivist and a naturalist. Of course, the "law" metaphor is only one way of looking at ethics. We could begin instead with the many ideals and virtues which are desired as ends-in-themselves. Here, however, we are dealing with a concept of ethics which is attractive, rather than imperative - a matter of aspiration towards the good, rather than obligation to the moral law. The contrast between these approaches has been noted by several modern ethicists, including Henry Sidgwick.[104] The former is classical, the latter is Christian. Nietzsche prefers the classical approach. The idea of unconditional obedience to the moral law, he says, is at the root

of German moral teaching. The Greeks, on the other hand, "seem as moralists like a gymnastics teacher who says to his pupil: 'Come! Follow me! Submit to my discipline! Then perhaps you will succeed in carrying off a prize before all the Hellenes'" (D 207). Ancient ethics is aretaic, urging one to aspire towards excellence. Modern morality emphasizes obedience, whether in the form of obedience to God, or obedience to the categorical imperative principle.

We come now to the crux of the matter. A concept of ethics based on hypothetical imperatives of prudence, or on aspiration towards the good, is potentially compatible with naturalism. There may be no Platonic good-in-itself, over and above our needs and aspirations, but so what? We still need what we need, and admire what we admire. The fact that our internal goals are not the goals of the universe should not bother us, unless we are under the spell of some form of metaphysical realism. Our values may ultimately be projections, but why should we stop projecting? As Nietzsche says:

> The 'in itself.' - Formerly we asked: what is the laughable? as though there were things external to us to which the laughable adhered ... 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: - 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. (D 210)

Concepts such as the laughable, the beautiful, and the good can survive such internalization. They remain attractive, even if they are only the product of our own point of view. Objectivity may be impossible - if by objectivity one means some sort of metaphysical realist validation. But if by objectivity one means finding some degree of commonality in our perspectives, and some way of ranking human development in terms of excellence and flourishing, then it very well may remain within reach.

Concepts like the categorical imperative and moral obligation, however, are more problematic. For if obligation is internalized, how can it remain categorically binding? If the moral law is not something over and above us, how can it remain prescriptive when its dictates run counter to interest and inclination? If duty is not attractive or prudentially necessary or subjectively compelling in some other way, what claim can it have on us?

II

At this point, defenders of the moral law may appeal to conscience or reason. Conscience may be seen as giving access to a moral law within which does not depend on any Platonic metaphysics. Others may appeal to reason. The rationalist option is popular with philosophers working in the tradition of Kant and Aquinas. Thus, Alan Donagan tries to combat the Schopenhauer-Anscombe thesis by arguing that the moral law is ascertainable by reason. Donagan credits the Stoics with working out

> the first reasonably clear conception of morality: not because they had a theory of divine law, but because they conceived the divine law as valid for all men in virtue of their common rationality.[105]

However, just as Nietzsche's naturalist ontology leaves no room for an external moral law, his analysis of moral psychology leaves no room for an internal moral law. Nietzsche rejects moral rationalism, and rejects any sort of Kantian dichotomy between sublime duty and mere inclination. We may feel obligated to do certain things and not do others; we may even be troubled by guilt. But this reflects, not the voice of the moral law within, but the effects of evolutionary and personal history:

> Duty is a compulsive feeling which impels us to some action and which we call good... The thinker, however, regards everything as having evolved and everything that has evolved as discussable, and is thus a man without a sense of duty - as long, that is, as he is functioning as a thinker. (WS 43)
>
> The content of our conscience is everything that was during the years of our childhood regularly demanded of us without reason by people we honoured or feared. It is

> thus the conscience that excites the feeling of compulsion ('I must do this, not do that') which does not ask: why must I. In every case in which a thing is done with 'because' and 'why' man acts without conscience; but not yet for that reason against it. - The belief in authorities is the source of conscience: it is therefore not the voice of God in the heart of man but the voice of some men in man. (WS 52)

Nietzsche here anticipates Freud. Conscience as a kind of superego; its content reflects how we were programmed in our early years; its unconditional nature reflects the fact that certain behaviours have been unconditionally demanded of us by those in authority.[106] In sharp opposition to Kant, he insists that reason and conscience are very different things. Reason is a matter of "because" and "why"; in Kantian terms, it is a matter of hypothetical imperatives. It seeks justification in terms of some end or purpose which is meaningful to the agent. Conscience, however, has categorical claims. It insists that its commands are unconditionally binding, whether we like it or not. But its power over us has to do, not with reason, but with unthinking obedience to authority.

Nietzsche is no moral rationalist. His conception of reason cuts off the possibility of such an approach to ethics. He thinks that moralities are "a sign language of the affects" (BGE 187) and that "reason is merely an instrument" (BGE 191). Like Hume, his view of moral reason is instrumental, and he is more interested in our passions and sentiments than in trying to prove that virtue is rationally required.[107] If one is to make a proper study of ethics, Nietzsche says, "all kinds of individual passions have to be thought through and pursued through different ages, peoples, and great and small individuals" (GS 7). What we need is not more deontic logic, but more understanding of such passions as love and envy, such institutions as law and punishment, and their history. For one cannot separate the "rational" part of ethics off from inclination (passion) and contingency (history) without badly distorting the subject.

Nietzsche rejects the traditional "order of rank" of reason over passion. Much like Hume, he is critical of the prevailing

"misunderstanding" and "degradation" of passion:

> The whole conception of an order of rank among the passions: as if the right and normal thing were for one to be guided by reason - with the passions as abnormal, dangerous, semi-animal ...
>
> Passion is degraded (1) as if it were only in unseemly cases, and not necessarily and always, the motive force; (2) in as much as it has for its object something of no great value, amusement -
>
> The misunderstanding of passion and reason, as if the latter were an independent entity and not rather a system of relations between various passions and desires; and as if every passion did not possess its quantum of reason - (WP 387)

Reason is not an independent entity - it is merely a system of relations among various passions and desires. It may show passion A and passion B how to fulfil their goals in a way that is mutually coherent. Passion A may curb passion B if it is more powerful, or if its demands are more central to the individual. But "reason" cannot simply overrule inclination.

To the extent that one's actions tend to promote one's own fulfilment, they may be said to be instrumentally rational and mutually coherent. But the fact that we are rational in this sense has nothing to do with any universal moral law. Our reason will lead us down similar ethical paths - if our needs and aspirations are somewhat alike, if we are capable of a certain degree of mutual sympathy, and if we are relatively equal in power. But if we were radically unlike one another in these respects, our reason would lead us into conflict.

4. The Metaphysics of the Hangman

The Kantian notion of practical reason is not the only element of the peculiar institution to run afoul of Nietzsche's account of human agency and motivation. For Nietzsche is a defender of egoism and determinism. He holds that all our desires and actions flow out of the self, and that all of them are part of the chain of causality. To demand that our acts be utterly selfless or utterly

free is to demand the impossible. The implications of this are clear. If morality depends on non-egoism or non-determinism, then morality rests on an illusion. As Nietzsche says:

> 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 the will, as another definition says, then there are likewise no moral actions! (D 148)

Once again, the target of Nietzsche's criticism is Kant and the Christian tradition. According to Kant, human beings have a dual nature. On one hand, we belong to the sensible world and are subject to the laws of nature; on the other hand, we belong to the intelligible world and are subject to laws which are not empirical but are founded purely on reason. If we were merely part of the sensible world, our actions would have to be taken as determined by the natural law of desire and inclination. This, for Kant, is heteronomy. However, insofar as we are part of the intelligible world, we are free to transcend nature, subdue inclination, and live in accordance with reason and the moral law. While events in the sensible world are causally determined, the duality of our nature enables us, as rational beings, to be free and autonomous moral agents. Without this duality, Kant remarks, a fatalist could "chase all morality out."[108]

Kant also claimed that only that which is done out of duty has any moral worth. To act out of duty is to act out of pure respect for the moral law. The implication here is that if our actions flow out of the empirical self and its natural inclinations, then they are somehow tainted and lose their ethical value. The Kantian ideal is to act, not out of love and affection, but out of pure reason; not out of aspiration towards arete, but out of obedience to the moral law. Such a view may strike us as harsh and inhuman.[109] But it follows from the way that Kant bifurcates human agency. For to act out of inclination is to be unfree, to be enmeshed in the sensible world. But to act out of duty is to rise above our animal nature, to rise above the ego, and to act autonomously in accord with universal reason.

All this sounds very Platonic. When Nietzsche gets rid of the "true world," the basis for such dualism is eliminated. We are left with the inclinations of the human heart and the necessities of the sensible world. Morality, in the Kantian sense, is shown to rest on a psychological error. For if actions must be free and selfless to be moral, then moral actions are impossible:

> First proposition: There are no moral actions whatsoever: they are completely imaginary. Not only are they indemonstrable (which Kant, e.g., admitted, and Christianity as well) - they are altogether impossible. Through a psychological misunderstanding one has invented an antithesis to the motivating forces, and believes one has described another kind of force; one has imagined a primum mobile which does not exist at all. ...
>
> Second proposition: This entire distinction "moral" and "immoral" proceeds from the idea that moral as well as immoral actions are acts arising from free spontaneity - in short, that such a spontaneity exists, or in other words: that moral judgements in general relate only to one species of intentions and actions, those that are free. But this whole species of intentions and actions is purely imaginary; the world to which alone the moral standard can be applied does not exist at all: - there are neither moral nor immoral actions. (WP 786)

Nietzsche equates freedom of the will in the metaphysical sense with the notion of the causa sui - a notion he dismisses as self-contradictory. One is not "free" to rise above causality, and "pull oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the swamps of nothingness" (BGE 21).[110]

Nietzsche goes on to discuss egoism. So-called "selfless" actions are imaginary. The whole antithesis between "ego" and "non-ego" is a mistake, opening up an artificial divide between the single ego, existing in and for itself, and the tremendous non-ego. Morality is then conceived as self-negation; a matter of subjugating oneself to the non-ego and living for its sake. But since the self is present in all our drives and actions, the "Christian conclusion" is:

> "Everything is sin; even our virtues. Absolute reprehensibility of man. The unselfish action is not possible." Original sin. In short, once man had made of his instincts an antithesis to a purely imaginary world of the good, he ended by despising himself as incapable of performing actions that were "good." (WP 786)

The view of morality that Nietzsche is attacking here is not just a straw man, or even a peculiarity of Kant's metaphysical morals. Modern moral thinking in general has been haunted by fallacies concerning the implications of egoism and determinism.

I

In taking up these fallacies, let us begin with determinism. Some have maintained that in order to be worthy of moral blame or moral credit, an action must be utterly free. Clarence Darrow, the famous attorney, made use of this premis in his defence of clients such as Leopold and Loeb.[111] Darrow would argue that his clients' conduct was the result of a long chain of causality; that whatever they may have done, they were victims of circumstance. In other words, since they did not make themselves, they were not ultimately responsible for their character. And since they are not ultimately responsible, it is unfair to inflict harsh retribution (such as death by hanging).

The above line of argument can also be used to undermine the concepts of moral credit and desert. According to Rawls, the fact that our natural talents and abilities are contingent means that they are morally arbitrary - a matter of good fortune in the lottery of life.[112] Meritocracy he regards as unjust, because the "gifts" it rewards are ultimately undeserved. This raises the question of just how one is to separate contingency from what is morally deserved. Is skill at moral reasoning any less contingent than skill at other forms of reasoning? Is the ability to identify with other people and imagine what they are feeling any less contingent than other talents and abilities? Are "moral" traits such as conscientiousness and self-control any less contingent than "non-moral" traits such as cheerfulness, charm, or a cultivated sense of humour?[113]

If one is a naturalist - if one refuses to bifurcate human

nature - such distinctions are unsupportable. We must admit that all forms of arete are contingent; that goodness is fragile; that those who do us harm are ultimately caught in the web of causality just as we are. This does not mean that we should stop bestowing praise and blame or that punishing criminals is pointless. It just means that the strict and peculiar "moral" conception of these practices must be abandoned. People will, of course, continue to admire some qualities of character and deplore others, regardless of whether they are ultimately "voluntary" or "deserved." Such valuations need have nothing to do with the peculiar institution of Morality. For humans admire and value many forms of excellence. An apple is valued if it is sweet and crisp; a bridge is valued if it is sturdy and elegantly designed; a therapist is valued if she is insightful and empathetic. Such judgements of "good and bad" are inescapable for creatures such as ourselves. But they are not specifically moral - they do not (or at least need not) refer to a realm of credit and blame which is beyond contingency. It is in this spirit that Nietzsche's "noble mode of valuation" proceeds.

So how did ethical evaluation become bound up with the notion of the utterly voluntary? The answer, Nietzsche thinks, has to do with the desire to find human beings utterly blameworthy. The most striking example of this is Christianity. For Christian theology asserts that the guilty will suffer eternal torment in hell, and that such punishment is deserved. The doctrine of free will thus becomes essential to Christian apologetics. For only by means of this doctrine can the ultimate blame for sin be placed on human beings, rather than on our omnipotent and supposedly loving Creator. Thus, in Twilight of the Idols, Nietzsche condemns free will as "the foulest of all theologians' artifices":

> Wherever responsibilities are sought, it is usually the instinct of wanting to judge and punish which is at work. Becoming has been deprived of its innocence when any being-such-and-such is traced back to will, to purposes, to acts of responsibility: the doctrine of the will has been invented essentially for the purpose of punishment, that is, because one wanted to impute guilt. The entire old psychology, the psychology of will, was conditioned

> by the fact that its originators, the priests at the head of ancient communities, wanted to create for themselves the right to punish - or wanted to create this right for God. Men were considered "free" so that they might be judged and punished - so that they might become guilty (TI VI:7).

Nietzsche calls Christianity "a metaphysics of the hangman." Against it, he argues that the Christian God - if he existed - would have no right to punish us. For he is the First Cause, the all-powerful and all-knowing creator of the universe, who is responsible for creating us the way we are. The question of how such a deity could endow us with free will is as perplexing as the question of whether he could create a rock so heavy that even he could not lift it. For both involve a negation or surrender of divine omnipotence. As long as God remains all-powerful and all-knowing, God remains responsible for everything that happens, and moral theology is rendered incoherent.[114] For if God is the ultimate cause of our "sinful" nature, he has no right to condemn us. Thus, Nietzsche tells us that at the age of thirteen, he reached the conclusion that God must be "the father of evil" (GM P:3). And Zarathustra compares the Christian God to a potter, who "wreaked revenge on his pots and creations for having bungled them himself" (Z IV:6).

II

With the death of God, the question remains: Do people have the right to blame and punish one another? The issue here hinges on how we understand "blame" and "punishment." If we view them in strictly Moral terms, the answer is "no." Our nature and actions are not ultimately worthy of blame, for they flow out of the river of causality whose sources are beyond our control. One could trace their origins back, from our parents, to our culture, to the universe itself. But the universe is not evil or blameworthy - it simply is. Thus, Nietzsche upholds the innocence of becoming. He insists that the concepts of guilt, blame, and punishment are not part of the fabric of the universe, What is more, they have no place in any positive ethic. Nietzsche declares the consciousness of guilt, or "bad conscience," to be worthless (GM II:4). And he

seeks to root out the moralistic view of punishment as if it were a noxious weed (D 13).

A person, of course, may do many things which are obnoxious to his neighbours. He may harm or injure them, thereby provoking them to seek retribution - that is, revenge. But this is far short of Christian and Kantian theories of moral blame and punishment. For the desire for retribution is simply the all-too-human desire to "even the score" on the part of those who have been harmed. It is natural for them to want to extract their "pound of flesh" from those who have hurt them. Thus, as Nietzsche explains in the Second Essay of the Genealogy, the offender was originally seen as a kind of debtor. In punishing him, the victim sought compensation. He "collected" on the debt by making the debtor suffer in turn:

> Let us be clear as to the logic of this form of compensation: it is strange enough. An equivalence is provided by the creditor in receiving, in place of a literal compensation for an injury (thus in place of money, land, possessions of any kind), a recompense in the form of pleasure - the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless ... In "punishing" the debtor, the creditor participates in a right of the masters: at last he, too, may experience for once the exalted sensation of being allowed to despise and mistreat someone as "beneath him" - or at least, if the actual power and administration of punishment has already passed to the "authorities," to see him despised and mistreated. The compensation, then, consists in a warrant for and title to cruelty. (GM II:5)

The debtor demands an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, as laid out in the Jus Talionis. Such justice may be harsh, but at least it is direct and honest about its cruelty and vengefulness. It is only later that the desire for revenge is moralized into something which is objectively demanded by divine law; it is only later that the concept of debt (owed to a particular person for a particular offense) is moralized into guilt, which insists that the "guilty" deserve to suffer, even if their torment is of no benefit to anyone. But once we move from the all-too-human desire to "even

the score" to the idea of a realm of ultimate desert, the problem of free will raises its head again. One might ask: why should we beat up on ourselves and feel guilty for "sins" which are beyond our control? Isn't such guilt senseless? And why should we allow retribution to cloak itself in the impersonal robes of justice? Isn't the human propensity to vengefulness strong enough without giving it the good conscience of Morality?

Nietzsche does not condemn those who seek retribution; he does not tell us to love our enemies or to requite evil with good. As Zarathustra says: "a little revenge is more human than no revenge" (Z I:19). It is better to express one's anger than to try to make one's enemy feel guilty and ashamed. It is better to requite evil with evil than to repress our sense of grievance, bottling it up until it festers into ressentiment. For this reason, Nietzsche has more regard for primitive justice, in which "debt" is discharged through physical punishments (however cruel), than for later religious morality, in which "debt" is internalized into guilt, bad conscience, and psychological self-torture.

But Nietzsche is no advocate of retribution. He bids us to "mistrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful" (Z II:7). Reactive feelings, he thinks, proceed from weakness and lack of power. Those who are vulnerable, easily hurt, or unable to get over their injuries are likely to take the wrongs they have suffered very seriously. But as the "creditor" becomes "richer" - as we become more psychologically affluent and secure - we are likely to be more forgiving and humane. The same goes for communities. Those which are weak must take extreme measures to uphold the social contract. But as the power of a community increases, it tends to take the individual's transgressions less seriously:

> It is not unthinkable that a society might attain such a consciousness of power that is could allow itself the noblest luxury possible to it - letting those who harm it go unpunished. "What are my parasites to me?" it might say. "May they live and prosper. I am strong enough for that!" (GM II:10, also D 202)

For Nietzsche, the desire for retribution is something to be overcome in the name of mercy. Like Portia in The Merchant of

Venice, Nietzsche hopes that human beings will eventually be able to forgo their "pound of flesh." But as long as we are vulnerable beings, and as long as tragic loss gives rise to the desire for vengeance, this overcoming will remain incomplete.

Beyond retribution, there are other functions of punishment. One is simply to incapacitate the offender. Those with a record of willfully harming others must be prevented from doing further injury (WS 33). This has little to do with notions of moral blame and condemnation. In locking away a dangerous offender, we treat him as we would treat a vicious dog. Such an individual cannot be allowed to run loose, because he poses a danger to others. This remains so, regardless of whether he is ultimately to blame for his viciousness or whether we have a desire to exact retribution.

A final purpose of punishment is deterrence (WS 33). Since violence and lawlessness are a threat to public peace, measures must to taken to deter such behaviour. The probable costs of crime must be made to outweigh the benefits for the potential criminal. However, when punishment is used as a deterrent, we are merely using the person we are punishing as a means of influencing future behaviour. As Nietzsche remarks:

> How is it that every execution offends us more than a murder? It is the coldness of the judges, the scrupulous preparation, the insight that here a human being is being used as a means of deterring others. (HA 70)

Using the offender in this way is cruel and somewhat ugly, although it may by unavoidable. It is similar to the process described in the Genealogy, whereby punishment is used to create a memory - to render unforgettable five or six "I will not's" on which the social order depends (GM II:3). Such efforts are simply a form of "negative reinforcement" which endeavours to teach the offender (and anyone else who is watching) to associate pain with certain forms of transgression. Pain is inflicted in order to modify behaviour, not because the offender is held to be morally deserving of pain.

In the end, what Nietzsche leaves us with is not an elaborate theory of when, and on what grounds, various punishments are justified. He seeks, instead, to destroy the good conscience of

those who delight in blaming and judging others, and to refute what could be called moralistic retributivism - the notion that people who do certain things are worthy of punishment, regardless of whether their victims desire revenge or whether punishing them is of any value as a deterrent or a preventative of future harms.[115]

5. Egoism Revalued

Let us now turn to the subject of egoism. Nietzsche stands opposed to all moralistic hostility to the ego, and does so on both psychological and evaluative grounds. Nietzsche denies the reality of unegoistic actions. But his point is not simply that people, alas, are incapable of acting disinterestedly. His real goal is to revalue egoism - to refute the idea that "selfishness" is always wicked, while "self-sacrifice" is the epitome of moral worth. Beginning with Daybreak, Nietzsche takes up the fight "against the morality that would unself man" (EH III:D2). Morality "unselfs" us when it preaches against our natural instincts and demands that we surrender the ego. Whether such demands are made in the name of God or moral duty, or whether they call for monkish austerities or unremitting service to others, the point remains the same. Such a morality is ascetic and anti-life. As Nietzsche says:

> The decisive symptom that shows ... that the morality of decadence, the will to the end has become accepted as morality itself, is the fact that what is unegoistic is everywhere assigned absolute value while what is egoistic is met with hostility. Whoever is at odds with me about that is to my mind infected. - But all the world is at odds with me. (EH III:D2)

Nietzsche is at odds here, not only with religious tradition, but with Kant and Schopenhauer. For Kant, morality means putting aside inclination. Rather than growing out of desire, morality demands that we transcend desire and obey the moral law. Schopenhauer defines morality in a slightly different way. According to him, all actions are done either from egoism, malice, or compassion. But only those done from compassion have any moral worth, for "egoism and the moral worth of an action absolutely exclude one another."[116] Once again, we are presented with a dichotomy of

egoism versus morality, and of "tainted" versus "pure" motivation. Actions which flow out of the ego are considered suspect. Schopenhauer dismisses all perfectionist self-realization and all love (except the desire to alleviate suffering) as a form of egoism. Only actions which are purely other-regarding are seen as morally worthy.[117]

But are there any such actions? Nietzsche thinks not. Under strict examination, he argues, the whole concept of "unegoistic action" vanishes into thin air:

> No man has ever done anything that was done wholly for others and with no personal motivation whatever; how, indeed, should a man be <u>able</u> to do something which had no reference to himself, that is to say lacked all inner compulsion (which would have its basis in a personal need)? How could the ego act without the ego? (HA 133)

There is no such motive as impartial reason or disinterested love. Whatever we do, our motives are in some way connected with our ego and its perspectives. A person may seem to be sacrificing her own needs for the sake of someone (or something) else. But perhaps she vicariously lives through her children or her artistic creations. Perhaps living up to certain ideals is more important to her than any other gratification. Or perhaps out of self-hatred, she takes a perverse delight in punishing herself. The possible twists and turns of human desire are endless.

Therefore no simple dichotomy between "wicked" egoism and "good" altruism is possible. For there is a chemistry of concepts and motives. So-called altruistic actions arise out of egoism. Sometimes the flowers that we most prize grow out of materials that we despise (HA 1). Nietzsche thus regards egoistic desire, not as a vice to be overcome, but as a power to be sublimated. As he remarks: "good actions are sublimated evil ones; evil actions are coarsened, brutalized good ones" (HA 107).

In upholding psychological egoism, Nietzsche's intention is far from cynical. He is not one of those who is determined to take a gloomy view of human nature, arguing that beneath every admirable action there lurks a petty or shameful motive. Nietzsche insists that the value of an action is in no way tainted by being linked to

the ego. Thus, he distinguishes his view from that of the French aphorist, La Rochefoucauld:

> Egoism and its problem! The Christian gloominess of La Rochefoucauld which extracted egoism from everything and thought he had thereby reduced the value of things and of virtues! To counter that, I at first sought to prove that there could not be anything other than egoism - that in men whose ego is weak and thin the power of great love also grows weak - that the greatest lovers are so from the strength of their ego - (WP 362, also D 103)

The view that egoism is sinful, when combined with psychological realism, leads to the view that our nature is sinful. Rather than helping us to ennoble our egoism, such a view teaches us to despise ourselves, equating self-negation with virtue. Nietzsche suspects that the ideal of selflessness is tied to cruelty; that "only the bad conscience, only the will to self-maltreatment provided the conditions for the value of the unegoistic" (GM II:18).

I

Against such a view, Nietzsche makes a couple of effective arguments. First, there is something self-contradictory about making "living for others" one's ultimate ethical ideal. For if our altruism is to be of any value to others, they must be sufficiently egoistic to accept our sacrifice (HA 133).[118] The value of giving is predicated on the fact that others have selfish desires, that they value the satisfaction of such desires, and that they are able to graciously accept our gifts. A world of complete altruists would be like a group of people dining together, each of whom presses their neighbours with food and vehemently insists on being the one to pick up the check. In such a world, there would be universal frustration, as everyone sacrifices for others (or for duty) but no one is able to enjoy the benefits.

If the satisfaction of other people's wants is an ethically worthy end, it must also be proper to satisfy our own. Those who deny this must admit that they are really ascetics. For if altruism is meant to benefit humanity, its value must be predicated on the selfish enjoyment of someone. Otherwise, it would simply be a form of self-denial. A world in which everyone abandoned selfish desire

for the sake of "morality" - if it were possible - could only be a world of self-mortifying ascetics.

The preaching of "selflessness" involves similar problems. To praise it because it brings us advantages is self-contradictory. If we really cared about the flourishing of our neighbours, Nietzsche thinks, we would stop demanding that they sacrifice themselves for the benefit of others - not to mention for our personal benefit. Rather, we would delight in their self-actualization and refuse to condone such sacrifices (GS 21).

Second, Nietzsche argues that in preaching against the ego, one debases egoism. In telling people for thousands of years that selfishness is evil, one harmed selfishness and "deprived it of much spirit, much cheerfulness, much sensitivity, much beauty" (GS 328). It would be far better, Nietzsche says, to direct our scorn against stupidity and try to take away its good conscience. Those who preach against the ego also weaken the ego. Egoism acquires a bad conscience while the herd instincts are strengthened (GS 328). It thus becomes harder for the individual to resist the demands of conformity. Efforts to "become what one is" are looked upon with suspicion while self-development gives way, not to benevolence, but to a kind of pseudo-egoism:

> Whatever they may 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. (D 105)

The individual becomes lost in the fog of habits and opinions which envelope him. He struggles for wealth and respectability, not because he wants them, but because he is supposed to want them. Having internalized society's opposition to the ego, he is unable to creatively follow his own path. Timid and conformist in his egoism, he gratifies the approved wants in the approved fashion, and is thoroughly other-directed.[119]

In politics, egoism is not usually the source of the greatest evils. Rather, the person we really need to look out for is the "selfless" ideologue who feels that his conscience is clean because he is acting "disinterestedly":

> To be able to act with complete ruthlessness, a statesman will do best to perform his work not on his own behalf but on behalf of a prince. The glitter of this general disinterestedness will dazzle the eye of the beholder, so that he will fail to see the knavery and harshness involved in the work of the statesman. (HA 445)

One thinks of Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi bureaucrat who engineered the Holocaust and later claimed that he was just obeying orders. Indeed, Eichmann went so far as to claim that he had lived his whole life according to Kant's moral principles. This may seem outrageous, but there is an element of truth in it. For Eichmann saw himself as a law-abiding subject of the Führer, who put his repugnant "duty" before inclination.[120] As his example shows, a morality of duty can easily be perverted to support authoritarian ends, and the call to overcome inclination can be turned against whatever noble and decent impulses we might have. When the ego is weakened and given a bad conscience, monsters may rise up to fill the void. Ultimately, it is those people with the strongest and most independent egos who stand the best chance of resisting the "categorical imperatives" of Hitler, Stalin, and their ilk.

II

So far, we have been examining Nietzsche's case against the preachers of "selflessness" - an unrealizable and harmful ideal. But what of Nietzsche's own teachings concerning the ego? How does he deal with the challenge it poses for ethics? According to the received view (which is not limited to the Christian-Kantian tradition), egoism is a major impediment to ethical behaviour. Some see egoism as leading to a war of all against all. They argue that people desire such things as wealth and power, that their desires bring them into conflict, and that the only way to avoid disaster is if everyone agrees to constrain themselves in accordance with common moral rules. Others, who begin with the general utility, see egoism as an anti-social impediment to its maximization.

The former view is contractarian; the latter is utilitarian. Contract theory is fairly helpful - as long as its dictates are really in accord with self-interest. It is to our advantage to respect the rights of others - as long as one desires peace,

security, and the benefits of civil society. These conditions generally hold. But there are exceptions. Sometimes the weak are at the mercy of the strong; sometimes people prize other things more highly than peace and security. More will be said about these issues in sections 3:3 and 3:4, when we examine the contractarian element in Nietzsche's own thought. For now, it is enough to point out that contract theory is only a partial answer to the challenge of reconciling egoism with human well-being.

The utilitarian position is in worse shape. It offers, not a partial answer, but no answer at all. For it is unable to explain why a person - a separate individual - should allow his or her aspirations to be submerged in the general utility. Nietzsche has several reasons for opposing utilitarianism. He regards the development of the gifted few as more important than the pleasure and comfort of the many. He is critical of the way utilitarians identify the good with what is useful and pleasant. And he is appalled at the thought of rare talents being told to turn aside from the task of "becoming what one is" for the sake of Benthamite ideals. For Nietzsche, such a sacrifice would represent, not virtue, but a <u>waste</u> of virtue (BGE 221).

A utilitarian could respond in several ways. She could accuse Nietzsche of elitism and reject his <u>aretaic</u> ideals. Or she could follow the example of John Stuart Mill and try to modify the theory, perhaps distinguishing between higher and lower pleasures and giving more weight to the former; perhaps insisting that the general utility is best advanced by fostering self-actualization, individuality, and the development of rare talents. Utilitarianism can be interpreted more charitably than Nietzsche does.[121] But in the end, the crux of the problem remains. For the theory is unable to fully recognize and respect the separateness of persons. It makes everything revolve around the general utility, and thus from time to time, it may demand that people sacrifice themselves (or others) on this altar.

This leads to serious justification problems. For a person may ask: Why should I give up what is precious to me for the sake of anonymous millions whom I do not even know? Why, even, should I sacrifice myself for the sake of a few rare talents whose

aspirations and experiences are alien to me? As long as there is a gap between what the individual cares about and what is optimal for everyone (or for higher human beings), any moral code which demands the self-sacrifice of the individual will face such questions.

Thus, utilitarianism may be objectionable to Nietzsche because of its hedonism and egalitarianism. But from the point of view of meta-ethics and psychology, it faces a serious motivation problem. For it demands that we regard the maximization of the general utility as our ultimate end, thus relegating ourselves to the status of a mere means. But if psychological egoism has any truth, we must accept that everyone looks upon their own flourishing as an end-in-itself, and that it is perfectly reasonable to do so.[122]

III

Now we come to the crux of the matter. The reason the above theories leave us at an impasse is that they set up a conflict between egoism and morality. When we act for the ego, a definite pattern of desire is assumed. Our actions are assumed to be base or petty - for the sake of money or status. Morality, on the other hand, is seen as something immeasurably above us. Its motivation is seen as wholly distinct from selfish desire (Kant), or its proper end is seen as distant from what we ordinarily desire (Bentham). Given these premises, there is no escape. Egoism is anti-social, morality is unegoistic, and never the twain shall meet.

But there is a way out. For the self is fluid and potentially boundless. As Nietzsche says, most people take that which they know under their protection. Their sense of self grows to include their children, their town, and whatever else they identify with (D 285). In other words, self-interest need not be fixated on any particular set of concerns. It can be base and mean, but it also can be noble and generous. This insight was well-expressed by Aristotle:

> The good man should be a lover of self (for he will both himself profit by doing noble acts, and he will benefit his fellows), but the wicked man should not; for he will hurt both himself and his neighbours, following as he does evil passions.[123]

The good man strives towards what is excellent. His self-love leads him to cultivate the virtues and act nobly on behalf of his friends

and fellow citizens. Since he prizes arete above material gain, he can be trusted not to harm others out of greed. And since he fears dishonour more than death, he is unlikely to do wrong even when he thinks he can get away with it. The problem with the wicked man, on the other hand, is not that he is an egoist - it is that his priorities are distorted and he does not value what is truly good.

Nietzsche views egoism in similar terms. He says that "self-interest is worth as much as the person who has it: it can be worth a great deal, and it can be unworthy and contemptible" (TI IX:33). The egoism of the "ascending" type is worth much. For it is through such individuals that life moves forward. Such people have many gifts to develop and to give. The egoism of the "descending" type, on the other hand, tends to be publicly detrimental. It leads the unfortunate to take from others and diminish those who have turned out well.

Nietzsche's fullest statement of these ideas is pronounced by Zarathustra. He distinguishes between noble (or healthy) and base (or sick) forms of selfishness. The former he calls the gift-giving virtue. It transcends the usual dichotomies between self and other, and between giving and taking:

> Insatiably your soul strives for treasures and gems, because your virtue is insatiable in wanting to give. You force all things to and into yourself that they may flow back out of your well as the gifts of your love. (Z I:22)

Zarathustra calls such selfishness "whole and holy." It is generous - unlike the poor and hungry selfishness of the sick, which always wants to steal. But it gives out of a spirit of aretaic ambition, and recognizes that one must cultivate one's powers before one can be of any help to others.

This gift-giving love is, in many ways, analogous to the love of a mother for her children. Thus, Zarathustra bids us to love our virtues like a mother (Z II:5). Such a love is far from unselfish. Our children are vehicles of immortality, carrying our genes and our memories into the future. But neither is it "selfish" in the usual sense. We love our children for their own sake, not for any crude pay-off. As parents we give of our time, our energy, and our resources, much as a creative artist invests herself in her work.

In both cases, one must nourish and cultivate oneself before one can give. And one does not experience such giving as self-sacrifice - as long as one's deepest self is bound up with the work. This remains the case, whether one's "work" is a child, a book, or a particular ideal.[124] For Zarathustra: "your virtue is yourself and not something foreign, a skin, a cloak, that is the truth from the foundation of your souls, you who are virtuous" (Z II:5).

6. Slave Morality and Ressentiment

Central to Nietzsche's critique of morality is his critique of slave morality. Indeed, he regards the peculiar institution as essentially slavish. Anyone who is at all familiar with Nietzsche is likely to have heard of slave morality. Like all good phrases, it has a way of sticking in the mind. But beyond the fact that it is the opposite of master morality, there is much disagreement as to its meaning.

When one first hears of slave morality, one is tempted to view it in political terms. Such a morality, one might suppose, is a morality invented by slaves (or their sympathizers) for the benefit of slaves.[125] Perhaps it commands the strong to help the weak and treat them with compassion. Or insists that all persons are equally worthy of respect, regardless of their intelligence and talent. Or makes justice revolve around the interests of the least advantaged. Or urges the oppressed to work together for liberation, under a slogan like "solidarity forever!"

From a Marxian point of view, such moralities could be said to reflect the class interests of the "slaves" - the poor, exploited, and oppressed. And Nietzsche could be seen as a Marx in reverse - a thinker who is well aware that morality is a weapon in the class struggle, but chooses to side with the masters. While Marx shows how morality and religion have served the interests of the ruling classes, Nietzsche shows how they have served the interests of the mediocre masses. But as unmaskers of ideology, their efforts are complementary. One exposes bourgeois morality; the other exposes slave morality. Both see ethics as an arena in which competing classes struggle for power. We are left to face social reality without illusions.

If one interprets Nietzsche's opposition to slave morality in such terms, one moves directly into a contractarian problematic. For such a reading leaves no room for any meta-ethical distinction between the moralities of "master" and "slave." One morality reflects the interests and values of the few; the other reflects the interests and values of the many, and that is that. Conflicts may be settled by civil war, or ideological deception, or some sort of compromise. In any case, the slaves seem to be just as entitled to stand up for themselves as the masters. And as long as they are lacking in such basics as food, shelter, liberty, and security, it is not hard to sympathize with them. One might even admire the way they have used moral ideology to overcome the oppressor.

I

The above account of slave morality (with all its limitations) is not foreign to Nietzsche. Indeed, it is implicit in Beyond Good and Evil 260. But it is not the primary account - the one that is developed at length in the First Essay of the Genealogy, where he proposes his theory of value-inversion. The accounts of slave morality in these two works are notably different. The one in BGE is essentially political. The one in the Genealogy, on the other hand, has a meta-ethical dimension. It contrasts two modes of valuation - one of which is consistent with naturalism, and the other which is not. Unfortunately, commentators tend to ignore the difference between them, assimilating the later account to the preliminary sketch of BGE 260.

In BGE 260, Nietzsche contrasts "master morality" with "slave morality." This is not the first appearance of this theme in his writings. As early as Human, All Too Human 45, Nietzsche discusses the "twofold history of good and evil" - first in the souls of the ruling tribes and castes, then in the souls of the subjected and powerless. His account of the noble's ethic in HA 45 contains the seed of his mature view of the subject. Nietzsche says that good and bad were for a long time the same thing as noble and base. Good are those who can requite good with good, and evil with evil; bad are those who are too weak to requite. It is not those who do us harm, but those who are contemptible who count as bad. A noble enemy is respected, for such a person can requite. Nietzsche refers

to Homer for evidence.

Nietzsche's account of the noble's ethic in his later writings remains much the same. The terminology does become a bit sharper. Nietzsche tells us that the noble mode of valuation is based on the distinction between good and bad - a distinction which has nothing to do with such concepts as "evil" and "blame." The judgement "good" originates with the noble and powerful. It has nothing to do with utilitarian efforts to promote altruism (GM I:2). Rather, "good" is a matter of self-affirmation. One feels oneself and what one honours to be good. Thus, the noble type "experiences itself as determining values" (BGE 260). To be good is to be noble, powerful, and proud.

Being "noble and powerful" was once largely a matter of social caste and physical force. What mattered was that one was a master, a commander, a possessor (recall the emphasis in HA 45 on being able to requite). But nobility also comes to refer to typical character traits. The nobles affirm themselves as "the truthful" or "the brave" (GM I:5). They are the people who are strong enough to risk their lives in battle, conquer fear, honour their pledges, and have no need to lie. Power also comes to be seen as something more than brute force. To be powerful is to be able to discipline oneself, to shrug off petty annoyances, and to experience exalted states of soul:

> In the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow: the noble human being, too, helps the unfortunate, but not, or almost not, from pity, but prompted more by an urge begotten by excess of power. (BGE 260)

One is reminded of Zarathustra's gift-giving virtue and Aristotle's praise of liberality and magnificence.

But what of the bad? They are simply seen as lacking in goodness. They are human beings who do not measure up. One may regard them as contemptible or pitiful. However, like bad eggs that are low on the scale of egghood, there is no point in condemning them. There is nothing morally wrong (or evil) in being a low-grade

human, any more than there is in being a low-grade egg. From the perspective of the nobles, the bad are hardly worthy of hatred, let alone moral blame. They are simply bad.[126]

The noble mode of valuation is thoroughly naturalistic and aretaic. It evaluates the goodness or badness of human beings in the same spirit as one would evaluate anything else as to whether it is an excellent (good) or defective (bad) specimen of its kind. Such judgements have nothing to do with any specifically moral notions. The ontological assumptions they presuppose are very parsimonious, and the concept of goodness with which they deal has motivating force. For who among us does not want to be excellent?

One still might wonder why Nietzsche puts so much stock in the aretaic evaluations of the ancient masters. For even in the realm "beyond good and evil," people may disagree about good and bad. Nietzsche does not address this issue directly. But the beginnings of an answer are implicit in his work. For he envisions the masters as healthy specimens, brimming over with vitality and the feeling of power. They are the good, beautiful, happy ones, "filled with life and passion through and through" (GM I:10). Such people, Nietzsche thinks, will act out of psychological abundance rather than deficiency. They will affirm life and what is life-enhancing, rather than getting hung up on fear or ressentiment.

Virtue-ethicists tend to be more interested in providing an account of good character than of right behaviour. The assumption is that if one achieves the former, the latter will follow of itself.[127] Nietzsche's approach is similar. He is forever drawing portraits of ideal human beings and talking about health, nobility, and power. These concepts are closely related in his thinking and have an aretaic significance. Out of them flows a psychology and ethical outlook which Nietzsche regards as normative for human beings (much as the qualities of a grade A egg are normative for eggs). Those who are "good," he thinks, are more likely to make life-affirming choices and value judgements than those who are "bad."

This does not mean that one should slavishly imitate the ways of the ancient masters (see my discussion of this issue in section 1:2). Such a return to the past is impossible; as Nietzsche says,

one is not free to walk backwards like a crab (TI IX:43). Perhaps, however, we may recapture the master's affirmative attitude towards life and nature. Perhaps we will succeed in developing a noble mode of valuation appropriate to the conditions of our own time.[128]

When one turns to the subject of slave morality, on the other hand, one finds that the accounts of it given in HA 45, BGE 260, and the Genealogy are quite different. In the first passage, Nietzsche says that the weak see everyone as threatening, hostile, and ready to take advantage - in short, as evil. Their view of other people is essentially fearful and suspicious, making community-building very difficult. Nietzsche thus suggests that our present morality has grown up among the ruling tribes and castes.

A fuller and more complicated account of slave morality appears in BGE 260. Here again, Nietzsche says that the concept of evil arises out of the slave's fear: "into evil one's feelings project power and dangerousness, a certain terribleness, subtlety, and strength that does not permit contempt to develop." The fear-inspiring masters are judged to be evil. Now, however, Nietzsche does not see slave morality as leading to a generalized paranoia. Rather, the weak huddle together ethically for protection against the strong. Slave morality approves of those who are useful, kind, and harmless. The "good" person is someone who is good-natured, easy to deceive, perhaps a bit stupid. Freedom is valued as a goal. The "virtues" are those traits which serve to ease existence for those who suffer. Pity, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honoured - for they are useful. Slave morality, Nietzsche says, "is essentially a morality of utility" (BGE 260).

The slaves depicted here are more formidable and worthy of respect than those of HA 145. They may fear the masters, but their fear does not prevent them from working together for mutual benefit. They may suffer from existence, but the traits they value really seem to ease their lot. Such an ethic is useful to slaves, because it advances their normative interests. It may be born of fear and weakness, but as long as it enables the fearful and weak to make the most of their lot, they have no reason to abandon it.

In BGE 260, Nietzsche suggests that present-day morality is a mixture of master and slave elements. In all "higher and more mixed

cultures," he says, there are attempts at mediation between these two moralities. They may interpenetrate one another; they may exist alongside each other; they may even be found within "the same human being, within a single soul." Modern ethics reflects this duality. One should not assume that our "slave" inheritance is altogether deplorable. Nietzsche says that all higher cultures reflect the influence of both moralities. The slaves are said to value traits such as friendliness and the desire for freedom, which he sometimes speaks of with approval.[129] Moreover, the version of slave morality described here is not bound up with any particular metaphysical errors. It may originate in weakness, but it is not anti-life, since it seems to be beneficial to the weak. It is just contrary to the interests of nobility and the flourishing of exceptional human beings. It is for this reason that Nietzsche vehemently rejects utilitarianism and what he calls "herd morality" (BGE 201-202).

II

Nietzsche's fully developed theory of slave morality appears in the Genealogy, and further light is shed on it in the Antichrist. Here, it is the slaves' ressentiment (not their fear or their weakness) which takes centre stage. As Nietzsche says:

> The slave revolt in morality begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the ressentiment of natures which are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No ... and this No is its creative deed. (GM I:10)

The concept of ressentiment does not suddenly appear here, fully formed. As early as Human, All Too Human, Nietzsche observes that to desire revenge without having the strength and courage to carry it out "means to carry about a chronic illness, a poisoning of body and soul" (HA 60). In Daybreak, he warns us to "beware of all spirits that lie in chains" (such as clever women who are confined to a petty, dull environment), for in their frustration they will take revenge on everything that is at liberty (D 227). The evil of

the strong, Nietzsche says, discharges itself through the vigorous actions of the muscles. When such people do harm, they do so thoughtlessly. The evil of the weak, on the other hand, "wants to harm others and see the signs of the suffering it has caused" (D 371). In Zarathustra, he declares that suffering and incapacity are at the root of all afterworldly theologies (Z:I:3). And in Beyond Good and Evil, he says that Christianity had its origin in slavish revenge. Its symbol of "god on the cross" represents "a revaluation of all the values of antiquity" (BGE 46). He also links moralizing with the spirit of revenge:

> Moral judgements and condemnations constitute the favourite revenge of the spiritually limited against those less limited - also a sort of compensation for having been ill-favored by nature ... It pleases them down deep in their hearts that there are standards before which those overflowing with wealth and privileges of the spirit are their equals: they ... almost need faith in God just for that. (BGE 219)

The above themes finally coalesce in Nietzsche's account of what we will call the slave morality of ressentiment (to distinguish it from that other slave ethic which merely promotes the interests of the herd). Such a morality inverts values. While the nobles actively affirm their own existence, the slaves are reactive. Their morality is a form of "imaginary revenge." It seeks not to advance the weak, but to get back at the strong; not to improve conditions for the wretched, but to afflict those who are rich and happy. Since the slaves are unable to take revenge directly, their feelings are bottled up, turning ever more bitter and rancorous. Finally, they find expression in the realm of imagination where gods and ideals are created.

The slaves react against the values of the masters. From their perspective, it is precisely the "good" person of the noble ethic who is "evil" (GM I:11). Several things are worthy of note here. One is that the slaves are not out to reform the noble ethic - to make it kinder, gentler, or fairer. The morality of ressentiment is primarily a matter of sour grapes. The rich, the powerful, and the worldly are considered evil. Pride, self-will, and the enjoyment of

the flesh are condemned. Weakness, on the other hand, is "lied into something meritorious." Thus, the impotence which cannot requite becomes "goodness of heart"; anxious lowliness becomes "humility"; subjection to those one hates becomes "obedience"; the need to wait at the door becomes "patience"; the inability to revenge is called unwillingness to revenge, or "forgiveness" (GM I:14). In other words, slave morality makes a virtue of necessity. One is lowly and subservient, and so one tells oneself that these traits are really virtues - that being humble and obedient is morally better than being proud and self-willed, and that everyone should be humble and obedient. Or one is unable to get revenge, and so one tells oneself that one is too forgiving for such a thing. The point here is not that forgiveness is always a sham. For it is a trait that Nietzsche much admires. The point is that the underlying motivation of slave morality is passive aggressive. While it may prate about love and mercy, its real nature is more insidious.

Also worthy of note are the meta-ethical features which separate this morality from the noble ethic. First, the morality of ressentiment involves blaming people for what they are. Such blame is what separates the concept of "evil" from that which is merely "bad."[130] Consider the following parable:

> That lambs dislike great birds of prey does not seem strange: only it gives no grounds for reproaching these birds of prey for bearing off little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves: "these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey, but rather its opposite, a lamb - would he not be good?" ... the birds of prey might view it a little ironically and say: "we don't dislike them at all, these good little lambs; we even love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender lamb." (GM I:13)

The slaves fear and hate the nobles, regarding them as "evil." The nobles, on the other hand, see the slaves as useful or, at worst, merely "bad." Such feelings are understandable. But in the case of the slaves, there is a problem in going from disliking the nobles to blaming them for being strong and dominant. One may regret that their power sometimes expresses itself in brutal ways. However, the

strong are ultimately no more free to be weak than birds of prey are free to be lambs. No matter how much the slaves would like to condemn the nobles, there are ultimately no grounds for holding them culpable for being "birds of prey" (see my discussion of free will and moral blame in section 2:4).

The morality of ressentiment faces another obstacle. Those who would invert values must get others to take their moral judgements seriously. The aretaic qualities valued by the nobles tend to win spontaneous approbation. Thus, their opponents face a challenge. For how does one get people to reject such virtues and aspire to be meek? The birds of prey in GM I:13 treat the moralizing of the little lambs with irony. Surely real nobles would take a similar attitude towards any slaves who tried to feign contempt for their values. The slaves, however, have a metaphysical trump. They need not take on the burden of asserting that humility and obedience are really better, in aretaic terms, than their opposites. For the slaves can appeal to God - an all-powerful being who, they insist, will reward the meek and punish the proud. Thus, at the same time that the slaves invert values, they move life's centre of gravity into the beyond.

The link between the "moral" negation of noble values and the "metaphysical" negation of earthly life is only implicit in the First Essay of the Genealogy. One must read it alongside the Third Essay, where Nietzsche gives us a sustained analysis of the ascetic ideal. He sees it as born of a "ressentiment without equal" which turns against life itself (GM III:11). One must also consider the Antichrist, where Nietzsche says:

> In my Genealogy of Morals I offered the first psychological analysis of the counter-concepts of a noble morality and a morality of ressentiment - the later born of the No to the former: but this is Judaeo-Christian morality pure and simple. So that it could say No to everything on earth that represents the ascending tendency of life, to that which has turned out well, to power, to beauty, to self-affirmation, the instinct of ressentiment, which had here become genius, had to invent another world from whose point of view the affirmation of life appeared as

evil, the reprehensible as such. (A 24)

Here everything begins to come together. We learn that the morality of ressentiment is essentially Christian morality. This means that the critiques of the Genealogy and the Antichrist are inextricably related. The slavishness of Christianity (e.g., its valorization of humility and obedience) is also closely related to its otherworldly orientation. In order for the slaves to negate the life-affirming values of the nobles, they had to negate earthly life. Hence the invention of the transcendent world - a perspective from which the resentful and unhappy could denigrate the "worldliness" of the nobles and the "vanity" of all concern with honour, beauty, riches, or success. But the slaves (and their priestly sympathizers) were not content to claim only that the nobles were "bad" or mistaken in their values. They hated the nobles and wanted to see them suffer. Thus, they delighted in imagining an afterworld in which the objects of their ressentiment (the evil ones) would be judged and punished, while they themselves would be rewarded for their lamb-like goodness. Thus, the anti-natural and vengeful attitude of the slaves was given supernatural authority. A rewarder-punisher God became the ultimate sanction of morality. And morality itself became a "peculiar institution," dependent on a host of assumptions which are unable to survive intellectual scrutiny.

In order to carry out their inversion of values, the slaves and priests had to revalue the concept of deity. Originally, the gods were a projection of a people's virtues and its feeling of power. Such a religion was a form of thankfulness, which affirmed nature and embodied noble values (A 16, also A 25). Later, under the influence of the resentful slaves and ascetic priests, all this changed. God became a counter-concept to "the world." And he became moralistic, the ultimate guarantor of slave values. The slaves may still suffer, but their suffering is given a moral interpretation. Perhaps God is testing their faith, or teaching them to renounce the flesh, or punishing them for some transgression. At any rate, they tell themselves that if only they are selfless and obedient and patient, they will be rewarded for their faith. And their enemies - the evil, the godless, the sinners - will get what they deserve. The slaves call this, not "revenge," but the triumph of

God and justice (GM I:14). But beneath these fine words lurks a ressentiment without equal.

Nietzsche regards the Christian conception of the afterlife as the ultimate apotheosis of ressentiment. As evidence of this, he quotes Aquinas, who said that the blessed in heaven would be able to see the punishment of the damned, in order that their bliss be more delightful for them. And he quotes Tertullian, who warns good Christians to avoid the cruel pleasures of the arena, but then goes on to describe the pleasures awaiting the faithful on the day of judgement, when rulers and athletes, poets and philosophers, will be thrown into the fires of hell. Such passages reveal a desire for revenge that is either so consuming, or so lacking in real-world outlets, that it looks forward to the eternal torment of its "enemies." For Nietzsche, the "eternal hate" that is implicit in such a vision gives the lie to Christian talk of love and mercy:

> One must not let oneself be lead astray: "judge not," they say, but they consign to hell everything that stands in their way. By letting God judge, they themselves judge; by glorifying God, they glorify themselves; by demanding the virtues of which they happen to be capable - even more, which they require to stay on top at all - they give themselves the magnificent appearance of a struggle for virtue ... Oh, this humble, chaste, merciful variety of mendaciousness! (A 44)

The psychology of ressentiment is passive aggressive. On one hand, the good Christian is meek and turns the other cheek. He tells himself that revenge is evil, and that his lamb-like demeanour is a mark of virtue. On the other hand, he believes in a God who will judge and punish the wicked. Thus, the good Christian need not face up to his own lust for vengeance. For it is God who judges and punishes people, and His wisdom and justice are beyond question. Who can argue with a Being who is all-knowing and all-powerful? The good Christian need only look on with hope and gratitude at the workings of divine justice.

Such a moral theology is an insidious form of revenge. But it does not seem to do anyone any real good. The noble and strong are harmed, for their virtues are devalued and their souls are weighed

down with blame, guilt, and the fear of hell. The slaves may enjoy a certain degree of satisfaction, but the fact remains that their revenge is purely imaginary. Rather than helping them improve their earthly estate, it turns their attention towards otherworldly fantasies. Rather than helping them assert what power they do have, it teaches them humility and obedience. And as Christian history has amply shown, a morality which valorizes the lamb-like virtues can easily play into the hands of those in authority, who want their slaves to be "good slaves" - that is, suitably servile and deferential subjects who are accepting of their lot. This, in essence, was Marx's basic charge against Christianity, and the charge has been repeated by feminists, such as Mary Daly.[131] Their line of argument is not necessarily incompatible with Nietzsche's view. For although the morality of ressentiment may have been invented by slaves (and their allies), this does not mean that it cannot be turned against them by masters and priests who are clever enough to see through it.

III

Towards the end of his discussion of "good and bad" and "good and evil," Nietzsche speaks of the two rival modes of valuation in a way that is reminiscent of BGE 260. He says that they have struggled with each other for thousands of years,

> so that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a "higher nature," a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense and a genuine battleground of these opposed values. (GM I:16)

Here it seems that human development requires a synthesis of noble and slave perspectives. Nietzsche then gives us a brief sketch of Western history. The noble perspective is represented by Rome; the slave perspective by Judea. The latter triumphed in Christianity. The Renaissance meant a swing back towards classical ideals. With the French revolution, popular ressentiment prevailed again. But out of it came Napoleon, a signpost to the other path. It is thus no wonder that our culture reflects the legacy of both outlooks.

In a note from 1884, Nietzsche speaks of "the Roman Caesar with Christ's soul" (WP 983). This phrase seems to point towards a synthesis of the best of Roman (noble) and Jewish (slave)

values.[132] Various passages in the Genealogy also suggest the need for such a synthesis. Thus, Nietzsche credits the priestly form of existence with making man an interesting animal and giving depth to the human soul (GM I:6). And he says that "history would be altogether too stupid a thing without the spirit that the impotent have introduced into it" (GM I:7).

However, the idea of such a master-slave synthesis is in conflict with much of what Nietzsche says in the Genealogy, where slave morality is characterized primarily in terms of its origin in ressentiment and its otherworldly orientation. If there is anything that Nietzsche consistently and unreservedly opposes, it is these two traits. Ressentiment is poisonous and destructive of human excellence; otherworldiness fosters illusions which are anti-life. There is no evidence that he wanted to integrate either in any kind of ethical synthesis. Moreover, at the end of the First Essay, Nietzsche tells us that his aim is to go "Beyond Good and Evil," and that this does not mean "Beyond Good and Bad" (GM I:17). In at least some sense, then, slave morality (but not the noble mode of valuation) is something to be overcome.[133] Many aspects of it are harmful; others are simply false. For example, its concept of blame and its rewarder-punisher-god theology are simply untenable from a naturalistic perspective.

The morality of ressentiment, and the theology of ressentiment on which it depends, are thus both seriously damaged by Nietzsche's critique. It is doubtful whether anything of them remains which Nietzsche would want to salvage. Some qualifications are, however, in order. First, Nietzsche acknowledges that the slaves and the priests have enriched our culture in various ways, giving us depth and cleverness, and forcing the strong to exercise their power in a more thoughtful and considerate way. This does not mean that we need to retain the morality of ressentiment in order to continue to receive these benefits. It simply means that Nietzsche is generous enough to give his adversaries their due.

Second, we must remember our earlier distinction between the morality of ressentiment and an ethic which merely seeks to advance the interests of the herd. The latter remains an option, because it need not rely on any non-natural assumptions. Nietzsche may link

the French Revolution with ressentiment. While this event was in part an expression of revenge (the Reign of Terror and all), at least it was active and this-worldly - quite different from ressentiment as Nietzsche usually describes it. The ideals of the Revolution were liberty, equal rights, and democracy - ideals with which Nietzsche has been known to quarrel. However, there is no inherent reason why those who struggle for such ideals need be mean-spirited or vengeful. In the 20th century, one can point to plenty of left-wing liberation movements which were driven, to one degree or another, by the bloody-minded spirit of revenge. But one can also point to Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and a variety of other people who have managed to meet oppression with a nobility and strength of spirit that is truly remarkable.[134]

I have now presented the major themes of Nietzsche's critique of Morality. From his denial of the Moral God and the Moral Law, to his analysis of slave morality, we have seen how Nietzsche takes issue with many central elements of "the peciliar institution." Some may wonder why, after discussing the morality of ressentiment of Genealogy I, we do not go on to discuss the themes of the Second and Third Essays. What about guilt and asceticism? The answer is that these topics have already found a place in our presentation. In section 2:4, we saw how Nietzsche pulls the rug out from under the notion of moral guilt - the notion that people deserve to suffer for their transgressions, even if such suffering is of no benefit to anyone. The desire to condemn other people as guilty in this sense reflects a will to revenge, not all that different from the ressentiment of the First Essay. And the desire to condemn oneself as guilty reflects a kind of internalized aggression and self-laceration. Thus, Nietzsche speaks of bad conscience as an illness (GM II:16).

Similarly, in examining Nietzsche's critique of "the morality that would unself man" in section 2:5, we saw how the ascetic ideal has become deeply entangled with morality. Asceticism turns against life and against our natural impulses. It idealizes "voluntary deprivation, self-mortification, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice" (GM III:11). Morality reflects the influence of the ascetic ideal, not only when it takes a dim view of sensual pleasure, but also

when it equates "selfishness" (i.e. acting on behalf of the self) with sin. What could be more ascetic that the notion that morality requires us to put aside inclination, put aside fulfilment, and act only for the sake of others or the sake of duty?

CHAPTER THREE
FROM NATURALISM TO VIRTUE

1. Life as the Standard of Value

In the Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche says that he may be asked: "What are you really doing, erecting an ideal or knocking one down?" His answer is that "if a temple is to be erected, a temple must be destroyed" (GM II:24). In the last chapter we examined the demolition job that Nietzsche does on the old and forbidding Temple of Morality. It is now time to move on to the constructive part of Nietzsche's thought, and consider what ethical ideas and arguments remain available to us after the old edifice has been torn down.

Let us survey the building site. The first thing we should note is that Nietzsche gives us no clear and distinct foundational plan for erecting any new ethical structure. What he does give us is, on one level, a naturalistic meta-ethics and standard of value, and at another level, a number of aretaic or virtue-ethical ideals. But nowhere does he present a systematic ethics. Nietzsche devotes books, and sections of books, to his critique of Morality and Christianity. His ethical naturalism is most often articulated in the context of critique. His targets are otherworldly metaphysics, ascetic ideals of moral motivation, and resentful perspectives which turn against life. As the basis of his critique, Nietzsche outlines an alternative - namely, a naturalistic view of reality and human nature, and a standard of value which is rooted in the flourishing of human life (see section 2:1).

Although Nietzsche's naturalism offers us some very suggestive lines of argument, it is hardly a comprehensive ethical blueprint. The challenge, for any commentator wanting to give a thorough account of Nietzsche's position, is in showing how his naturalistic standard of value is connected to his more substantive ideals. Such ideals as nobility, courage, amor fati, and self-actualization are very important to Nietzsche. One might even say that they represent the summit of his ethics. And they appear throughout his writings, in assorted aphorisms, his portrait of the masters of Genealogy I, and the narrative context of Zarathustra.

If Nietzsche is to be read as a thoroughgoing naturalist, such aretaic ideals must be shown to be rooted in his naturalism and his standard of value. This is our task in this chapter. Showing that these strands of Nietzsche's thought are related is not all that hard, although (as he says in AO 26) sometimes it is necessary to "stroke and feed" his propositions in order to bring out their fullest implications or defend them against possible objections. Nietzsche may not lay out his ideas in a systematic treatise, but that does not prevent them from hanging together in an essentially coherent way.

I

Let us begin at the beginning. Nietzsche defines value in terms of life. More precisely, it is the flourishing of life that is his standard of value - especially the flourishing of the human species, and of those aretaic individuals who are its most fully realized exemplars.[135] The idea that life is the standard of value appears frequently in Nietzsche's writing and is very prominent in his later works. In the Genealogy he says that the basic question concerning value judgements is "what value do they themselves possess?" As an explanation of how this question is to be answered, he continues:

> Have they hitherto hindered or furthered menschliche Gedeihen? [human flourishing] Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plentitude, force, and will of life, its courage, certainty, future? (GM P:3)

Notice that two distinct points are being made here. Ethical codes are to be judged in terms of their value for life - in terms of whether they promote human flourishing. And they also are to be judged according to the type of life they reveal - whether they are a sign of flourishing or distress, growth or regression, abundance or want. It is by such standards that moralities of resentment, guilt, and asceticism are evaluated and found wanting. Nietzsche says the same thing in Twilight of the Idols:

> I reduce a principle to a formula. Every naturalism in morality - that is, every healthy morality - is dominated

> by an instinct of life; some commandment of life is fulfilled by a determinate canon of "shalt" and "shalt not"; some inhibition and hostile element on the path of life is thus removed. (TI V:4)

An ethic is healthy if it promotes human flourishing and if it grows out of an instinct for life. If it forbids some actions, it does this so that life can fully realize itself. Anti-natural moralities, on the other hand, preach against the instincts. Their ultimate ideal is, not the flourishing of life, but an otherworldly "kingdom of God" which is conceived in opposition to life and this world (i.e. to reality).

It is not just moral values that are to be evaluated in terms of life. The same goes for aesthetic and cognitive values. As we have seen (in section 2:1), Nietzsche regards beauty as a stimulus to procreation and art as a stimulus to life (TI IX:22-24). And he proposes that even the value of truth and science must be measured by this standard:

> For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust. (BGE 2)
>
> The falseness of a judgement is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgement ... The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating. (BGE 4)

This means that epistemology cannot properly be seen as "value-free" or "first philosophy." For Nietzsche, the question of <u>value for life</u> is always central. Knowledge has evolved - not so that humans could have access to reality-in-itself, but in response to "physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life" (BGE 3). For a purely cognitive being, without passions or interests, "<u>knowledge would be a matter of indifference</u>" (AO 98). If we did not have a desire to survive, flourish, and make sense of the world, there would be no real basis for preferring one way of mapping our experience over another. Such ideas make Nietzsche a pioneer in the field of evolutionary epistemology.

Nietzsche also reminds us that science and scholarship exist

to serve human life. When this is forgotten - when "disinterested" or "value-free" knowledge is proclaimed to be the ideal - the pursuit of truth becomes a mere heaping up of facts. History loses its relevance for life and, in the name of science, becomes little more than an antiquarian exercise. These themes are explored in Nietzsche's meditation On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life. In the Genealogy, he goes so far as to maintain that modern scientific scholarship - with its devotion to objective truth, truth alone, truth for its own sake - is really just the latest form of the ascetic ideal (GM III:23). What the positivist and the objective scholar fail to realize is that the value of truth can only be established in terms of its value for life. Thus, it makes no sense to see truth as an absolute end, to be pursued selflessly, disinterestedly, and in a "value-free" way that does not take into account any other end.[136]

One implication of this is that "flourishing life" and "human nature" are themselves value-laden concepts. For no external, non-perspectival account of our needs and perfections is available. Where there is life, there are creatures with an evaluative interest in what is beneficial or harmful for them. Knowledge of human nature arises for the purposes of life. And the concept of flourishing is not purely descriptive - not a matter of what is statistically average or normal. It is an ideal of health or excellence which is constructed out of human experience. While rooted in biology, it is inescapably evaluative and internal to human experience. "Life" and "value" are thus interrelated concepts: life and its flourishing is the standard of value, but any concept of "flourishing life" is itself already impregnated with value. As Martha Nussbaum puts it:

> human nature just is an inside perspective, not a thing at all, but rather the most fundamental and broadly shared experiences of human beings living and reasoning together.[137]

In arguing that life is Nietzsche's standard of value, my interpretation follows Schacht. Like him, I regard Nietzsche as a naturalist. I think that, far from being just a preacher in his normative moments, Nietzsche did "lay claim to philosophical

tenability in setting forth his theory of value and the fundamental standard of value and evaluation it incorporates."[138] And I agree with Schacht when he says:

> [Nietzsche] is by no means simply and violently ill-disposed towards Christianity ... He styles himself 'antichrist,' as he also styles himself 'immoralist,' because - in contrast to those who advocate both Christianity and morality as he understands them - he takes 'life' in this world to be the sole locus of value, and its preservation, flourishing, and above all its enhancement to be ultimately decisive for determinations of value.[139]

Hunt also attributes to Nietzsche the view that "life is the only thing which is good in itself, and is the standard by which the value of everything else is to be measured."[140] He calls this Nietzsche's vitalism, and (much like me) sees it as crucial to aesthetics and epistemology as well as to ethics.

Others who interpret Nietzsche as a naturalist are less than impressed with this line of argument. Leiter complains that the notion of "value for life" suffers from intolerable vagueness. This is an understandable objection. And he takes issue with Schacht for suggesting that life is will to power, and that it is the degree of power which is the standard of value. This, he says, involves no gain in precision and embroils us in the whole question of how the will to power (both the doctrine and the writings assembled under that title) is to be understood.[141]

II

These objections are important. Let us begin with the question of will to power. Whether Nietzsche speaks of "life" or "power," he is really speaking of the same thing - namely, human flourishing (menschliche Gedeihen). In speaking of life it is the flourishing of life, and not mere survival, which he has in mind. Moreover, the will to power can be accurately described as a will to flourishing (i.e. to self-actualization). Nietzsche treats the enhancement of power and the enhancement of life as virtually synonymous. Consider the following from the Antichrist:

> What is good? Everything that heightens the feeling of

> power in man, the will to power, power itself. What is bad? Everything that is born of weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome. (A 2)

Here again, Nietzsche sets out his standard of value. Only here, he speaks of power, while in the Genealogy and Twilight, he speaks of the flourishing of life. Since these works were written at about the same time, and since Nietzsche gives us no indication that he moved from one position to another, it is best to regard them as saying the same thing in different ways. This reading is supported by a note, written in 1885 or 1886 (previous to all of the above works), in which Nietzsche defines life as "will to power," which he calls "a new, more definite formulation" of his concept of life (WP 254).

What does this mean? On the basis of some of the material in the Nachlass, some commentators (such as Schacht) interpret the will to power in metaphysical or cosmological terms. They emphasize notes such as WP 1067, which says that "this world is the will to power - and nothing besides; WP 674, which says that "the objective measure of value" is "solely the quantum of enhanced and organized power"; and WP 706, which says that "life is only a means to something" - a means, presumably, to the "growth of power." The status of these notes is both textually and philosophically dubious. For they have no analogues in Nietzsche's published books, and they appear to contradict the sort of naturalism that he upheld in print. The standard of value described in WP 674 seems to be external to living beings, or at least, external to conscious life and the "feelings aroused in this consciousness." But how can "quanta of power" be valuable if there are no living creatures around to feel powerful, or to value the feeling of power? And when WP 706 declares that life is merely a means to the growth of power, what can this mean? Does the non-living universe have ends or goals? (Nietzsche mocks this notion in BGE 9 and BGE 22). And if it did, how could a perspectivist ever know that its goal was to maximize power? One can only conclude that Nietzsche had good reason to reserve such speculations for his notebooks. At most, they represent a path not taken.[142]

I take it that when Nietzsche describes life as will to power, he is saying something about the nature and psychology of creatures like ourselves. Power is a motive which is internal to life - not a feature of the external world. As Zarathustra says: "only where there is life is there also will: not will to life but - thus I teach you - will to power" (Z II:12). The distinction drawn here between "will to life" and "will to power" is, more precisely, a distinction between the desire for mere survival and the aspiration to realize our highest potential.[143]

Nietzsche contrasts the will to power with such incentives as pleasure or self-preservation. Nietzsche values the will to power, because he thinks that living a flourishing life is not just a matter of pleasure-seeking and death-avoidance, but a matter of growth, struggle, development, self-overcoming, and "becoming what one is." Thus, he is critical of those who claim that self-preservation is the fundamental instinct of life. A healthy living thing seeks to enhance its power, to discharge its strength, and "self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results" (BGE 13, GS 349). To be always concerned about survival is a sign of distress. Those who are rich in spirit aim higher. The life they value is flourishing life, not mere survival at any price. They are willing to take risks and "live dangerously" in the name of their ideals. Like Aristotle's great-souled man, they may well prefer "a twelvemonth of noble life to many years of humdrum existence, and one great and noble action to many trivial ones."[144] A similar point is made by Zarathustra in his speech "On Free Death." The mere prolongation of life is no ideal. The best death is one that consummates our life with hope and promise for those who live on; second best "is to die fighting and to squander a great soul" (Z I:21). It is better to choose death freely than to be like a fruit which, out of cowardice, clings to the branch until it rots. Zarathustra wants to hallow life. He sees no contradiction between this and euthanasia because what is valuable for him is the flourishing of life - not the fearful avoidance and prolongation of death.

Nietzsche also rejects the idea - central to the utilitarian tradition - that pleasure is the summum bonum. He declares that

> all those ways of thinking which measure the value of things in accordance with pleasure and pain, which are mere epiphenomena and wholly secondary, are ways of thinking which stay in the foreground and naivetes on which everyone conscious of creative powers and an artistic conscience will look down not without derision, nor without pity. (BGE 225)

One is reminded of Aristotle's view that pleasure merely supervenes on the activity; that no one would choose to live his whole life with the intellect of a child no matter how much he was pleased at childish things; that "there are many things we should be keen about even if they brought no pleasure."[145] These include knowing, remembering, possessing the virtues - in other words, the central elements of eudaimonia. Nietzsche also values flourishing more than pleasure. It is not just that there are reaches of human nature that go beyond the satisfaction of our basic appetites. It is that suffering is in some sense necessary for the enhancement and cultivation of human beings (BGE 225). What would achievement be without challenge, obstacle, contest, adversity? How could we give birth to our profoundest creations without suffering the pangs of labour? (GS P) Pain and pleasure are tragically bound together, so that whoever wants to have a good share of one must accept a share of the other. Thus, if your overriding goal is to reduce the amount of humanity's pain, "you also have to diminish and lower the level of their capacity for joy" (GS 12). This means that you diminish their potential to flourish.

I have been arguing that the notion of will to power suggests that growth and self-actualization, rather than pleasure or self-preservation, is the goal of life. But can power be equated with flourishing and treated as an aretaic ideal? Here one must realize that the power that Nietzsche values is not a matter of brute force - the "power trip" of bullying others - but something more subtle and noble. The height of power, for Nietzsche, is not a gnawing hunger for "power-over" but a superabundant feeling of "power-within." It has more to do with internal psychology than external force.[146] What is really important is whether a particular will to power proceeds from strength (abundance) or weakness (deficiency).

Those who feel weak and insecure may stop at nothing in order to acquire the feeling of power, but those who feel powerful are more fastidious and noble in their tastes (D 348). As Nietzsche says:

> There are proud fellows who, to produce in themselves a feeling of dignity and importance, always require others whom they can dominate and rape: others, that is to say, whose impotence and cowardice permits with impunity a display of anger and haughtiness in their presence! - so that they require their environment to be wretched in order to raise themselves for a moment above their own wretchedness! (D 369)

To have to put others down in order to raise oneself up is a sign that one is inwardly a wretch. A healthy individual is likely to exercise power by benefitting others rather than by hurting them. The latter reveals that "we are still lacking power, or it shows a sense of frustration in the face of this poverty" (GS 13). One thinks of the pathetic sort of person who shoots a celebrity in order to make a name for himself.

III

Here it may be helpful to make a few comparisons. First, Nietzsche's use of the term "power" is similar to Mill's use of the term "pleasure." By this, I do not mean that Nietzsche and Mill's ideals are the same - merely that the way their master-concepts function is much alike. Power, for Nietzsche, is not one narrowly defined end among others, but a concept so broad and elastic that it encompasses virtually all of human aspiration. The same goes for Mill's concept of pleasure. Mill verbally agrees with Bentham in saying that pleasure is the sole desirable end, but he is no reductionist. For he distinguishes between the quality of different kinds of pleasure, rather than simply proposing to quantify them in terms of the number of hedons they yield. This has the result of expanding the meaning of pleasure beyond popular usage. The high-quality forms of pleasure that Mill most valued - the pleasures of the intellect, the exercise of our faculties, the cultivation of noble character and the moral sentiments - bear a resemblance to the arete and eudaimonia of classical ethics. While Bentham held that pushpin is as good as poetry (provided the quantity of hedons

they yield is the same), Mill believed that "it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."[147]

In much the same way, Nietzsche expands the meaning of power beyond the crudities of domination, appropriation, and brute force. Mill accused some of his critics of supposing human beings to be capable of no pleasures beyond those of swine; Nietzsche could equally reply to some of his critics that they suppose human beings to be capable of no powers beyond those of brutes.[148] For he is no reductionist. While he sometimes speaks of "quanta of power" he clearly thinks that some forms of power are worth more than others. The inner power of a creative artist or philosopher is worth more than the power to bully of a wretch who enjoys hurting other people out of spite. And the difference between these forms of power is qualitative. In many cases, no amount of success as a bully can change the fact that one is inwardly weak and reactive. One could become the greatest tyrant on earth and still not actualize one's power in the fullest sense. Just consider Hitler and Stalin.

There are some who object to the idea that all behaviour is motivated by a will to power because they do not see how this could be a plausible or interesting hypothesis. Clark argues:

> The enlightening character of contemporary accounts of rape in terms of power, for example, seems dependent on the implied contrast between the desire for power and the desire for sex. What the rapist fundamentally wants is not sexual gratification but a sense of power. This explanation loses its enlightening character if one goes on to say that all behaviour is motivated by a desire for power, for then the motive for rape has not been differentiated from any other motive.[149]

This objection is just as applicable to hedonic utilitarians as it is to Nietzsche. It works well against any reductive account of human motivation. But Nietzsche (like Mill) can get around it, for his concept of power is elastic and hierarchical, with higher and lower forms. The sort of power sought by a Goethe or an Emerson is remote from the brute force of the rapist and the momentary rush of power that he gets when he acts out his resentment. And all of this

is quite different from the way that the will to power (which is equally a will to flourishing) is present within healthy sensual enjoyment.[150] One may ask: why speak of power in so many varied contexts? In answer to this question, let us turn our attention to Plato and Maslow.

Nietzsche's will to power is comparable to the concept of eros that Socrates presents in the Symposium.[151] For just as there are higher and lower manifestations of will to power, there are many rungs on the ladder of Platonic love. What both concepts do, is allow us to see a variety of human longings as continuous with one another rather than as completely separate. Thus, Socrates calls love an all-beguiling power that "includes every kind of longing for happiness and for the good."[152] It is a sort of upward striving. One starts with a love of beautiful bodies, and moves on to beauties of soul, beauties of laws and institutions, and finally to the beauty of the forms. From the immortality of bodily reproduction, one moves on to the immortality of glorious deeds, and finally to a longing for the eternal itself.

The major difference between eros and the will to power is that the former aims at transcendence, while Nietzsche's principle is purely immanent - a will to grow, develop, and flourish. But both have essentially the same structure. Both are rooted in primal human desire, and involve an aspiration, not just for more of the same - more physical sex, more brute power - but towards a higher level of awareness and development. Along the way our priorities may shift, from ordinary sexual desire to a longing for arete and eudaimonia, or from a desire for powers (wealth, status, etc.) which breed conflict to a higher perspective from which these things seem less important. Perhaps creative achievement now seems like a more appropriate goal.

This brings us to the ideas of Abraham Maslow, the humanistic psychologist who is our final figure of comparison. Maslow and Nietzsche have much in common: both are ethical naturalists, both are interested in human nature and its potential, both value the self-actualizing person as their highest ideal. Maslow's most impressive contribution to the Aristotelian-Nietzschean tradition is his theory of the hierarchy of human needs.[153] This theory

follows Plato and Nietzsche in postulating some sort of continuity among the many things that people desire. In other words, there is a certain implicit telos in human life. Healthy human beings seek to grow and fulfil their nature. But this may take many different forms, depending on the degree to which a person's basic needs have been met. One whose survival is precarious, whose physiological and safety needs have been poorly met, may come to imagine that money or security is the summum bonum. Such people pursue "lower pleasures" or "lower forms of power." At another level, the need for love or esteem may take centre stage. With physical survival no longer an issue, people may feel the want of affection and belongingness, or respect and recognition. When these emotional and social needs are reasonably well satisfied, there emerges what Maslow calls the need for self-actualization.

The concept of self-actualization functions as both a virtue-ethical ideal and a biologically-based need. Here the gap between human desire and the good virtually disappears. Self-actualizing people are restless if they do not make use of their particular talents. They feel a need to develop to the full stature of which they are capable. As Maslow says, they "seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing, reminding us of Nietzsche's exhortation, 'Become what thou art!'"[154] Maslow attributes to self-actualizers many traits that Nietzsche would certainly admire. These include autonomy, creativity, honest perception of reality, fearlessness in the face of the unknown, acceptance of human nature and its animal processes, the ability to resist enculturation, and the synergistic overcoming of dichotomies such as reason versus emotion, selfishness versus unselfishness, the spiritual versus the sensual, and duty versus pleasure.[155]

Maslow also makes a distinction, reminiscent of Nietzsche, between growth motivation and deficiency motivation. Those who are unsatisfied in their basic needs tend to be driven by deficiency. Out of want, they greedily seek to enrich themselves; out of fear, they arm themselves and launch vicious pre-emptive strikes; out of emotional neediness, they demand that others shower them with signs of love and reassurance. All this is similar to the pathological

type of selfishness described by Zarathustra, which always wants to take (Z I:22). Growth motivation, on the other hand, is analogous to the gift-giving virtue (discussed in sections 2:5 and 3:7). The growth-motivated person acts out of abundance. Having satisfied the basic needs, he or she has less need to take and more ability to give. Such individuals depend for their continued development, not so much on other people or the external environment, but

> on their own potentialities and latent resources. Just as a tree needs sunshine and water and food, so do most people need love, safety, and the other basic need gratifications that can come only from without. But once these external satisfiers are obtained, once these inner deficiencies are satisfied by outside satisfiers, the true problem of human self-development begins, e.g., self-actualization.[156]

The affinities between Nietzsche and Maslow can be summarized by saying that both are aretaic naturalists. Both distinguish the needs and motives of the flourishing individual from those of the human being who suffers from deficiencies and must focus on the basic requirements of survival. Maslow deserves credit for articulating these ideas in a clear and organized way. Rather than talking vaguely of "strength and weakness" or "higher and lower" forms of power, he gives us a well-defined framework in which a variety of specific needs are arranged. In the tradition of Nietzsche, this framework is both hierarchical and pluralistic. It affirms that some ends are higher without denying that others are more basic. And it allows us to reconcile the idea of a telos in human life (self-actualization) with the fact that people pursue a variety of goals.

How does one advance towards self-actualization? Here there is a difference in emphasis between our thinkers. Maslow's view is more optimistic and lends itself to liberal welfarism. He suggests that higher needs will emerge as more basic ones are satisfied. If a child grows up in conditions of affluence and security, receiving plenty of love and esteem, then he or she should become a self-actualizing adult. Nietzsche's view is more tragic and agonistic. He believes that human development involves elements of suffering

and strife. One must practice self-overcoming and come to see that "what does not kill me, makes me stronger" (TI I:8).[157] A paradise of comfort and ease could very well turn people into "last men" (Z P:5). These issues are important and we will return to them (see section 3:8). For now, I will say only that there is enough truth in Nietzsche's view to short-circuit any kind of post-scarcity utopianism, and that Maslow's emphasis on the satisfaction of basic needs provides a useful counterpoint to some of Nietzsche's more extreme claims.

IV

Now we are ready to respond to the complaint that Nietzsche's naturalism is intolerably vague. First, the "life" that is his standard of value is flourishing life, not mere survival. To hold that avoiding death and avoiding pain are the ultimate aims of life is a sign of weakness and distress. Second, life is will to power. This has nothing to do with cosmology or reductionism. It means that healthy living things seek to grow and to actualize their natures. This usually involves a move up the ladder of power - a shift in the forms of power that are valued and pursued. Nietzsche may not articulate the idea of a hierarchy of needs and motives as explicitly as Maslow does, but such a hierarchy is present in his thought. Thus, there are higher and lower forms of selfishness (see section 2:5), and even a theory of moral stages is suggested in HA 94-95, in which people move from prudence to honour to autonmous virtue (see the introduction). Nietzsche's naturalism has a definite shape and structure because it is an aretaic naturalism, and yet it acknowledges that there are a variety of ethical incentives.

Two major challenges remain. First, naturalism is a view which leaves open many possibilities. Even if one accepts that earthly life is the locus of value, there is still a variety of needs and motives which may be taken as a starting point for further ethical reflection. One theorist may start with our need for survival, developing a contract theory in the spirit of Hobbes. Another may focus on our need and capacity for love, developing a care theory out of certain other-regarding sentiments. Such views are likely to yield different results from a virtue theory which gives pride of

place to our need for esteem, achievement, or self-actualization. For example, a "survivalist" will disagree with a "flourisher" over how the goal of preserving life is to be weighed against the possibility of enhancing it. And the theories will likely diverge on the question of how the interests of the individual are to be related to those of the larger group.

So which approach is best? Nietzsche is first and foremost a virtue theorist. This approach has the advantage of appealing to motives which are higher, and traits of character which are more typical of the flourishing human being. Its rivals, on the other hand, have the advantage of appealing to needs which are more basic. Adequate food, security, and affection are prerequisites of human development, and there are always a lot of deficiency-motivated people around who never get beyond the cruder forms of selfishness and power-lust. To avoid one-sidedness, a naturalistic ethic must be pluralistic. Even if it is based on a clear concept of arete and human flourishing, it must have something to say to different types of people with different motives.

Thus, before we examine Nietzsche's particular version of virtue-ethics, we will look at his views concerning contract theory (section 3:3 and 3.4) and the sentiments of benevolence (section 3:5). We will see that Nietzsche does not reject these options in the way that he rejects "the peculiar institution." Indeed, he himself is a contractarian, while pointing to its limitations. And he values sympathy and generosity, while taking issue with the sort of pity which dwells on human misery and the altruism which holds that virtue is essentially a matter of living for others.

Beyond this, there are a couple of objections to the very possibility of naturalistic ethics which must be addressed. These include radical nihilism, which would deny that life is of any value, and radical relativism, which would deny that there is any such thing as human nature on which to base an ethic. Showing how Nietzsche deals with these objections (or given his assumptions, how he might deal with them) will be the topic of the next section.

2. Objections: Nihilism and Relativism

At the root of Nietzsche's ethical naturalism is the premis that life is the standard of value. The position most radically opposed to this is nihilism. To be a nihilist in this sense is not simply to cast doubt on certain epistemic or moral claims, but to negate earthly life (see section 2:2). This may be termed radical nihilism, to distinguish it from other uses of the term. Radical nihilism asserts that life is empty, wretched, or worthless. It stands in the way of any sort of naturalistic ethics. For if life does not have value, it cannot serve as an ethical standard. It becomes hard to see how anything could have value. For if we have no basis for preferring survival over death or flourishing over wretchedness, we have no basis for making any evaluative claims.

I

Before we set out Nietzsche's case against radical nihilism, we must distinguish between its straightforward and its religious form. The former expresses itself openly and directly. It may claim that life is not worth living; that the will to power or will to flourishing is a misguided will, driving us to incur pointless suffering. Or it may eschew such evaluations, insisting only that to value existence is to make an arbitrary and groundless choice. Religious nihilism, on the other hand, is more concealed and indirect. It may proclaim that the world is fallen, that matter is evil, and that our proper end is not to flourish as natural beings but to escape the wheel of rebirth or win admission to heaven. Religious nihilism denigrates earthly life, but always in the name of something "more ultimate." Renounce the world or the body or the ego, it tells us, and you will gain something that is infinitely more precious.

Nietzsche seeks to expose religious nihilism for what it is. A critic of Schopenhauer, Platonism, and Christianity, he rejects all versions of the two-worlds theory. Such metaphysics is not only false, but lurking behind it is a will to negate life. In making this point, Nietzsche collapses nihilistic religion into radical nihilism. Thus, "it was suffering and incapacity that created all afterworlds" (Z I:3). To despise your body is a sign that "your self itself wants to die and turns away from life" (Z I:4). And

those who preach ascetic renunciation are really "preachers of death" - that is, radical nihilists - who would have us turn away from the only life that we know in favour of an illusion (Z I:9).

Zarathustra responds to the radical nihilists by preaching death to them in turn. He would have them act on their doctrines, rather than merely slandering the world that they are unable to affirm. Thus, he tells the despisers of the body to "merely say farewell to their own bodies - and thus become silent" (Z I:4). In his speech "On the Preachers of Death," he develops this theme at length:

> There are those with consumption of the soul: hardly are they born when they begin to die and to long for doctrines of weariness and renunciation. They would like to be dead, and we should welcome their wish ... They encounter a sick man or an old man or a corpse, and immediately they say, "Life is refuted." But only they themselves are refuted, and their eyes, which see only this one face of existence ... "Life is only suffering," others say, and do not lie: see to it, then, that you cease! See to it, then, that the life that is only suffering ceases! And let this be the doctrine of your virtue: "Thou shalt kill thyself! Thou shalt steal away!" ... Everywhere the voice of those who preach death is heard; and the earth is full of those to whom one must preach death. Or "eternal life" - that is the same to me, if only they pass away quickly. (Z I:9)

Two points are made here. First, there is something self-refuting in preaching that life is worthless while one continues to keep oneself alive. The self-contradiction becomes even more glaring when someone (like Schopenhauer) writes books and seeks to make a name by preaching radical nihilism. Thus, Nietzsche refuses to take Schopenhauer's pessimism seriously, describing him as someone who "needed enemies in order to keep in good spirits," who loved lavish invective, and who enjoyed denouncing the whole will to existence (GM III:7). We must keep in mind that, in a naturalistic universe, we are free to end our life if we do not feel it is worth living. We need not practice elaborate austerities in order to escape the

wheel of rebirth, or fear that if we disobey God's commands we might be spending eternity in hell.

Second, Nietzsche treats radical nihilism, not as an argument to be refuted, but as a disease to be contained. In referring to it as "consumption of the soul," he suggests that it is the spiritual equivalent of tuberculosis. This way of dismissing radical nihilism may annoy some philosophical analysts. But it is appropriate. For given naturalistic premises, there is no way to show that any value has a claim on human beings which is independent of their desires, needs, and goals. If one does value survival or flourishing, then one is committed to the chain of ends that these values entail. Various ethical arguments can at least make a start. However, if one is a radical nihilist, one need not be guilty of any logical or factual error in choosing nothingness over life. As Hume observes, it is not necessarily "contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger."[158] The claim that "life is worthwhile" cannot be validated in purely rational and objective terms. Of course, the same goes for all nihilistic evaluations of life. Nietzsche says:

> Judgements of value, concerning life, for it or against it, can, in the end, never be true; they have value only as symptoms, they are worthy of consideration only as symptoms; in themselves, such judgements are stupidities. One must by all means stretch out one's fingers and make the attempt to grasp this amazing finesse, that the value of life cannot be estimated. (TI II:2)

To ask about the value of life is to seek some higher standard of value - some end or goal which is outside of life. But we have no access to any such position (TI V:5). Unless the physical universe is some kind of giant organism with the potential to flourish (or fail to flourish), we have no way to make sense of the notion of a telos which transcends individual creatures. Outside of life, the alternatives of survival-death, joy-sorrow, or flourishing-misery simply do not arise. Therefore, value concepts have no application. In a lifeless universe - a universe without any desiring, needy, goal-directed beings - there would be no dimension of value, and no good or bad, let alone any right or wrong.[159]

This does not mean, however, that life-affirming and life-denying perspectives are on an equal footing. When a psychologist treats a person who is severely depressed, we do not ask her to demonstrate by logical argument that life is worth living. We grasp that depression is an unhealthy state, and that something has gone wrong with the person who is depressed. Nietzsche feels entitled to approach radical nihilism in the same way. When we speak of values, Nietzsche says, "we speak with the inspiration, with the way of looking at things, which is part of life: life itself forces us to posit values; life itself values through us when we posit values" (TI V:5). As living creatures, we may survive and flourish or we may fail to do so. Life is always facing these alternatives; thus, values arise so that life may be preserved and enhanced. To affirm and value one's life is a sign of health. To be a nihilist is a sign "of declining, weakened, weary, condemned life" (TI V:5). Beyond this, there is nothing to be said for nihilism, for it tries to use a concept which supervenes on life to pass judgement against life as a whole. But outside of life, the dimension of value does not exist.[160]

II

A more serious challenge to ethical naturalism comes from the direction of relativism. Relativists may accept that life is the standard of value. What they deny is that anything definite can be said about human nature or human flourishing. Some relativists draw attention to individual variability. Others emphasize the diversity of cultures. But for our purposes, the key distinction is between moderate and radical relativism. The former, which we may call pluralism, is no impediment to developing a naturalistic ethic. It simply points out that there are different human types, that different virtues may be called for in different ages, and there is no one-size-fits-all blueprint for human well-being. Such a view is entailed by perspectivism (see section 1:4). Nietzsche is himself an ardent pluralist, and is critical of the moralistic notion that there is one single permissible mode of life (GS 143, TI V:6).

Radical relativism goes further. It insists that "man has no nature," that our nature is socially constructed all the way down, that nothing can be said about "the good for man" beyond the

content of individual preferences, or that different cultures are incommensurable. From a naturalistic viewpoint, such claims are destructive of all ethics. For they make it impossible to define human nature in even the most general of terms. And without such a concept, one cannot ask what it might mean for humans to flourish. If everything about us is socially constructed, then there is no basis in our nature by which the morality of ressentiment and the ascetic ideal can be criticized. We can no longer say that values have been "inverted" - merely that they have been "redescribed" or made to look bad. If one refuses to talk about what is good for humans, the result is the same. One is left with individual preferences that are beyond criticism, as long as they are not internally inconsistent or self-defeating. There is no way to distinguish healthy forms of will to power from those which arise out of deficiency. A preference is a preference is a preference.

The distinction between these relativisms is very important. For a moderate relativism is hard to refute. Statements about our nature are always rough and ready generalizations, and however attentive we may be to individual and cultural differences, there will always be particulars that we fail to do justice to. This is the price we must pay when we deal in universals.[161] But it need not prevent us from developing a serviceable account of human flourishing, any more than variations in how patients respond to treatment prevent us from practicing medicine. On the other hand, radical relativism strikes at the heart of naturalistic ethics. It denies that there is any such thing as human nature or the human good. But in making such ambitious claims, it opens itself up to rebuttal.

Was Nietzsche a radical relativist? Allan Bloom thinks so. In The Closing of the American Mind, he portrays Nietzsche as the arch-relativist whose views have had a malign influence on 20th century thought and culture:

> Values are not discovered by reason, and it is fruitless to seek them, to find the truth or the good life. The quest ... has come to an end with the observation that there is nothing to seek. This alleged fact was announced by Nietzsche just over a century ago when he said, "God

> is dead." Good and evil now for the first time appeared as values, of which there have been a thousand and one, none rationally or objectively preferable to any other.[162]

Bloom arrives at this view largely because he ignores Nietzsche's naturalism. He seems to think that the death of God means the demise of all modes of ethics. But for the naturalist, radical relativism does not triumph on the day that we cease to believe in an objective "moral law" or "form of the good." As long as there is something to be said about our nature and needs, it will never be "fruitless" to raise the question of how we should live.

Bloom also claims that Nietzsche was an extreme historicist, who believed that "the mind is essentially related to history or culture" and values are merely "the product of folk minds and have relevance only to those minds."[163] It is unclear what this has to do with the death of God, but at least one can see how historicism entails radical relativism. If we are only products of our culture, there is no standard of value by which culture can be evaluated. Thus, for Bloom's Nietzsche:

> Culture is ... the only framework within which to account for what is specifically human in man. Man is pure becoming, unlike any other being in nature; and it is in culture that he becomes something that transcends nature and has no other mode of existence and no other support than a particular culture. The actuality of plants and other animals is contained in their potentialities; but this is not true of man ... Nietzsche's contribution was to draw with perfect intransigence the consequences of that idea and try to live with them.[164]

There are certain passages in Nietzsche which seem to support such an interpretation. In HA 2, he argues that it is a common failing of philosophers to regard "man" as an eternal verity, with a nature that remains the same, when in fact "everything has become." Here and elsewhere, Nietzsche prides himself on his historical sense. Everything that has been said about man is, he says, "no more than a testimony as to the man of a very limited period of time" (HA 2). And in Zarathustra's discourse "On the Thousand and One Goals"

(alluded to by Bloom), he speaks of the many tablets of good and evil that different peoples have created, and adds that "the individual himself is still the most recent creation" (Z I:15).

However, there are good reasons for not reading Nietzsche as a radical relativist. First, his insistence that we are historical and cultural beings is in no way a denial that we are biological beings. Bloom jumps to the conclusion that man is "unlike any other being in nature" and that he "transcends nature." This does not sound like Nietzsche, who seeks to naturalize our view of humanity, understanding ourselves in the same way as we understand the rest of nature (GS 109, BGE 230). According to Bloom, Nietzsche denies that our "actuality" is contained in our "potentiality." One is reminded of Sartre's denial that "essence" precedes "existence."[165] But Nietzsche is not an existentialist in this sense. Much that is central to his philosophy, from his critique of Christianity to his ideal of self-actualization, is predicated on the assumption that human beings do have a nature, that the "nature of our nature" is important to ethics, and that we are neither causa sui nor blank slates to be passively written upon by society.

Of course, Nietzsche does not believe that "man" is an eternal verity. Our knowledge of Darwinian evolution sets modern naturalism apart from Aristotle; moreover, history shows that our capacity for culture allows for rapid change over a relatively brief period of time. What it is to be a postmodern intellectual is different from what it was to be a Homeric warrior or a medieval monk. But this does not mean that our nature is infinitely malleable. As Mary Midgley points out:

> Man is innately programmed in such a way that he needs a culture to complete him. Culture is not an alternative or replacement for instinct, but its outgrowth and supplement. Man is like one of those versatile cake mixes that can be variously prepared to end up as different kinds of cake - but never, it must be noted, as a boiled egg or smoked salmon.[166]

Nietzsche never clearly sets out his view on the "nature versus culture" question, but something like this seems to be his view, since he sees us as both natural-biological and cultural-historical

beings. Thus, in HA 2, he says that "everything essential in the development of mankind took place in primeval times, long before the four thousand years we more or less know about." One needs a historical sense to understand how we have been shaped by history, but our basic nature has remained the same since prehistoric times. Thus, we do have things in common. We are born with human bodies; we require oxygen, water, food, and shelter; we are subject to pain and death; we must be taken care of when we are very young; we have a continuing need for love and affiliation; and we share a certain cognitive capacity and emotional structure.[167] Even our differences are not simply a matter of arbitrary choice. Rather, they may reflect differences of psychological type within human nature, or variations in the environment with which humans must cope. A trait that may be very valuable in a warrior society may be less valuable in an industrial society, and vice versa.

When Zarathustra speaks "On the Thousand and One Goals," Bloom thinks him to be advocating the sort of cultural relativism that was to become fashionable in the early 20th century, with the work of anthropologists like Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict. The temptation to read such ideas back into Nietzsche is natural, given that he is much more critical of rigid moralists than he is of people at the other extreme. This, however, only goes to show that radical cultural relativism was not a view that loomed large on his intellectual horizon, or one that he seriously entertained.[168] Nietzsche dismisses as "childish" the argument that differences in values among nations show "that no morality is at all binding" (GS 345). The thousand goals pursued by different peoples are not just arbitrary products of culture. They flow out of a will to power which seeks to "rule and triumph and shine" (Z I:15). Presumably, the various goals can be judged according to how well this end is attained. Good and bad may be "created" but they are not groundless whims. Because underpinning cultural divergence is the familiar naturalistic standard of value:

> Only man placed value in things to preserve himself ... Through esteeming alone is there value: and without esteeming, the nut of existence would be hollow. (Z I:15)

Values are not arbitrary. Although they would not exist if there

were no humans (or no other living beings)[169] around to posit them, values can be evaluated in terms of the contribution they make to the preservation and enhancement of life.

Finally, Nietzsche would disapprove of the motivation of much 20th century relativism. Nietzsche says that the moral intentions of a theory constitute the real germ of life from which it has grown (BGE 6). In the case of relativism, the "intentions" behind it are often egalitarian. If there are no standards of excellence, then no one is entitled to think herself better than anyone else. Push-pin is as good as poetry, and the last man is as good as the overman. If cultural relativists are correct, then we are not entitled to criticize "less advanced" cultures or impose our ways on them. Relativists think they are promoting tolerance and mutual respect. However, radical relativism as an egalitarian ethical position is self-refuting.[170] If there is no such thing as the good life or the good culture, then why bother trying to make ethical sense of the complex, multi-perspectival world we inhabit? One may end up like the weak and lazy skeptics described by Nietzsche in BGE 208, or the students described by Bloom who are convinced that everything is relative. Or more ominously, one may draw the conclusion that brute force is the final arbiter of value.

Consider the arguments of O'Brien in Nineteen Eighty-Four - the most chilling of all spokesman for radical relativism. O'Brien tortures Winston Smith; he seeks to show that the Party can control people's minds, and thus control what is real. O'Brien's primary motive, one might say, is a crude and twisted form of the will to power. But a radical relativist - unlike a naturalist - is not entitled to criticize his motives in this way. For O'Brien appears to be well-adjusted in terms of the ways of his society, and he appears to enjoy his work. O'Brien tells Winston: "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever."[171] This, says Richard Rorty, is the scariest part of the book. Given radical relativist premises, it is completely possible that some group could seize total power and reshape human beings so that this is how things come out, and "it just so happens that the scenario can no longer be changed."[172] In other words, our nature and values are totally contingent upon the accidents of

history. When Winston replies that "life will defeat you," O'Brien insists:

> We control life ... You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable.[173]

However, when O'Brien claims that the Party will eradicate the sex instinct and cut the link between parent and child, it is hard to believe that this could be accomplished (barring the reconstruction of our nature at the physiological level, in which case we would no longer be human beings). Many ascetic faiths have already idealized celibacy or tried to institute puritanical codes without affecting any lasting change in our erotic nature.

The real scandal of radical relativism is that it leaves us with no basis for criticizing the regime in 1984. A naturalist may not be able to show that the Party will never seize power or that O'Brien will come to a bad end. Ideologies that are anti-life have held sway before. But a naturalist can at least accuse the regime of inverting values or thwarting our potential to flourish. For a radical relativist there is no such standard. If dissidents like Winston are unhappy with their lot, relativists can only say that they are maladjusted and require "re-education." Since human nature is only a social construct, a dissatisfied individual only reveals that her nature has been poorly constructed. One need only reshape her emotions, and she can be made perfectly content; she can learn to love Big Brother.

In this section, we have seen why Nietzsche rejects radical nihilism and radical relativism, why the flourishing of life is a defensible standard of value, and why the nature of flourishing is at least somewhat definable. The question of how the desires and needs of the individual are to be related to the flourishing of the larger group remains. We have argued that there is such a thing as human nature, but we have not shown how one goes about deriving an ethic from it. In the rest of this chapter we will look at several ways in which this might be done.

3. Nietzsche as Contractarian

Nietzsche clearly has an ideal of the good human being - of the healthy, noble, self-actualizing individual. But as Philippa Foot points out, this alone does not constitute an ethics. It is one thing to bid the gifted to "become what you are"; another to arbitrate between competing interests and set out norms of right and wrong. A genuine ethics must have something to say about justice. Foot contends that Nietzsche is an immoralist because he lacks such a concept.[174] However, this is no more true of him than it is of Hobbes, because Nietzsche is a contractarian.

Contract theory is a resource which is useful to the project of ethical naturalism. It enables us to generate basic ethical norms for societies out of the desires and needs of individuals. The contractarian approach has the advantage of being tough-minded and relying on only the most minimal of assumptions. It does not postulate that all souls are created equal or that the strong have certain duties to the weak; rather it provides a framework for arguing for or against such claims. It does not appeal to any sort of metaphysical or natural law; rather it begins with the interest that all people (except maybe radical nihilists) have in their own survival. In a Hobbesian state of nature, there are no "natural rights" - just the right to do what you can to preserve your life and obtain what you desire. Since this condition is sub-optimal for everyone, justice must be instituted for the sake of mutual advantage. It arises out of such peace-inclining passions as "fear of death" and "desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living."[175] Thus, even the motives that this approach depends on are very basic - Maslow's physiological and safety needs.

Nietzsche as contractarian is a theme that has received very little attention.[176] It is not as central to his work as some other themes - particularly his critique of morality and his aretaic ideals, about which he has more to say than he does about justice. However, when Nietzsche does discuss the nature and origins of justice, his approach is generally contractarian. Evidence of this can be found throughout his books, from Human, All Too Human to the Genealogy of Morals.

Moreover, such an approach is not inconsistent with the rest

of Nietzsche's ethical thought. First, contract theories in the Hobbesian tradition are thoroughly "beyond good and evil." They have little to do with Morality in the Christian-Kantian sense. Second, contrary to the views of some, there need not be anything slavish or resentful about contract theory.[177] The contractarian agent simply seeks her own advantage - she does not seek to get back at anyone out of spite. As we will see, Nietzsche thinks that justice first arose among the strong - it was not something imposed on them by the weak (GM II:11). Third, it is possible to take a contractarian view of justice while continuing to think about other matters in virtue-ethical terms. A contract theorist need not reduce everything to a negotiated deal. Thus, Hume distinguishes between the artificial virtue of justice and natural virtues like greatness of mind and benevolence. He gives justice a neo-Hobbesian analysis while treating other virtues in neo-Aristotelian terms. Much the same distinction can be found in Nietzsche's Genealogy. The First Essay is about the moralization of good and bad (i.e. the natural virtues) while the Second Essay is about the moralization of right and wrong (i.e. artificial virtue).

I

Where did Nietzsche get his contractarian ideas? Among those who influenced him are Hobbes and Thucydides. In an early work, he praises Hobbes as an intrepid spirit who boldly derived an ethical code for life out of the war of all against all and the privileges of the strong (UM p.30, DS 7). And on many occasions, he speaks highly of Thucydides, admiring the ethical and political realism of the Greek historian. With him, Nietzsche says, "the culture of the Sophists, by which I mean the culture of the realists, reaches its perfect expression" (TI X:2, D 168). Nietzsche thus places himself in the realist tradition which goes back to Periclean Athens and includes such moderns as Machiavelli and Hobbes. Interestingly, Hobbes also was a great admirer of Thucydides. He translated the Greek historian several decades before he wrote Leviathan, and his account of the state of nature resembles Thucydides' description of civil strife in the context of the Peloponnesian War.[178]

As a contractarian, Nietzsche is in the realist tradition of Hobbes and Thucydides (but not of Rawls).[179] Consider the earliest

passage in which he presents a contractual view of justice:

> Justice (fairness) originates between parties of approximately equal power, as Thucydides correctly grasped (in the terrible colloquy between the Athenian and Melian ambassadors): where there is no clearly recognizable superiority of force and a contest would result in mutual injury ... the idea arises of coming to an understanding and negotiating over one another's demands: the characteristic of exchange is the original characteristic of justice. (HA 92)[180]

Two points are made here. First, justice is a bargain, a negotiated settlement, based on the self-interest and mutual advantage of the parties involved. It is like a diplomatic treaty or a commercial exchange. When the parties are approximately equal - when they have the power to harm or help one another in ways that are significant - then it is prudent to agree on rules of justice. Second, as the reference to the Melian dialogue makes clear, there are harsh implications of defining justice in this way. For if the parties happen to be radically unequal, then the need for relations of justice simply does not arise. The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must. This may seem shocking, but it is a feature of realist contractarian theories from Hobbes and Hume to David Gauthier.[181]

One way around this is to argue that human beings are, in fact, approximately equal in power. Hobbes does this in Leviathan, and Nietzsche's views are surprisingly similar:

> For the sake of their security, men have founded the community on the basis of positing themselves as being equal to one another; but this conception is at bottom repugnant to the nature of the individual and something imposed upon him; and so it happens that, the more the general security is guaranteed, the more do the new shoots of the ancient drive to domination assert themselves: in the division of classes, in the claim to special dignities and privileges, and in vanity in general (in mannerisms, costume, modes of speech, etc.). As soon as the communality comes to feel itself in danger

> again, the majority [reimpose equality] ... If, however, the communality collapses completely and everything dissolves into anarchy, then there at once breaks through that condition of unreflecting, ruthless inequality that constitutes the state of nature: as, according to the report of Thucydides, happened on Corcyra. There exists neither a natural right nor a natural wrong. (WS 31)

This passage is deeply Hobbesian. Once again, the state of nature is conceived of as a state of war. Like Hobbes, he claims that in such a condition of anarchy there is no natural right or wrong; that it is essentially for the sake of security that communities are formed and rules of justice are instituted; and that all this requires an acceptance of equality. The last point is especially noteworthy. For here, Nietzsche maintains that political community and justice can only be founded on the postulate that human beings are in some sense equal. Such equality is posited. It is not that all souls are equal before God, or that all people are equal in ability or merit. Nietzsche rejects such doctrines, just as he rejects the sort of egalitarianism which wants to level everyone down (Z II:7, BGE 219, GM II:11). The sense in which Nietzsche accepts equality is closer to Hobbes. Hobbes formulated what is probably the most tough-minded of all arguments for human equality. He pointed out that "the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others."[182] It follows that all of us are basically equal in vulnerability. For in a war of all against all, whatever advantages one may hope to gain through superior cleverness or physical strength will certainly be outweighed by the disadvantages of being vulnerable to the attacks and reprisals of other people. Everyone must sleep sometimes, and everyone is potentially "weak" if a sufficiently large number of people gang up on them. Thus, above all, Hobbes insists that we should seek peace.

Nietzsche's view of things in WS 31 differs from Hobbes in that it is more dialectical. People require the security of civil society, so they institute justice and posit themselves as equal. Presumably, this means that they are equal before the law, or equal in terms of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The

acceptance of such equality is seen by Nietzsche as a step forward, for it is the only way to a overcome the dreadful insecurity of the state of nature. Contrary to what some commentators have said, Nietzsche is well aware that some forms of conflict, some forms of the will to power, are simply destructive. Thus, in the Genealogy he speaks highly of the benefits of community:

> One lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of a communality (oh what advantages! we sometimes underrate them today), one dwells protected, cared for, in peace and trustfulness, without fear of certain injuries and hostile acts to which the man outside, the "man without peace," is exposed. (GM II:9)

All this is not an unmixed blessing. Nietzsche thinks that there is something "repugnant" to the individual about equality. From the biological standpoint, "legal conditions can never be other than exceptional conditions, since they constitute a partial restriction of the will of life, which is bent upon power" (GM II:11). Equality may be accepted for the sake of security, but security is not the summum bonum. People do not want just to be equal, they want to actualize their power - to be in some way unique, outstanding, excellent. The crude may do this crudely, and the noble may do this nobly, but both may come into conflict with the principle of equality. Thus, beneath the canopy of peace and security there grow up new shoots of the will to power. Social classes arise. Some individuals are able to attain far more wealth or status than they ever could in a state of nature. Civil society equalizes people in some basic ways, but it also enables them to cultivate distinctions of mind or occupation which only become viable when there is a high level of social organization.[183]

Such inequality produces a reaction. The have-nots seek a more equal distribution of goods. Their political efforts may change the balance of social power. Or they may lead to class-based civil war. The latter, according to Thucydides, is what happened on Corcyra. Civil war broke out between the democrats and the oligarchs, and ended only when the members of the victorious party had massacred all their opponents. Here we see a social contract that has come full circle, returning to the "ruthless inequality" of the state of

nature - an inequality which flows from the ability of one group to conquer, kill, or enslave another. Nietzsche's image of the state of nature is, like a real civil war, more a matter of gang versus gang than an atomistic war of all against all.

II

Contract theories of justice serve two main purposes. First, they can explain, in a tough-minded and naturalistic fashion, why the basic elements of justice are necessary and defensible - why it is to the advantage of all people to prohibit murder, fraud, theft, and assault. What different contractarians have to say about these matters tends to be mutually reinforcing. Second, contract theories can be used to adjudicate class or ideological conflicts over the distribution of power and other goods. They can be used to argue for a particular concept of social justice - what the role of the state is, what rights people should have, how much inequality should be permitted, and so forth. On such issues there is very little agreement. Thus, contract theory has been used to support a variety of libertarian and egalitarian views, as well as the absolute monarchism of Hobbes.

Nietzsche uses contract theory in both ways. The Second Essay of the Genealogy is his fullest treatment of the nature and origins of basic justice. It begins with the question of how it is possible "to breed an animal with the right to make promises" (GM II:1). This is the central issue of contractarian moral psychology - the question of how people developed a disposition to keep covenants, honour their pledges, and respect the rule of law. The answer that Nietzsche gives is that memory had to be burned into people's minds through cruel punishments. It is only with the aid of such procedures that "one finally remembers five or six 'I will not's,' in regard to which one had given one's promise so as to participate in the advantages of society" (GM II:3). Through such negative reinforcement, people come to internalize the basic prohibitions on which society is based. When the community punishes a law-breaker, it has nothing to do with moral guilt. The transgressor is simply treated as a debtor who has forgotten what he owes to the benefits of civil society. He must be "reminded what these benefits are really worth" by being thrown back into the outlaw state that would

prevail in the absence of a social contract (GM II:9).

What about the political origins of justice? Who founded this community which is so intent on getting people to keep their promises and respect the rule of law? And what were their motives? The answer that Nietzsche gives here is similar to HA 92:

> Justice on this elementary level is the good will among parties of approximately equal power to come to terms with one another, to reach an "understanding" by means of a settlement - and to compel parties of lesser power to reach a settlement among themselves. (GM II:8)

Notice that it is "parties" who negotiate the terms of justice. Nietzsche never envisions the social contract as arising out of some pre-social condition. He also rejects the idea that the state began with an actual contract (GM II:17).[184] As a matter of fact, most states began in conquest. The need for contractarian justice arises only when parties of approximately equal power realize that it is to their advantage to avoid destructive conflict. Such parties may be imagined as warring clan leaders or barons who manage to reach an agreement. Nietzsche thinks that justice began among the strong. It is the active, aggressive type of person who has strength enough to inflict serious damage on an enemy, to control his own reactive feelings, and to enforce codes of justice. Thus, whenever justice is maintained, "one sees a stronger power seeking a means of putting an end to the senseless raging of ressentiment among the weaker powers that stand under it" (GM II:11).

Based on what Nietzsche says here, it appears that justice is of noble origin. Far from being a conspiracy of the weak against the strong, it began as an agreement among the strong, based on mutual advantage. We can thus assume that the community that Nietzsche talks about in the Second Essay was aristocratic. This does not matter very much when it comes to the basic elements of justice. For when the strong uphold the five or six "I will not's" on which society depends, they also benefit the weak. Basic justice is in the interest of all. Social justice, however, is another issue. If the earliest codes of justice were designed by a noble class, they probably served aristocratic interests. Thus, the

earliest forms of social organization probably were not very equal. This is of some importance to how we read Nietzsche. For however highly he may speak of justice in Genealogy II, we cannot assume that he is talking about social justice in anything like the contemporary sense.[185]

Ultimately, the details of the earliest social contract - the question of who originated it, of how egalitarian it was - are irrelevant to modern-day contractarian deliberations. For Nietzsche is no believer in the authority of some "original contract." He maintains that justice is based on equilibrium (WS 22, WS 26). It is not something that is established once and for all, but something that evolves over time as the balance of power between groups of people evolves:

> Our duties - are the rights of others over us. How have they acquired such rights? By taking us to be capable of contracting and requiting, by positing us as similar and equal to them ... My rights - are the part of my power which others have not merely conceded me, but which they wish me to preserve. How do these others arrive at that? First: through their prudence and fear and caution: whether in that they expect something similar from us in return (protection of their own rights); or in that they consider that a struggle with us would be perilous or to no purpose ... That is how rights originate: recognised and guaranteed degrees of power. If power-relationships undergo any material alteration, rights disappear and new ones are created - as is demonstrated in the continual disappearance and reformation of rights between nations ... If our power appears to be deeply shaken and broken, our rights cease to exist: conversely, if we have grown very much more powerful, the rights of others, as we have previously conceded them, cease to exist for us. (D 112)

Here we see that Nietzsche's contract thinking is much more historical than that of Hobbes and his successors. The fact that humans are approximately equal in vulnerability and that certain kinds of conflict are mutually destructive may be enough to show that the rule of law is better than anarchy. Some restrictions on

killing and stealing will always be in the general interest. However, questions of political organization and class conflict seem to have no permanent solutions. In Ancient Greece, democrats fought oligarchs; in the Roman Republic, plebeians battled patricians; in the Middle Ages, kings struggled with feudal barons; in the late 18th century, liberal capitalism challenged the ancient regime; and since Marx, the ideological war has been waged between socialist egalitarians and free-market individualists. Clearly, the balance of social power shifted many times. Regimes that began as aristocracies were transformed into democracies, and vice versa.

In looking at basic justice, we saw that it does not really matter if the state began in conquest - what is important to our concept of justice is that from fairly early times, the relation between the individual and the community was tacitly viewed on the model of a contract.[186] In the same way, we have seen that it does not matter that the first states were not liberal democracies - what is important is that today, many people have come to think about social justice in contractarian terms.

III

Thus, in the chapter of Human, All Too Human concerning the state, Nietzsche declares that one must accommodate oneself to the "demagogic" conditions of modern politics as one accommodates oneself when an earthquake has altered the boundaries and value of one's property. The "earthquake" is the demand of the masses for democracy and self-determination:

> if the purpose of all politics really is to make life endurable for as many as possible, then those as-many-as-possible are entitled to determine what they understand by an endurable life; if they trust to their intellect also to discover the right means of attaining this goal, what good is there in doubting it? (HA 438)

The fact is that subordination is becoming unacceptable to modern people. It is bound to disappear, because belief in unconditional authority and definitive truth are passing away. Nietzsche says that in freer circumstances, "people subordinate themselves only under conditions, as the result of mutual compact, thus without prejudice to their own interests" (HA 441). The masses are no

longer willing to serve as means to the ends of their superiors. And since they have numbers on their side, they are a force to be reckoned with. As Nietzsche says: "the weak prevail over the strong again and again, for they are the great majority" (TI IX:14, also WP 685).

It is not simply that everyone is equal in vulnerablity (as Hobbes says). The Hobbesian argument for equality is ahistorical: the fact that the weakest could kill the strongest did not prevent slavery and feudal systems from arising in the past. However, modern ideological and social conditions have given added force to the argument. The fact that the majority are no longer willing to subordinate themselves, together with certain political and economic facts about modernity, makes democratic equality very hard to resist. Admittedly, the 20th century has witnessed the rise of absolute rulers such as Hitler and Stalin. But even they claimed to be socialists, ruling in the name of the volk or the proletariat. Their regimes did not represent a return to nobility or to anything resembling Nietzsche's ideals. And they did not long endure. In our period, no socio-political order is likely to be a serious option if it cannot show itself (or at least pretend) to be in the interest of the majority.

What of exceptional individuals? What of genius and greatness? Nietzsche hopes that such people may be allowed to refrain from politics - to refrain from the task of serving the happiness of the masses (HA 438). They must find a way to develop their talents and pursue their own perfectionist goals. This might be difficult in a populist despotism, where those who fail to conform are subject to coercion. But it need not be incompatible with liberalism. In a proper liberal state, exceptional people would be free to follow their own path - to stick their necks out without having them lopped off. As such people are always in the minority, they would surely benefit from the protection that liberalism provides against the tyranny of the majority. Indeed, there is a delightful irony here. The more Nietzsche identifies with the exception, distrusts and herd, and fears the power of the herd over the exception (i.e. the more elitist he is), the more reason he has to accept some version of liberalism.[187]

Nietzsche says that higher culture only comes into existence where there is a class that is "capable of true leisure" and only works if it wants to (HA 439). Sufficient wealth is thus the basis of nobility. For it permits one to pay the best teachers, to avoid deadening physical labour, and to have no cause for self-abasement (HA 479). However, there is little reason to think that the number of people who are wealthy in this sense - who enjoy the option of leisure - is any smaller in a modern liberal democracy than in any pre-modern state. There are still people who are independently wealthy, and government programs assist the needy and the talented. Moreover, the benefits of wealth that Nietzsche values proceed from moderate wealth. As he points out, "wealth exercises almost the same effects whether one has 300 or 30,000 talers a year to spend" (HA 479). This is what is known as the law of diminishing utility.

For this reason, Nietzsche has no need to take sides in any class conflict over wealth. He says that the wealthy bourgeois and the socialists are similar in the excessive value that they put on money, possessions, and comfort. The best defence that the rich have against revolution would be "to live modestly and moderately" and support the imposition of luxury taxes (AO 304). Although critical of socialism, Nietzsche considers both extremes of wealth and of poverty to be undesirable (WS 285, WS 293). The practice of exploiting the worker is short-sighted, for (contractarian) justice bids us to keep in mind "the enduring advantage of all conditions and classes"; if we fail to do this, we imperil the security and position of our descendants (WS 286). In the long run, Nietzsche thinks that the threat of class war over the distribution of wealth will be solved by democracy:

> As socialism is a doctrine that the acquisition of property ought to be abolished, the people are as alienated from it as they could be: and once they have got the power of taxation into their hands through their great parliamentary majorities they will assail the capitalists, the merchants and the princes of the stock exchange with a progressive tax and slowly create in fact a middle class which will be in a position to forget socialism like an illness it has recovered from. - The

> practical outcome of this spreading democratization will first of all be a European league of nations within which each individual nation ... will possess the status and rights of a canton. (WS 292)

This is about as far as Nietzsche goes in applying contractarian thought to modern politics.[188] Here, democracy emerges as a means whereby the social contract can be adjusted to take account of changes in the balance of power between classes. As modern ideas undermine the principle of authority, as changes in the means of production shift power away from the old regime and into the hands of businessmen and workers, the majority becomes more assertive. They demand, in the name of social justice, that the terms of social order be rewritten and excessive amounts of wealth be redistributed. Whether one likes this or not, it is simply a fact of Realmoralität.

4. Resistance to Contract Theory

However, this is not Nietzsche's last word on politics. In his later writings - especially Beyond Good and Evil and some of the material assembled in The Will to Power - he seeks to resist such conclusions. He takes a darker view of the modern world, which he sees as leading to the levelling, the weakening, and the herd-animalization of man (BGE 199-203, TI IX:38-39). He becomes more convinced that the interests of the few and the many are at odds, and more determined to resist the rising tide of equality. He tries to find a way around the logic of contractarian realism. Thus, he champions aristocratic rule and the higher man:

> Every enhancement of the type "man" has so far been the work of an aristocratic society - and it will be so again and again - a society that believes in the long ladder of an order of rank and differences in value between man and man ... Without that pathos of distance ... that other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown up either - the craving for an ever new widening of distances within the soul itself ... the continual "self-overcoming of man." (BGE 257)

A declaration of war on the masses by higher men is

needed! Everywhere the mediocre are combining in order to make themselves master! (WP 861)

What are we to make of this? It is clear that Nietzsche values the flourishing of exceptional individuals above the advantage of the majority. For him, the attainment of arete is more important than contractarian equilibrium. However, we should not conclude that Nietzsche abandoned his earlier political thought in favour of a fundamental commitment to aristocracy. In BGE 257 and elsewhere, aristocracy is treated as a means to aretaic ends. If Nietzsche favours it, it is because he has become pessimistic about the chances of reconciling aretaic ends with liberal democracy. It is not that he has found something wrong with the contractarian mode of thought. For among Nietzsche's later writings is the Genealogy.

This leaves us with some questions. First, was Nietzsche right in thinking that liberalism is an impediment to human excellence? And is democracy more antithetical to Nietzsche's ideals than old-fashioned aristocracy? If the answer is "no," then there would be no reason to think that the interests of "higher men" and "the mediocre" are essentially opposed. Nietzsche's ethics could then be separated off from the more problematic aspects of his politics.[189]

Suppose, however, that there was a serious conflict between liberal democracy and what is good for higher human beings. There then arises another question, which has to do with the upshot of contractarian argument in the modern world. The fact is that many people have come to think about society in contractarian terms, to look upon democracy as the only legitimate form of government, and to demand that political and economic relations be based on mutual advantage. Nietzsche may value the development of higher men, but he can give no reason why anyone - let alone the majority - should allow their interests to be subordinated to those of an elite. According to Nietzsche, the "fundamental faith" of every healthy aristocracy is that society exists "only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of being" (BGE 258). This may describe the outlook of most elites; it may even be an outlook which is necessary if artists and thinkers are to devote themselves

to their own special tasks. However, as Nietzsche acknowledges, this outlook is a matter of personal faith. For there can be no ethical obligation for the majority to allow itself to be reduced to an instrument - a means to the ends of others. Indeed, why shouldn't everyone want to raise themselves to the "highest state of being" of which they are capable?

I

If Nietzsche is to side with the few against the many, he must find a way of shifting the balance of political power in the modern world. However, it is unthinkable that his "higher men" could ever prevail over "the herd" simply by means of brute force. The latter are, after all, the majority, and they have numbers on their side. Nietzsche (much like Hobbes) is aware that "the strongest and most fortunate are weak when opposed by organized herd instincts, by the timidity of the weak, by the vast majority" (WP 685). The "power" he values is not a matter of muscle. It is also not a matter of economic power. Nietzsche's ideal human being is not a merchant, a financier, or even a Junker landowner (EH III:1). He or she is a philosopher, a creative artist, a person with nobility of soul. If such people have power, it is intellectual or creative - in other words, ideological power. Thus, when Nietzsche seeks to avoid the egalitarian implication of his contractarian ideas, he turns to what might be called the politics of the legislator.[190]

In the past, certain law-givers and religious leaders have succeeded in changing the course of history and imposing their will on generations to come. Nietzsche takes an interest in this model of political change in his later writings. Thus, he discusses Plato and Mohammed as legislators of value (WP 972). Plato equated his own values with "good in itself," and inspired much of the Western tradition to accept his claim. He proposed founding a polis, based on his notion of the tripartite soul, in which philosophers would rule and the populace would be guided by myths and lies. Mohammed succeeded in founding a new order by creating a new religion. He managed to convince a whole culture that his "I will" was the command of God. Nietzsche also takes an interest in the Hindu Law of Manu (A 57). He sees it as setting up a caste system which, like the Republic, distinguishes between the pre-eminently spiritual

ones, those who are strong in muscle and temperament, and the rest of the people. Such a law-giver takes the experience of the race, filters it, and gives it authority so that it may attain the unconscious automatism of instinct.[191] Ultimately, such law-giving is based on a holy lie. This is the hallmark of all philosophers and priests who have "improved" mankind:

> Neither Manu nor Plato nor Confucius nor the Jewish and Christian teachers have ever doubted their right to lie ... one might say: all the means by which one has so far attempted to make mankind moral were through and through immoral. (TI VII:5)

Nietzsche delights in this paradox. It shows up the moralists of the past. But as an "immoralist" who wants in his own way to "improve" mankind, Nietzsche is attracted by the example of Manu and Plato. He dreams of philosophers of the future who will have a similar effect. It is tempting to condemn him for entertaining such notions. Before one does so, one should keep a couple of things in mind. First, it is not Nietzsche the radical anti-Platonist and anti-Christian who proposes the politics of the legislator, but rather a Nietzsche who wants to resurrect some very old-fashioned ideas. Conservatives should reflect upon this before they rush to reject his most innovative ideas in the name of ancient wisdom. Second, Nietzsche is too honest and open-ended a thinker to act the part of the philosophical legislator. Such a person must be willing to be a pious fraud, who lies for ideological purposes. However, Nietzsche loves to expose humbug too much to ever subordinate his thinking to such a goal.

In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche may hope for the coming of new philosophers - commanders and legislators - who will prepare great ventures and experiments in discipline and breeding, so as to put an end to the nonsense of the "greatest number" and the herd-animalization of man (BGE 203). He may speak of the need for the cultivation of a new caste that will rule Europe (BGE 251). And in a note written at this time, he may describe this caste as "a new, tremendous aristocracy, based on the severest self-legislation, in which the will of philosophical men of power and artist-tyrants will be made to endure for millenia" (WP 960). But in the end, such

musings seem like a bizarre fantasy which is incongruous with many other elements of his thought. It is as if, at a certain point, Nietzsche despaired of modernity, crying out: "Only a philosopher-king can save us now!"

Nietzsche prides himself on his realism. Yet his politics of the legislator is not very realistic. To begin with, there are all the traditional problems with oligarchic rule, as well as the question of how the philosopher can influence the ruling elite without his ideas being coopted and corrupted. One thinks of Plato's experience with Dionysius the tyrant, Seneca's experience with Nero, not to mention what has become of the legacy of Marx. The case of Heidegger and Carl Schmitt under the Nazis is only the latest example. On balance, there appears to be no reason to expect an oligarchic regime to be more friendly to Nietzsche's ideals than a democratic one. Oligarchs have purposes our their own - amassing wealth, maintaining order, exerting power over others. And when it comes to ideology, they often find it convenient to hide behind a smoke screen of populism. Liberal democracy, at least, offers a certain protection to minorities and minority ideas. As Nietzsche himself says, democratic institutions are useful as "quarantine arrangements to combat that ancient pestilence, lust for tyranny" (WS 289).[192]

No thinker is more conscious of the power of ressentiment than Nietzsche. He points out that thwarted and wretched spirits tend to be vengeful and spiteful, and that such reactive feelings have had a tremendous impact on religion and morality. Yet his aristocratic politics ignores this problem. For if the needs of the majority were to be subordinated to those of the elite, this would give rise to frustration and ressentiment. If forbidden active expression, such sentiments could lead people to turn away from earthly life or invert the values of the elite. A politics that would remove the root causes of ressentiment, on the other hand, would have to allow everyone's needs to be reasonably well satisfied. It would have to make sure that misery and despair were not allowed to fester and poison the body politic.[193]

Finally, Nietzsche is aware of the critical temper of the modern mind, its independence from authority, and its demand for

intellectual honesty. His own thinking embodies all these traits. Yet his politics of the legislator seems to require the opposite of these qualities if it is to succeed. Thus, noble lies will only be believed if the people are uncritical. Ideological myths will only escape unmasking if the other party has not been reading Marx. Such fictions do not stand a chance of success in an intellectual world that puts much value on verifiable truth and critical questioning. And as Nietzsche points out, no single philosopher or law-giver is likely to sweep the field in a culture that is pluralistic and sophisticated:

> The failure of reformations. - Among the Greeks several attempts to found new Greek religions failed - which speaks for the higher civilization of the Greeks even in rather early times. It suggests that there must have been in Greece at an early time large numbers of diverse individuals whose diverse needs and miseries could not be taken care of with a single prescription of faith and hope. ... The more general and unconditional the influence of an individual or the idea of an individual can be, the more homogeneous and the lower must the mass be that is influenced ... Conversely, we may always infer that a civilization is really high when powerful and domineering natures have little influence and create only sects. (GS 149)

This explains very well why the notion of a law-giver is unsuited to the nature of the modern world. In spite of what Nietzsche sometimes says about the herd-animalization of man, modern society is more pluralistic than ancient Greece, with many modes of thought, many sources of knowledge, and a diversity of sects and organizations.[194]

Thus, there are good Nietzschean reasons for being skeptical of the politics of the legislator. Aristocratic rule does not seem to be well-suited to the situation of the modern world. Even if it could be revived, there is no reason to expect that it would be conducive to Nietzsche's aretaic values. Indeed, this whole line of thought seems to have developed out of revulsion against modern equality, and the conclusions of his earlier contractarian thought.

In HA 441, Nietzsche argued that belief in unconditional authority is passing away and modern people are willing to subordinate themselves only under conditions of mutual advantage (i.e. without prejudice to their own interests). Nothing in his later writings gives us reason to doubt this.

Where does this leave us? Contractarian argument establishes a low but solid standard. It is low, in that the facts and motives on which it rests are so basic and realistic. Nietzsche argues that for parties of approximately equal power, it is to their advantage to agree on terms of justice. Underlying this are the Hobbesian motives - self-interest, fear of death, considerations of relative power. The theory sets its sights rather low. It seeks to show only that the inculcation of certain "I will not's" is necessary, that political community is advantageous, and that it is a good idea to respect those who can requite injuries and benefits.

Contract theory is solid, in that it argues well for these conclusions. Among other things, it makes a solid case for a kind of tough-minded equality. Justice may indeed have arisen among the strong; it may once have been defined by feudal barons who regarded only each other as equals. But for Nietzsche, justice is based on an equilibrium of power, and the balance may shift over time. In the modern world, the balance has moved in the direction of equal rights and democracy. The reasons for it are deeply bound up with modernity, and range from the critical temper of the modern mind to modern forms of socio-economic organization.

Nietzsche may not like the conclusions of his contract theory. He may kick against equality. But in his final works, he is unable to find a way around the contractarian structure that he has built. It is too well cemented to the ideals of modernity; it coheres too well with the foundations of his own ethical naturalism; it is too useful when it comes to giving a genealogical account of justice, punishment, and the like. Thus, the best commentary on the politics of the legislator is given (perhaps unintentionally) by Nietzsche in the following passage:

> Whispered to the conservatives. What was not known formerly, what is known, or might be known, today: a reversion, a return in any sense or degree is simply not

> possible ... today too there are still parties whose dream it is that all things might walk backwards like crabs. But no one is free to be a crab. Nothing avails: one must go forward - step by step further into decadence (this is my definition of modern "progress"). (TI IX:43)

Here Nietzsche acknowledges that modernity, for good or ill, is an irreversible process. Conservative priests and moralists may want to return to the time before the death of God, but there is no going back. This passage has nothing to say about the idea of bringing back aristocracy or re-enacting the role of Solon or Manu in the modern world, but clearly the same arguments apply.

II

We have seen that contractarian arguments provide a solid defence for a certain kind of equality. One cannot get around the need to respect those who are approximately equal to us in power. And given modern social conditions, everyone is approximately equal in power. Not only do the weakest have strength enough the kill the strongest (Hobbes), but they are no longer willing to subordinate themselves to their betters (Nietzsche), modern economics makes people increasingly interdependent (Marx), and in the face of the modern state, every individual is potentially weak (Mill). For all of these reasons, it is unwise to try to found any social order on exploitation and domination.

This does not mean, however, that contractarian justice is the last word on ethics. The standards that it upholds are very minimal - a low but solid wall which it is not easy to crawl under. But one may climb over it, rising above the obsessive concern with self-preservation, the calculating prudence, and the cruder forms of self-interest and will to power on which the theory is based. Contractarian arguments may make a good case for positing equality in the political realm. But when it comes to moral psychology - to issues of motivation and character - there is something mean and poor about the contractarian concept of human nature. The contractarian agent appears to be stuck at the level of Maslow's physiological and safety needs. For Hobbes, "the passion to be reckoned upon, is fear" - whether it be fear of death, fear of punishment, or fear of powers invisible.[195] Gauthier bases his

"morals by agreement" on economic man, assuming that human beings are simply rational maximizers of their own preferences.[196] And as we have seen, Nietzsche's contract theory also sees justice as originating in the need to avoid mutually destructive conflict, and in such economic concepts as requital and exchange (HA 92, GM II).

Two main things set Nietzsche apart from Hobbes and Gauthier. One is the fact that, like Hume, he is not a pure contractarian. Beyond the artifice of justice there are other virtues. Beyond tough-minded realism there is the possibility of moving up the ladder of power and the hierarchy of human needs. Pure contract theory has its limits. It offers us no reason to respect those who are unable to requite injury or make their resentment felt. Thus, Nietzsche reflects on our traffic with animals. We have the power to carelessly destroy or exploit them, however

> he who is cruel towards animals arouses the suspicion that he is also cruel towards weak, subordinate people incapable of revenge; he counts as ignoble, as lacking refinement in pride. (WS 57)

Where there is a clear inequality and no chance or requital, virtues such as sympathy, generosity, and pride come into play. Nietzsche thinks it "ignoble" for the strong to abuse the weak. Even at his most radically aristocratic, he insists: "When the exceptional human being treats the mediocre more tenderly than himself and his peers ... it is simply his duty" (A 57).[197]

Another thing that separates Nietzsche from Hobbes is his conception of power.[198] In the Hobbesian moral universe, the desire for power, glory, and pride are counter-moral incentives, setting the stage for a "war of all against all." Power is defined as the means to obtain some apparent good (i.e. to gratify desire), and the general inclination of all people is said to be "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death."[199] There is something flat and quantitative about this account of power, as if people simply were driven to accumulate more and more power (riches, glory, authority over others, etc.) until they collide with one another. There is no possibility here of sublimation; no idea that powers may differ in quality or that a healthy human being may move up the ladder of

power towards self-actualization (see my treatment of will to power in section 3:1). Thus, Hobbes has little alternative but to appeal to fear as a countervailing passion. Or as Gauthier puts it, we must learn to be "constrained maximizers," curbing our pursuit of self-interest for the sake of prudence.

Such a view leaves no room for a distinctively virtue-ethical approach. Hobbes raises the possibility that a person might honour their word and keep covenants out of a sense of pride, only to dismiss it as "a generosity too rarely found to be presumed on."[200] Such motives as sympathy and benevolence are not even discussed. The ethical landscape here is very bleak. The only growth it can support is contractarian realism. Since will to power cannot be cultivated to any good purpose, it must be suppressed. Pride and power must be made to give way to fear and prudence. We are left with a sense of loss and a vision of ethics which is not very inspiring. As Michael Oakeshott says:

> The morality we have seen Hobbes to be defending is the morality of the tame man. It is still true that the greatest stimulus to the vital movement of the heart is the elation generated by being continuously recognized to be superior. But this greatest good must be foregone; pride, even when it does not degenerate into vain glory, is too dangerous a passion to be allowed, even if its suppression somewhat dims the brilliance of life.[201]

However, for Nietzsche, there is no tragic need to abandon our highest aspirations in order to escape the war of all against all. We may have to live with a certain recognition of equality (WS 31), but we need not renounce the shining qualities that add so much brilliance to life. For there are many dimensions of power. The will to power of a healthy human being does not seek merely to appropriate more things and subjugate other people. It is capable of self-overcoming, becoming qualitatively different as it moves towards fulfilment. This is illustrated by Nietzsche's account of the gift-giving virtue (Z I:22), as well as his description of the noble human being who helps others out of "an urge begotten by excess of power" (BGE 260). Unlike Hobbes, Nietzsche thinks that a sense of power and pride is potentially a significant source of

virtue. Consider the following commentary on the will to power:

> When power becomes gracious and descends into the visible - such descent I call beauty. And there is nobody from whom I want beauty as much as from you who are powerful: let your kindness be your final self-conquest. Of all evil I deem you capable: therefore I want the good from you. Verily, I have often laughed at the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had no claws. (Z II:13)

This is a key passage. Coming right after his presentation of the will to power ("On Self-Overcoming"), it yields great insight into his aretaic ideals. We are told that power must learn laughter and beauty, and must become gracious and kind. The powerful individual acts graciously in a way that goes beyond Hobbesian logic. She has the strength to harm others, but treats them well anyway. If such a person is good, she is so - not out of fear or prudence, but out of proud abundance. Hobbesian contract theory, in contrast, tries to persuade us that we ought to be good because we have no claws - or more exactly, because we cannot get away with clawing others without most likely getting clawed in return. The Hobbesian agent is only good out of weakness. Nietzsche admires the individual who is kind and honourable out of strength. This is what it means to be noble, in the sense of nobility of character.

Hobbes is mentioned only twice in Nietzsche's latter works. In one case, he is simply listed along with other English philosophers (BGE 252). In the other, Nietzsche takes issue with his view of laughter (BGE 294). This sheds more light on the difference between Hobbes and Nietzsche than one might think. In Leviathan, Hobbes defines laughter as sudden glory, "caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them, or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves."[202] In other words, laughter is nothing but a rejoicing in our own superiority over others, as if to say "I am great" or "they are contemptible." This view of laughter is pretty much what one should expect, given that he sees life as a restless striving after power, and that he understands power in rather crude and one-dimensional terms. In his world there is no room for any

innocent merriment - laughter can only serve the purpose of raising oneself up or putting others down.

On the other hand, Nietzsche proposes "an order of rank among philosophers depending on the rank of their laughter - all the way up to those capable of golden laughter" (BGE 294). This implies that there are different forms of laughter (as there are different forms of power), some of which are more elevated than others. The laughter which he celebrates represents a joyous attitude towards life which refuses to succumb to the spirit of gravity - that is, to heaviness, discouragement, or nihilism.[203] Nietzsche associates laughter with the Olympian gods. He says that if gods philosophize, they no doubt know how to laugh in a superhuman way at all serious things, including their own holy rites. Such laughter Zarathustra pronounces holy (Z IV:13).

Even the Second Essay of the Genealogy rises above the grim logic of contractarian realism. For Nietzsche is concerned with the development of the sovereign individual - a being who is proud and autonomous, "who has his own independent, protracted will and the right to make promises" (GM II:2). Such a person is the fruit of an extended process of discipline and punishment. Through long periods, Nietzsche thinks, people had to be reminded to keep their covenants by the spectre of fearful penalties. The end product of this history is a person who can be trusted to honour his or her word, not merely out of fear, but out of "proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility" (GM II:2). Sovereign individuals "give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it in the face of accidents" (GM II:2). They are motivated by virtue-ethical considerations rather than by momentary whims. In their souls, the virtues of honesty and integrity have become instinctive. Yet one would hardly think of them as tame.

Ultimately, Nietzsche dreams of the self-overcoming of justice - not out of injustice, but out of an abundance which rises above fear, retribution, and the desire to punish. Above contractarian justice is the realm of mercy. As the "creditor" becomes richer, she can afford to be more humane to her "debtor." As a community becomes more powerful and self-confident, it can afford to treat

transgressors more leniently. Perhaps, Nietzsche says, "a society might attain such a consciousness of power that it could allow itself the noblest luxury possible to it - letting those who harm it go unpunished" (GM II:10).[204] Elsewhere, he makes a similar point in regard to international relations:

> And perhaps there will come a great day on which a nation distinguished for wars and victories ... will cry of its own free will: "we shall shatter the sword" - and demolish its entire military machine down to its last foundations. To disarm while being the best armed, out of an elevation of sensibility - that is the means to real peace ... Better to perish than to hate and fear, and twofold better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared - this must one day become the supreme maxim of every individual state! (WS 284)

This is Nietzsche at his most idealistic. Such a course of action calls for real courage, and is a far cry from Realpolitik and Realmoralität. For to unilaterally disarm is to leave oneself open to attack, just as to forgive others their trespasses is to risk emboldening them to trespass again.

Does this mean that Nietzsche renounced contractarian realism? Does it mean that he contradicts himself? On the contrary, it only means that he is capable of employing more than one perspective. Contractarian realism is useful as long as there remain people who operate on this level. One who disarms or shows mercy out of strength must always risk being misunderstood by those who equate power with physical force. Such people are likely to interpret any generous action as a sign of weakness and stupidity. It is partly for this reason that Nietzsche insists it must be the powerful who must lead the way towards mercy and peace, for their motivation is harder to dismiss. Birds of prey might very well be skeptical of lambs who preach Christian ethics, but when another bird of prey chooses to retract its claws, they take notice.[205]

Perhaps forgiveness of injuries and unilateral disarmament are too much to expect - at least on any regular and continuing bases. Those who insist on living by the sword must, in the end, be met by physical force. A powerful society may be able to liberalize its

laws, but no social order will ever be strong enough to allow all crimes to go unpunished. For as individuals we are vulnerable. And even if all nations were to disarm except for one, that one rogue would still have the power to endanger the rest. However, such limitations should not be allowed to obscure the ideal of power that Nietzsche describes. In many domains (those in which physical force is not involved), one can move beyond the Hobbesian view of life regardless of what other people do. Thus, we may dream of an affluent society where increasing numbers of people realize that there is more to eudaimonia than accumulating wealth. Or of members of an elite who are willing to give up privilege and authority in order to cultivate more inward and creative forms of power.

In other words, it is possible to move from contractarian realism to virtue - as we will do in the following sections.

5. Pity, Sympathy, and Love

Nietzsche rejects the Judaeo-Christian God, the Kantian moral law, and other elements of the peculiar institution. For many thinking people today, none of this is particularly shocking. We are used to skepticism concerning moral absolutes. It is only when Nietzsche proceeds to question the value of pity and altruism that we feel threatened. Here we arrive at that which, for many of us, is ethically central - the sentiments of caring, compassion, and other-regarding love. Even postmodern skeptics and anti-theorists pay homage to such sentiments.[206] The fact that Nietzsche is willing to question their value has often been held against him. One wonders: what sort of a man would speak against pity, criticize altruism, and bid us to "become hard"?

In answering this question, we must distinguish between the various sentiments of benevolence. There is the magnanimity of Aristotle, the love of Christianity, the sympathy of Hume, the pity of Schopenhauer, the altruism of Auguste Comte, and the care of feminists like Nel Noddings.[207] Each of these theories appeals to other-regarding motives, but there are major differences between them. On one hand, there are virtue theories in which certain ways of relating to other people are seen as part of human excellence. They argue that humans are social creatures, that sympathy for our

fellows is natural, and that well-adjusted people will treat others well. In this spirit, Hume valued benevolence and Aristotle valued liberality and friendliness. On the other hand, there are theories (like those of Schopenhauer and some Christians) which equate goodness with service to others or pity for all that suffers. In commanding us to sacrifice the self, they are ascetic; in focusing on misery, they are nihilistic. Instead of enhancing life, they lead us back into the clutches of the peculiar institution.

Nietzsche's take on these issues is more nuanced and complex than many people realize. He clearly regards sympathy, love, and generosity as virtues. His critical fire is directed, not against benevolence as such, but against nihilistic forms of pity and self-denying forms of altruism. And the nature of his critique is quite novel. He opposes pity - not because it is a non-rational sentiment or because it is too weak to be relied upon, but because it has the potential to multiply misery to no good purpose. If it were to grow radically stronger, it would make existence harder to bear. The problem with altruism is that it reduces arete to a matter of other-directed service and concern. Instead of cultivating our own powers, we are told to spend our time worrying about other people and trying to make life easier for them.

I

Nietzsche's critique of pity is directed primarily against Schopenhauer, who advocated a morality of pity and took a nihilistic view life. In Nietzsche's mind, the two are connected:

> Some have dared to call pity a virtue (in every noble ethic it is considered a weakness); and as if this were not enough, it has been made the virtue, the basis and source of all virtues. To be sure - and one should always keep this in mind - this was done by a philosophy that was nihilistic and inscribed the negation of life upon its shield. Schopenhauer was consistent enough: pity negates life and renders it more deserving of negation. (A 7)

Schopenhauer deified "the instincts of pity, self-abnegation, and self-sacrifice ... on the basis of which he said No to life and to himself" (GM P:5). In response, Nietzsche came to see the morality

of pity as a symptom of nihilism and decline. Thus, when he opposes "pity" we must keep in mind that he is referring, not to ordinary sympathy, but to a particular ideal derived from Schopenhauer.

According to Schopenhauer, all actions are done either from egoism, malice, or Mitleid [pity or compassion].[208] Only those done from Mitleid have moral worth, for they are purely unegoistic. Such a theory makes it possible to dismiss all forms of self-realization and all forms of love (except those which "suffer-with") as morally unworthy. In the morality of pity, the only praiseworthy incentive is the desire to alleviate misery. All else is tainted by egoism. Schopenhauer also claims, following Rousseau, that our sympathy with others is restricted to their suffering, while their good fortune leaves us unmoved and may even excite envy.[209] This is a dismal doctrine. One is inclined to doubt the benevolence of a "pity" which turns to indifference or envy as soon as other people prosper. Could it be a way of elevating oneself above others in their moment of distress? Or a way of making a cult of suffering? In truth, Schopenhauer's interest in pity is not so much practical as metaphysical. He uses suffering as an objection against life and a way of negating the will to live. Pity, he says, is "practical mysticism" because it takes us beyond the phenomenal appearance of individuation, dissolving the distinction between ego and non-ego.[210]

Nietzsche launches a multi-pronged critique of pity and altruism in Daybreak 131-148. He begins by arguing that they are distinctively modern moral fashions. The great men of ancient ethics - Stoics like Epictetus, for instance - did not glorify "living for others" or "feeling with others" in the modern manner (D 131). The difference, Nietzsche thinks, is due to the echo of Christianity in morality. It is not that Christianity is a religion of pity. Nietzsche sees it primarily as a religion of personal salvation. In its heyday, it was otherworldly and ascetic to the core (see the Genealogy and the Antichrist).[211] But as Christian dogma has retreated, a moralism of benevolence and disinterested love has grown up (D 92). This has much to do with efforts of freethinkers to "outchristian Christianity":

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 of all French freethinkers from Voltaire up to Auguste Comte: and the latter did in fact, with his moral formula vivre pour autrui, outchristian Christianity. In Germany it was Schopenhauer, in England John Stuart Mill who gave the widest currency to the teaching of the sympathetic affects and of pity or the advantage of others as the principle of behaviour ... 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. (D 132)

Formerly it was taught that the ego must deny itself for the sake of salvation and that the world is a vale of tears. Now it is taught that the ego must deny itself for the sake of others and that "suffering-with" is the height of morality. It is no wonder that Nietzsche hears an echo of Christian themes in the modern ethic of pity or altruism.

Nietzsche is no enemy of the sympathetic affects. He merely wants to understand them in naturalistic terms, to make us aware of their dangers, and to leave a place for the heroic and creative virtues. Thus, he argues that Schopenhauer misunderstood Mitleid when he opposed it to egoism and gave it metaphysical significance. For in one way or another, our ego is always present in our pity. Perhaps an accident incurred by another reminds us of our own vulnerability and fragility. We repel this feeling of pain through an act of pity, which delights us and sets a limit to the injury. Rendering assistance gives us a sense of potency (not to mention praise), which distracts us from the painful impression made upon us by the others' misfortune (D 133). Nietzsche's intention here is not to dishonour the other-regarding sentiments. All actions flow out of the ego, but this does not in any way detract from their worth (D 148). It is just that what is done out of pity is not all that different from other actions in this regard.

Nietzsche has nothing but scorn for the Schopenhauerian idea that Mitleid involves some sort of a mystical process which "makes two beings into one and in this way makes possible the immediate understanding of the one by the other" (D 142). He dismisses this as "rubbish." Rather, empathy is a skill which has evolved, and which bears a particular relation to weakness and timidity. As a fragile creature that must live by its wits, the human animal has a pressing need to understand the feelings and intentions of others. This need is probably at its strongest among weak and timid people, who must cope with the whims of the powerful. Arrogant men, who live by physical strength and the right of command, have less to fear and hence less need to cultivate empathetic skill. On the other hand: "one should observe especially the play on the faces of women and how they quiver and glitter in continual imitation and reflection of what is felt to be going on around them" (D 142).[212]

Thus, Nietzsche regards empathy and sympathy as children of weakness. He thinks that "slaves" rather than "masters" are more likely to value the obliging hand and the warm heart (BGE 260). However, this has nothing to do with the morality of ressentiment as described in the Genealogy (see section 2:6). Such traits are useful to the weak in enduring the pressures of existence. Empathy is a form of intelligence; sympathy leads human beings to assist one another in times of need. To the extent that we ourselves are fragile and vulnerable creatures, we benefit from the cultivation of these affects. For all of us were infants once, all of us are subject to accident and disease, many of us will live to see our powers decline in old age. Benevolence, in some form, is therefore likely to find a place in any catalogue of virtues.

That of Nietzsche is no exception. Such qualities as sympathy [Mitgefühl], magnanimity, and courtesy make it onto his various lists of the cardinal virtues (BGE 284, D 556). The inclusion of sympathy is noteworthy, as it occurs in "What is Noble" (the final part of Beyond Good and Evil). Clearly, Nietzsche had no intention of relegating sympathy to the sphere of slave morality. He praises friendship much as Aristotle does (Z I:14), and speaks highly of a type of generosity he calls "the gift-giving virtue" (Z I:22).

It is not just that the sympathetic affections are useful.

There is also about them something profoundly attractive, which makes them impossible to dismiss:

> The subtlest artifice which Christianity has over the other religions is a word: it spoke of love. Thus it became the lyrical religion ... There is in the word love something so ambiguous and suggestive, something which speaks to the memory and to future hope, that even the meanest intelligence and the coldest heart still feels something of the lustre of this word. (AO 95)

In the Genealogy, Nietzsche continues to speak of love (and Jesus' gospel of love) as "a seduction," and as the "bait" which made it possible for all the world to swallow an inverted scheme of values (GM I:8). To seduce, and to work as bait, love must have genuine appeal. The unfortunate thing is that it has been used to hook people onto a religion that is resentful and otherworldly.[213]

AO 95 pays tribute to Christian love - or more exactly, to the chord that it strikes in the human heart which has a deep desire for love. In a letter to his friend, Malwida von Meysenbug, his words are even more revealing:

> One of the noblest impulses, of which I knew nothing before I met you, is that of mother-love without the physical tie between mother and child; it is one of the most splendid manifestations of caritas. Bestow on me some of this love, my highly honored friend, and look upon me as a son who has need - oh so great a need! of such a mother.[214]

This passages may surprise some, for it does not fit easily with Nietzsche's popular image. He speaks of his own need for motherly affection. The "mother-love without the physical tie" which he glorifies here resembles the ethic of caring that is described by Nel Noddings and some contemporary feminists. Noddings begins with the mother-child relationship and natural caring, and sees the ethical ideal as arising out of this. Through the "memory of our own best moments of caring and being caring for," we can bring the attitude of caring and the perspective of the mother to ever wider circles of life.[215] This is not a view of ethics that Nietzsche develops. One could argue, however, that it is implicit in the idea

that maternal love beyond the physical tie is "one of the noblest impulses." And Nietzsche does compare the creative love of an artist to maternal love (GS 72, GS 369).

At any rate, the above passages give the lie to the brutish, hard-boiled, "macho" image of Nietzsche. If he is critical of pity and altruism, it is not because he was insensitive to suffering, or had no need for others, or despised all that is gentle and tender. Rather the opposite. An attentive reading of Nietzsche (especially Zarathustra and his letters), reveals a person who is sensitive, vulnerable, lonely, and capable of great delicacy of feeling. His critique of pity is, among other things, a study of the dangers of "suffering-with" for those who are over-sensitive to the suffering of others.[216] In a letter to Peter Gast, Nietzsche writes:

> Did you read that Mommsen's house burned down? And that his notes were destroyed - no doubt the most impressive research any living scholar has produced? It is said he plunged into the flames again and again, until at last, covered with burns, he had to be restrained by force. ... When I heard this story my heart stopped beating, and even now I feel physical pain when I think about it. Is this compassion? But what do I care about Mommsen? I have no affection for him.[217]

This brings us to the central objection to pity that Nietzsche makes in Daybreak (which he was working on when he wrote the above letter). Pity, insofar as it causes suffering, is a weakness. It increases the amount of suffering in the world - usually to no good purpose. Here and there misery may be reduced as a result of pity, but overall, its effect is harmful. Nietzsche says that anyone "whose desire it is to serve mankind as a physician in any sense whatever" must guard against being paralyzed by pity (D 134). To really be of help, we must be strong enough to look upon wounds without flinching and to attend to our work without despair. But pity tends to have a depressing effect. Anyone who cultivated it, setting before his soul all the misery in his surroundings, would inevitably grow sick and melancholic (D 134). And when we allow ourselves to be made gloomy, our gloom tends to be inflicted on others in addition to the burdens that they bear already. In

becoming the echo of their pain, we can give them neither aid nor comfort (D 144).

Such arguments are a powerful challenge - not to the sympathy of the average person, but to extreme pity, and to the morality of pity upheld by Schopenhauer. At the very least, Nietzsche shows that pity is not an unlimited good; that if our ability to "suffer-with" were to grow radically, it would put a real damper on human existence. He also makes the point that vicariously sharing in the misery of others is not a particularly useful response to their plight. Nietzsche felt physical pain at the thought of Mommsen's house burning down, but what good did it do? This line of argument is even more valid today then in Nietzsche's time, for never before have people been so inundated with graphic accounts of suffering in distant places - of wars, famines, hurricanes, plane crashes, and other disasters which appear on the nightly news. For many people, this onslaught of woe is overwhelming and depressing; the message they get is that the times in which they live are very scary (perhaps even apocalyptic). However, if we are to act effectively, we must focus on one or two issues and not become emotionally involved in the rest.

In his later writings, Nietzsche became convinced that there is something nihilistic about pity - that it uses the spectacle of suffering to turn us against life. This is his diagnosis of the metaphysical morality of Schopenhauer, which he extends to other preachers of pity:

> Pity is the practice of nihilism ... this depressive and contagious instinct crosses those instincts which aim at the preservation of life and the enhancement of its value. It multiplies misery and conserves all that is miserable ... pity persuades men to nothingness! (A 7)

It is not that caring about others is nihilistic. The problem is that Mitleid (as defined by Schopenhauer) focuses on everything wretched and painful.

Thus, Nietzsche argues that joying-with is worth more than suffering-with (AO 62, GS 338). There are two reasons for this. First, joying-with has a more positive effect on our spirits, as it involves the contagion of joy rather than suffering. In his speech

"On the Pitying," Zarathustra declares:

> Verily, I may have done this and that for sufferers; but always I seemed to have done better when I learned to feel better joys. ... And learning better to feel joy, we learn best not to hurt others or to plan hurts for them. (Z II:3)

Second, joying-with a person is a matter of appreciating their virtues and celebrating their successes - the basis of respect and friendship. It is fellow-rejoicing that makes the friend (HA 499). But suffering-with dwells on misery and incapacity. We get to play the active, gratitude-producing role while the other becomes a mere patient. For Nietzsche, there is "something degrading in suffering and something elevating and productive of superiority in pitying" (D 138). To pity someone is to focus on what is pitiful about them (in contrast with love or admiration, which pay tribute to their aretaic qualities).

II

We have seen that Nietzsche objects to the nihilistic effects of pity. With the same vehemence, he objects to the notion that morality consists essentially in "living for others." The major problem with this is that it leaves no room for self-development. Moralities of pity or altruism stand opposed to the ego. They take the view that "only this is moral - to lose one's own way in order to come to the assistance of a neighbor" (GS 338). To suffer-with or serve others becomes the ultimate ideal - an ideal which is deeply ascetic. If selfishness in all its forms is wicked, then one must deny or sacrifice oneself if one's action is to have moral worth (see section 2:5). Even in its not-so-ascetic forms, such an ethic is unable to do justice to the heroic and creative virtues. For it demands that we subordinate ourselves and our development to the utility of the herd. This demand is likely to weigh hardest on exceptional people and "higher human beings" - a point which particularly outrages Nietzsche. But there are also questions about whether such an ethics is good for its supposed beneficiaries.

A world ruled by altruism - a world in which other-regarding sentiment was much stronger than it is now - could be imagined as a dystopia in which everyone was forever bothering and interfering

with others "for their own good" (D 143, D 147). This suggests that altruism, like pity, is not an unlimited virtue. People need to be loved, but they also need space to be alone, undisturbed, to pursue their own projects. A defender of altruism may reply that someone who truly cares about others will do what is good for them, neither neglecting them when they need help nor imposing on them when they want to be left alone. A sensible reply, but one which an aretaic naturalist can easily capitalize on. For once the question of the good is brought into the picture, it becomes clear that talk of "helping others" is without content unless one has some idea of what is really beneficial for them. This means that other-regarding concern, of whatever kind, is only as good as the concept of human flourishing and the perception of particulars that informs it.[218]

A mother, for example, may "live for" her children. But her devotion is worth little - in fact, it may be a vice - if it leads her to impose wrong-headed values on them, pushing them to find secure, well-paying jobs in accounting (or, if they are girls, to marry a good provider) instead of pursuing the dream of becoming a classical musician or going to graduate school to study philosophy. Such a mother may truly want the "best" for her children, for whom she will "do anything" - it is just that her concept of what is "best" happens to be security and a good income. She cannot understand that they have other ambitions, and that the conditions of their happiness differ from what would make her happy were she in their place.

In the above case, the mother's concern is directed towards the physiological and safety needs, while her children aspire towards self-actualization. This illustrates a common bias that Nietzsche detects, not only in pity, but in the sympathetic affects. Behind that idea that "moral actions are actions performed out of sympathy for others," there is a certain timidity:

> 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 towards the common security and society's sense of security are to be accorded the predicate 'good'. (D 174)

Other-regarding concern, in its usual form, is obsessed with safety and comfort. It wants to remove all the sharp edges of life. When it urges us to "live for others" it is no more interested in the self-realization of others than it is in our own self-realization. It just wants life to be made easier and more secure. Its goal, one might say, is the satisfaction of basic rather than higher needs.

There is a place for such concern - particularly when it comes to suffering caused by material deprivation which may be alleviated by social reform or acts of charity. Indeed, many people on the left (especially vulgar Marxists) regard such deprivation as the major cause of misery, and political and economic reform (if not revolution) as the panacea for eliminating it. Nietzsche does not share this view. Early in his career, he wrote: "every philosophy which believes that the problem of existence is touched on, not to say solved, by a political event is a joke - and pseudo-philosophy" (UM p.147-148, SE 4). This applies, perhaps most of all, to the problem of suffering. The fact is that human misery has many sources - grief for the dead, ill health, lack of love, frustrated ambition, and depression - which have little or nothing to do with socio-economic arrangements. When Nietzsche discusses suffering, it is primarily psychological or existential suffering that he has in mind. Thus, when he complains about those who would remove "all the dangers" from life, we should not read him as arguing for Social Darwinism or against child labour laws.[219]

Nietzsche says that he too has his "pity." It is an aretaic concern - a feeling, he says, for which there is no adequate name. He feels it when he sees precious capabilities squandered, or when he sees "anyone halted, as a result of some stupid accident, at something less than he might have become" (WP 367). Such "pity" is informed by aretaic ideals. It is a "pity" at the failure of self-actualization, not at the amount of danger and discomfort in the world. It longs for the fulfilment of human potential. In BGE 225, Nietzsche presents the issue between himself and those who measure the values of things in terms of pleasures and pain (i.e. utilitarians and pessimists) as an issue of "pity versus pity." Our pity, he says, is higher and more farsighted than the usual "hedonistic" kind.[220] It is aware that there are higher problems

than those of pleasure and pain. And it regards suffering, not merely as an evil, but as a factor which contributes to the enhancement of man.

A couple of cautions are in order here. First, when Nietzsche speaks well of such "pity," he should not be seen as advocating the sort of sentiment which is the mere contagion of misery. At its best, aretaic "pity" may be seen as a positive form of sympathy or concern. Otherwise, it becomes like the "pity for the higher man" which is said to be Zarathustra's final temptation (Z IV). Second, when Nietzsche says that suffering contributes to soul-making, we should not make too much of this in explaining his anti-pity views. Other criticisms are more prominent in the passages where pity (and related sentiments) are the theme. Nietzsche tends to talk about the positive value of suffering in the context of two other themes: the cultivation of virtue and amor fati (see section 3:8).

III

Let us review the argument so far. We have examined a variety of other-regarding affects. Nietzsche links empathy and sympathy with weakness, as being most useful to the weak. But he also regards empathy as a form of intelligence, sympathy as a cardinal virtue, and love as something which is profoundly attractive. Such tender sentiments do contribute to our flourishing, although they constitute only a part of ethics. On the other hand, we saw that Nietzsche objects to pity (suffering-with), the ideal of Schopenhauer, because it has a depressing effect and promotes nihilism. As an alternative, he suggests joying-with as a basis for human relationships. We saw that Nietzsche is critical of the ideal of altruism (living for others), which he regards as ascetic and detrimental to self-actualization. Finally, we examined the bias in sentimental ethics towards security and comfort. In response, Nietzsche describes an aretaic "pity" which is concerned with the realization of our highest capabilities.

Nietzsche's position is multi-faceted. There are things that he rejects outright - nihilistic forms of pity and ascetic forms of altruism - which he considers harmful or anti-life. They undermine one's ability to affirm existence, affirm oneself, and cultivate one's powers. At another level, there are other-regarding affects

which are useful to the weak but may stand in the way of the strong. Some varieties of sympathy are weighted towards security and comfort, or have insufficient respect for the separateness and independence of persons. However, there is a place in Nietzsche's ideal for various tender sentiments - sympathy, love, joying-with, and concern for those who must struggle to actualize themselves.

The most challenging critic of Nietzsche's view of pity (i.e. the sympathetic affects) is Martha Nussbaum. She avoids the all-too-common error of directing her arguments against a crude "boot in the face" image of Nietzsche. Rather, she thinks that Nietzsche is essentially Stoic in his objection to pity, and that he wants to "bring about a revival of Stoic values of self-command and self-formation."[221] At the root of his objection to pity, she thinks, is an idealization of hardness. This hardness may be more like that of a disciplined dancer than that of a thug; nevertheless, it strikes at the very roots of love. Nussbaum sees pity as based on a deep acknowledgement of human weakness and insufficiency. The pitier accepts that she and other people are vulnerable beings, subject to contingency, who depend for their well-being on worldly goods. This is not too different from the way Nietzsche links sympathy to weakness and fear in Daybreak. Yet Nussbaum regards him as a Stoic, because she sees him as evading the reality of human neediness and the real implications of his own naturalism:

> There is no philosopher in the modern Western tradition who is more emphatic than Nietzsche about the central importance of the body, and the fact that we are bodily creatures. Again and again he charges Christian and Platonist moralities with making a false separation between our spiritual and our physical nature ... [Yet] he really is very loathe to draw the conclusion that is naturally suggested by his position: that human beings need worldly goods in order to function.[222]

As an internal critique of certain themes in Nietzsche - his neglect of basic\economic needs in favour of higher\psychological needs, or his belief in the soul-making efficacy of suffering - this has considerable merit. Unfortunately, Nussbaum goes too far in assimilating Nietzschean "hardness" to Stoicism. She accuses him

of endorsing a false view of strength, which refuses to love in ways that open oneself to pain and loss, and cultivates the hardness of self-command as a bulwark against the risks of living. Thus, for all his celebration of life and becoming:

> Nietzsche fails ... to see what the Stoicism he endorses has in common with the Christianity he criticizes, what "hardness" has in common with otherworldliness: both are forms of self-protection, both express a fear of this world and its contingencies, both are incompatible with the deepest sort of love, whether personal or political.[223]

Against Stoicism, and against a certain ideal of hardness, the above argument is very telling. To protect oneself against pain, either by maintaining an attitude of emotional detachment or by insisting that external goods do not matter, is indeed similar to the strategies of otherworldly faith. One can also find passages in Nietzsche which are open to such criticism. In BGE 225, he says that "in man creature and creator are united" - there is in us material, clay, dirt, and chaos, but there is also form-giver, hammer hardness, and spectator divinity. We should not pity the "creature" which must be formed, broken, forged, and purified; rather we should identify with the creative part of our soul. The imagery here is dualistic, as if human beings could be separated into creative will and brute matter, and as if the former could or should simply have its way with the latter. And in Zarathustra, we are told to "become hard," for "all creators are hard," and "only the noblest are hard altogether" (Z III:12:29).

But for all that, Nietzsche is not a Stoic. The hardness he speaks of is not indifference to other people or worldly goods. There is an element of "self-protection" in his objection to pity, but he seeks protection, not against emotional attachment as such, but against a particular depressing and nihilistic affect. Thus, when suffering is not the issue, he can be very critical of Stoic moralities of self-control, for they require that we be forever on guard against our natural inclinations; that we turn the self into a castle, with "a hard Stoic hedgehog skin" (GS 305-306). The key to understanding Nietzsche's anti-pity position is not in his

allegiance to the Stoics but in his opposition to Schopenhauer. He also feels the need to carve out a space for self-actualization and defend it against extreme forms of altruism. Thus, when Zarathustra tells us to "become hard," hardness is contrasted with being too pliant, yielding, and self-denying. The point is that we are to dare to create new values (the theme of Z III:12), not that we should repress our feelings or harden our hearts. After all, who among philosophical spokesmen is more exuberant and passionate than Zarathustra? And who has more to say about the importance of material things to his own philosophical activity than Nietzsche does in Ecce Homo?

Nussbaum sees Nietzsche as part of an "anti-pity tradition." Nietzsche himself informs us that such diverse figures as Plato, Epictetus, Spinoza, La Rochefoucault, and Kant had a low estimation of pity (GM P:5, D 131). His point is only that the modern emphasis on pity is something new. For if there is an anti-pity tradition, at its core is a moral rationalism which Nietzsche does not share. In basing ethics on the passions, Nietzsche has more in common with Hume and Schopenhauer than with Kant, for whom the affections were too contingent, impure, and subjective to serve as the grounding for morality. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, human beings are necessarily and always motivated by passion; the only question is which passion will play the leading role, and how the various passions can be related, organized, and balanced in a way that is coherent and life-enhancing (WP 387, see section 2:3).

In the end, Nietzsche is not opposed to sympathy and love, any more than he is opposed to the incentives which are at the root of contractarian ethics. Indeed, sympathy [Mitgefühl] is counted as a virtue, and love is acknowledged as something profoundly attractive - which is more than one can say for the fear of death. If some other-regarding sentiments are criticized, it is because they are nihilistic, self-denying, or a threat to self-actualization - not because there is a problem with sentiment-based ethics as such. As we will see in section 3:7, Nietzsche's aretaic ideal is based on distinctive sentiments of its own.

6. A Catalogue of Virtues

We now come to the ethical approach that Nietzsche clearly favours. In contemporary terms, he is a virtue-ethicist. And the form of virtue ethics that he presents is distinct from morality. It is aretaic, not deontic; a matter of excellence and flourishing rather than obedience to the moral law (D 207, GM P:3). In one sense, we have been examining the virtues for several sections already. We have seen that Nietzsche's understanding of justice is similar to that of contractarians who regard it as an "artificial virtue," and that he values such traits as sympathy. However, the most quintessentially virtue-ethical part of his theory remains to be discussed. We have yet to look at the particular virtues that Nietzsche praises most frequently. This will be our task here. And we have yet to deal with the fundamental issue of how Nietzsche defines virtue and what sets the aretaic outlook apart from that of the moralist, the contractarian, and the care theorist. That we will do in section 3:7.

Nietzsche does not provide us with a catalogue of virtues in the systematic manner of Aristotle or Hume. But after reading his major works, it is not hard to come up with a list of Nietzschean virtues. In addition to justice and sympathy, one could mention courage, honesty, discipline, pride, autonomy, and amor fati.[224] While this list is distinctive, it is not all that different from accounts of the virtues past and present. Courage was one of the cardinal virtues in ancient Greece. Honesty and self-discipline have been upheld by a long line of moralists. Pride was valued by Aristotle and Hume. Autonomy, in various forms, is central to liberalism. Even Nietzsche's quest to affirm life and overcome the spirit of revenge has its spiritual antecedents. Such ideals are not as radically new as some of his value-creating rhetoric may suggest. But neither are they simply traditional or banal (as some commentators have charged).[225] Nietzsche puts a new spin on a variety of virtues, making his own contribution to the problematic of virtue ethics.

I

The call to courage and honesty rings throughout Nietzsche's writings, finding its way into many contexts. Being honest with

ourselves and our friends, and brave towards the enemy, are both listed as cardinal virtues (D 556). Courage appears on another such list (BGE 284), and truthfulness is said to be the highest virtue (EH IV:3). In the Genealogy, these virtues are singled out as noble qualities. When the ancient nobles designated themselves by a typical character trait, they called themselves "the truthful" or they emphasized their courage (GM I:5). Speaking the truth and acting bravely were seen as admirable qualities, not merely for their utility, but because they denote nobility and power.

The traditional paradigm of courage has been the soldier who risks his life in battle, or the hero who voluntarily faces danger. This we might call physical or military courage. It is the sort of thing that Aristotle had in mind when he discussed courage, and it was also admired by Nietzsche. The epigraph to Book Five of The Gay Science is taken from the French general, Turenne: "You tremble, carcass? You would tremble a lot more if you knew where I am taking you." And Zarathustra's speech "On War and Warriors" is, in part, a celebration of courage:

> War and courage have accomplished more great things than love of the neighbour. Not your pity but your courage has so far saved the unfortunate. (Z I:10)

But for all his military metaphors, the sort of courage with which he is most concerned is moral or intellectual. It is the courage to stand alone, to question the convictions of the herd, to face up to harsh truths, and to continue one's work in the face of loneliness and ill health. This is the courage of the Nietzschean philosopher; a courage that he aspires to himself and wants to summon up in his free-spirited readers. Thus, he describes his own philosophy as a labyrinth of audacious insights, and describes his perfect reader as "a monster of courage and curiosity ... a born adventurer and discoverer" (EH III:3). It is in this spirit that Book Five of The Gay Science is titled "We Fearless Ones."

Honesty is usually associated with keeping one's word and not deceiving other people. As such, it is a very contractarian virtue, for any social contract requires the keeping of covenants. In the Second Essay of the Genealogy, Nietzsche has much to say about how this virtue was inculcated. The end result is a human being with

the right to make promises, who can "give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it" (GM II:2). Such a person's truthfulness is a matter, not of fear or weakness, but of a sense of power, self-discipline, and pride in one's word.

Outside the Genealogy, Nietzsche's praise of honesty most often concerns intellectual honesty. Truthfulness, for Nietzsche, is at once the virtue of the powerful aristocrat and the free-thinking philosopher. In the latter context, the sort of honesty that is most important is honesty with oneself; that is, avoiding self-deception and refusing to distort one's perceptions for the sake of any faith or ideology. Nietzsche asks:

> Is there any contrast at all between a lie and a conviction? ... 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 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. (A 55)

This passage goes on to discuss the examples of anti-Semitism and German historiography. It brings to mind Orwell's concept of "doublethink" and the ability of Communist "party men" to avoid believing in the atrocities of Stalin during the 30's and 40's. However, it is Christianity and its apologists that Nietzsche usually has in mind when he invokes intellectual honesty. In his speech "On the Afterworldly," Zarathustra calls such honesty the "youngest among the virtues" (Z I:3). For centuries, people have cast their delusions beyond the earth and sought to believe in gods and afterworlds. They even declared such faith to be a virtue. But today, with the rise of the scientific outlook, the virtue of honesty has taken on a new and deeper meaning. The old faith told us not to lie to others; Nietzsche and other modern humanists bid us not to lie to ourselves.[226] Through honesty, Nietzsche says,

the Christian church has brought about its own self-overcoming, as two thousand years of training in truthfulness "finally forbids itself the lie involved in belief in God" (GM III:27, also GS 357).

Closely related to honesty is the intellectual conscience. Nietzsche complains that most people lack such a conscience: they do not "consider it contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly, without first having given themselves an account of the final and most certain reasons pro and con" (GS 2). He says that he cannot understand how any human being can stand amidst "this whole marvelous uncertainty and rich ambiguity of existence without questioning" (GS 2). Here again, we see how Nietzsche's aretaic evaluations (like those of Aristotle) apply to intellectual traits as well as traits of character. To believe without question and without evidence is regarded, not merely as an epistemic fault, but as virtue-ethically contemptible.[227]

II

Discipline is also valued by Nietzsche, but it must not be confused with anything ascetic. It is not about the rule of a rational soul over a material body, or mortifying the flesh, or repressing inclination in the name of duty. It is not even particularly concerned with controlling appetite or sexual desire. Nietzsche is no advocate of self-denial for its own sake:

> At bottom I abhor all those moralities which say: "Do not do this! Renounce! Overcome yourself!" But I am well disposed towards those moralities which goad me to do something and do it again, from morning till evening, and then to dream of it at night, and to think of nothing except doing this well ... What we do should determine what we forego; by doing we forego - that is how I like it, that is my principle. (GS 304)

It is in this light that we should understand Nietzsche's praise of poverty, humility, and chastity in the Genealogy. It is not that these things are virtues, or good-in-themselves, but that to a certain degree they constitute the appropriate conditions of the philosophical life (GM III:8). To devote oneself to the life of the mind, one may have to forego becoming rich, winning public honour, or having a family; however, to simply renounce these things out of

asceticism would be pointless.

The discipline that Nietzsche values is a matter of "self-overcoming" - not in the sense of renunciation, but in the sense of creating oneself, giving style to one's character, organizing one's drives and affects into a coherent whole (GS 290). This may be done by each person for herself, or it may be socially imposed. The latter need not be repressive or illiberal. Nietzsche appreciates the discipline involved in every higher practice and institution:

> Every artist knows how far from any feeling of letting himself go his "most natural" state is - the free ordering, placing, disposing, giving form in the moment of "inspiration" - and how strictly and subtly he obeys thousandfold laws precisely then ... What is essential "in heaven and on earth" seems to be, to say it once more, that there should be <u>obedience</u> over a long period of time and in a <u>single</u> direction: given that, something always develops, and has developed, for whose sake it is worth while to live on earth; for example, virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality - something transfiguring, subtle, mad, and divine. (BGE 188)

The same is said by Nietzsche concerning the discipline of science, aristocratic manners, and the Catholic priesthood (GS 293, D 60). The inculcation of promise-keeping could serve as another example (GM II). The goal of such discipline is ultimately not to subject our nature to constraint, but to create a being for whom certain powers and virtues are "second nature." For instance, artists who remain preoccupied with the basic conventions of their craft will never know inspiration. It is only when such rules have become instinctive that they can create freely and spontaneously at the highest level of their art.

This goes as well for nobility of soul. The truly noble person can trust her inclinations, and may fly without scruple where she feels like flying (BGE 294). Her drives and affects are healthy. She need not be constantly at war with herself, or forever on guard against an inner beast. As Nietzsche says in regard to Socrates:

> To <u>have</u> to fight the instincts - that is the formula of decadence: as long as life is <u>ascending</u>, happiness equals

instinct. (TI II:11)

This raises the question of whether discipline is only a quasi-virtue, in the same way that shame was only a quasi-virtue for Aristotle.[228] Just as a truly good person should avoid occasions for shame, a person of good instincts, habits, and breeding should have little need for discipline. Of course, since few of us (including Nietzsche) are this fortunate, such a need remains. In Nietzsche's critique of modernity, it becomes a major theme (BGE 203). To the extent that we moderns are "decadent" (as Nietzsche thinks) and our drives and affects are disordered, virtue requires that we either discipline ourselves or be disciplined from without.

Pride is another Nietzschean virtue. It is invoked under a variety of names: greatness of soul, self-respect, reverence for oneself. And it is linked with nobility. When the masters determine what is good, it is "the exalted, proud states of soul that are experienced as conferring distinction" (BGE 260). Concerning what nobility still means for us today, Nietzsche says:

> It is not the works, it is the faith that is decisive here, that determines the order of rank ... some fundamental certainty that a noble soul has about itself, something that cannot be sought, nor found, nor perhaps lost. The noble soul has reverence for itself. (BGE 287)

Such passages are reminiscent of Aristotle's description of the great-souled man. Nietzsche's aretaic pride is not mere vanity or haughtiness. It is a matter of self-respect (WP 919), inward power, confidence in what one can do, and a sense of honour which sets its sights high and demands much of itself.

The Nietzschean philosopher is also proud. Zarathustra's animals are the eagle and the serpent, the proudest and the wisest of animals (Z P:10). Where Jesus told his disciples to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves, Zarathustra combines the wisdom of the snake with the pride of an eagle.[229] One of Nietzsche's most basic objections to Christianity has to do with its view of pride. It demands a sacrifice of "all pride, all self-confidence of the spirit" (BGE 46), thus inverting values. To denigrate pride is, for Nietzsche, one of the surest signs that a moral view is slavish, resentful, or ascetic.

III

Autonomy is the most multi-faceted and modern of the virtues. What I call "autonomy" involves several things: independence, the power to stand alone; thinking for oneself, not passively accepting some faith; individuality, an appreciation of one's uniqueness; and self-actualization, cultivating one's talents so that "one becomes what one is." Nietzsche says that independence requires strength and is for the few (BGE 29). A certain distance from the crowd is the desire of "every choice human being" (BGE 26). Such individuals enjoy and benefit from solitude (BGE 284). They are what Nietzsche calls free spirits. Central to this ideal is an independence of mind which is strong enough "take leave of all faith" and dance on the edge of the abyss (GS 347). Nietzsche can also be as eloquent as any liberal or romantic in celebrating individuality. He tells us that every person is a "unique miracle," but that laziness, convention, and fear prevent us from coming into our own:

> In his heart every man knows quite well that, being unique, he will be in the world only once and that no imaginable chance will for a second time gather together into a unity so strangely variegated an assortment as he is: he knows it but he hides it like a bad conscience ... The man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily; let him follow his conscience, which calls to him: "Be your self! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself." (UM p.127, SE 1)

This call to individuality is not confined to the early Nietzsche, but is taken up again and again in his work (HA 286, D 173, GS 290, Z I:22). Of particular importance is GS 270, where Nietzsche asks: "What does your conscience say? - "You must become who you are [Du sollst der werden, der du bist]."[230] This cryptic aphorism is best understood in the light of SE 1. To become who you are is to be your self, to actualize your unique potential, and not evade your genius out of fear, laziness, or conformity to some parochial code. The "conscience" he speaks of is an aretaic conscience. It calls us to make the most of our life and to value our individuality. The "self" which we are to actualize is not simply a generic human

self, but a "unique miracle" which will not come into being again (at least not during this cycle of the universe). This gives the call to self-actualization its compelling urgency.

The idea of "becoming who one is" may be understood in two ways: as a matter of artistic self-creation, or as a naturalistic unfolding of one's capacities. Some commentators, such as Nehamas, see Nietzsche as emphasizing the creation of the self, and think that this blocks an Aristotelian reading of "becoming who one is" as a call to actualize one's potential. Nehamas denies that self-creation could be "like the uncovering of something that is already there."[231] Others, such as Thiele, emphasize Nietzsche's naturalism and innate determinism - the fact that the individual is a bearer of innate drives; that nobility is more a product of nature than choice; that there is no creation ex nihilo; that growth is simply a rearrangement of drives; and that attempts to "give style" to a mediocre character will not change its essential mediocrity.[232] For Thiele, "the self is not so much created as unfolded," but the uniqueness of the individual, together with the fact that the self is never completely discovered, makes this process appear as creation."[233]

I too think that Nietzsche's call to autonomous individuality should be interpreted in a way that fits with his naturalism and his denial of the causa sui. The metaphor of "self-creation" does not present a problem, because it can be reconciled with the idea of "self-unfolding." Contra Nehamas, there is no reason to assume that artistic creation is inconsistent with uncovering something that is already there. Consider the following passage in which Zarathustra is pictured as a sculptor:

> But my fervent will to create impels me even again toward man; thus is the hammer impelled towards the stone. O men, in the stone an image is sleeping, the image of images! Alas, that it has to sleep in the hardest, ugliest stone! Now my hammer rages cruelly against its prison ... I want to perfect it. (Z II:2)[234]

The task of the sculptor is to bring out and perfect the image that is sleeping within the stone. In the same way, creating the overman involves tapping into the potential that lies dormant within us.

Self-creation is a matter of developing something that is already there - a view rather like that of Aristotle. The difference is that for Nietzsche, this "something" is not only generic, but also unique. It is our potential for individuality and independence that makes autonomy a value for us.[235]

Nietzsche's emphasis on autonomy distinguishes his virtue ethic from that of Aristotle or Hume. It seems to put him in the same company as Mill on individuality, Emerson on self-reliance, and various romantics, liberals, and existentialists - the school of expressive individualism.[236] There are those, like MacIntyre, who consider such individualism to be incompatible with the tradition of the virtues. While I reject this view (see section 1:2), I acknowledge that autonomy is no ordinary virtue, and that its addition to the catalogue of virtues has some fairly radical implications for virtue ethics. Autonomous virtue is not something that can be defined in advance for each and every person alike. It is not a mould into which generic humanity is to be poured, but something which each of us must grasp or realize for ourselves. For these reasons, it opens up some special issues for Nietzsche's virtue theory that we will return to in section 3:8.

IV

The final virtue we will discuss is amor fati, or affirmation of life. It involves the ability to affirm the basic conditions of human existence, to love one's own fate, and avoid ressentiment. Such affirmation can be understood as something which flows out of a healthy and powerful human being, or as a kind of naturalistic religious attitude. In the first sense, it is exemplified by the ancient nobles - human beings who affirmed themselves, were at home in the world, and even admired the noble qualities of their enemies (BGE 260, GM I:10). For them, affirmation came easily, naturally, and unreflectively. They were pagans - people "who say Yes to life, for whom 'god' is the word for the great Yes to all things" (A 55).

For Nietzsche, on the other hand, saying Yes was more of a struggle. Well-versed in Schopenhauer, acutely aware of suffering, plagued by ill health, and at odds with his society, Nietzsche was not one of those healthy-minded souls for whom affirmation is easy, like breathing air.[237] Nevertheless, he was determined not to be

a Nay-sayer, not to turn against life. Central to his critique of slave morality and Christianity is a laying bare of the workings of ressentiment and the springs of otherworldly belief (see section 2:6). Zarathustra bids us: "my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe in those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes" (Z P:3). Such people are despisers of life; they "blaspheme the earth." And this, in the absence of the dead God, is judged by Zarathustra to be the greatest of blasphemies. It violates his earthly sense of piety.[238]

Amor fati operates on a more personal level. For Nietzsche aspired, not just to affirm life, but to love his own fate:

> For the new year ... I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who makes things beautiful. Amor fati: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer. (GS 276)

This is the passage where Nietzsche first introduces the concept of amor fati. It takes the form of a New Year's resolution, suggesting that such an attitude towards life is something he wants to attain. The quest to attain such an affirmation is central to Zarathustra. It is illustrated by his struggle to affirm eternal recurrence. Much has been written about recurrence as a cosmological doctrine. Its real point, however, is practical or ethical. It is a test of our amor fati, our ability to love our own fate, to say Yes to our own existence. Thus, Nietzsche asks us to carry out the following thought-experiment:

> What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence ..." Would you

> not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine." (GS 341)

The hypothetical form here is revealing. As several commentators have argued, what matters is not the truth of recurrence, but whether we could affirm it. The doctrine presents us with an ethical ideal: "to become the kind of person who, in the situation described, would consider the demon's message divine."[239]

What does amor fati entail? First, if we are to affirm life, we must affirm the basic ontological conditions of human life. These include our physical-biological nature (BGE 230, EH II:10), our bodies (Z I:4), our sexuality (Z III:10), the contingency of becoming (Z III:4), the fact that "death and deathly silence alone are certain" (GS 278), that life involves suffering (BGE 225), and that our will cannot change the past (Z II:20). If we are to "see as beautiful what is necessary in things," we must start by affirming such facts. We must accept our continuity with the rest of nature without disgust. We must put aside condemnation and the spirit of revenge. And we must acknowledge that death and suffering are part of life, without letting them cast a depressing shadow over existence. In other words, amor fati calls for a profoundly naturalistic kind of piety, which exalts the human condition and has no need for any beyond.

In addition, it calls on us to affirm the particulars of our own fate. Nietzsche seeks to do this in Ecce Homo. He speaks with gratitude, or at least acceptance, of all the accidents and obstacles of his existence: how ill health availed him certain insights into decadence (EH I:1); his lack of animosity towards enemies (EH I:7); what he owed to nutrition and climate (EH II); his appreciation of Wagner in spite of their break (EH II:5); and his inward amor fati, even towards Christianity, and even when his books were ignored. The following passage is very revealing:

> What is it, fundamentally, that allows us to recognize who has turned out well? ... He guesses what remedies avail against what is harmful; he exploits bad accidents

> to his advantage; what does not kill him makes him stronger. Instinctively, he collects from everything he sees, hears, lives through, his sum ... He believes neither in "misfortune" nor in "guilt": he comes to terms with himself, with others; he knows how to forget - he is strong enough; hence everything must turn out for his best. (EH I:2)

There is something admirable in such an attitude. It is the personal equivalent of theodicy.[240] In looking back, it encourages us to see how obstacles have strengthened us and accidents have contributed to our identity. In looking ahead, it encourages us to be the alchemists of our own life, finding ways to turn the dross of our experience into gold. This requires strength and vitality. Thus, Nietzsche sees himself as healthy at bottom because be was able to turn being sick into "an energetic stimulus for life, for living more (EH II:2). He was strong enough to turn adversity to his advantage. A good metaphor for this whole process is the oyster and how it turns the grain of sand which gets under its shell into a pearl. One might call this whole idea of turning evils into goods "the pearl principle."

By now it should be clear that amor fati, like autonomy, is no ordinary virtue. First, it is the sort of thing which is usually placed under the heading of mysticism rather than ethics. For it involves an experience of beatitude in which one is reconciled with life and with one's fate.[241] From the perspective of amor fati: "one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity" (EH II:10). This is reminiscent of the insights of various mystics. But in no way does it contravene naturalistic principles. For it is nature which is affirmed and justified, and this involves no appeal to any non-natural mode of knowledge.

The love of fate is also inseparable from Nietzsche's virtue-ethical ideal, given that his "formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati" (EH II:10). The problem is that amor fati is about the complete and total acceptance of being. But even an "ethics beyond morality" must distinguish between what is good (beneficial) and bad (harmful) for creatures such as ourselves, bidding us to aspire towards the former while overcoming or

sublimating the latter. As an ethical ideal, amor fati thus raises the problem of quietism. And if the pearl principle is also invoked, our efforts to affirm life may lead us to justify all sorts of evils. From the insight that turning grains of sand into pearls is a good trick, one may infer that gritty irritants are desirable, that they enable us to become stronger, and that instead of trying to guard against them, we should see to it that all oysters have a opportunity to produce cultured pearls.

We will return to the difficulties surrounding the ideals of amor fati and the pearl principle in section 3:8. But now, having outlined the major Nietzschean virtues, it is time to provide a more unified account of his conception of virtue.

7. The Heart of Virtue

In the Meno, Socrates protests when he is confronted with a swarm of particular virtues. What is really needed, he says, is a definition telling us what virtue is.[242] We have been examining the virtues one by one - courage, honesty, discipline, pride, autonomy, and amor fati. We are now ready to take on the more theoretical question of how Nietzsche understands virtue and what sets his aretaic ethics apart from its rivals.

I

To begin with, let us reflect upon the type of person that Nietzsche admires most. No single type emerges very clearly. For there are two poles to Nietzsche's ideal - the noble and the philosopher. In cataloguing the virtues our sources were, first, the ancient nobles and Nietzsche's account of nobility, and second, the Nietzschean philosopher and such related types as the artist and the free spirit. When Nietzsche speaks of virtue, it is usually one of these modes of life that he has in mind. Nobility, for him, entails most of the virtues. The ancient nobles are seen as courageous, truthful, proud, independent, and Yes-saying. And their instincts were sound enough that they did not have to struggle to discipline themselves or overcome nihilism. Nietzsche's ideal philosopher also embodies these traits, but in a slightly altered form. The virtues of the free spirit and philosopher of the future include courage in facing hard truths, intellectual honesty, and a

proud independence of mind. Such exemplars of Nietzsche's ideal are more self-conscious and highly individuated than the masters of the Genealogy. But their virtue and their love of fate seems to be more a matter of self-overcoming than of spontaneous health.

It would be a mistake to try to identify Nietzsche's ideal exclusively with either the noble or the philosophical life. His virtues are an amalgam of ancient and modern. On one hand, he identifies the noble mode of valuation with everything natural and good. Originally, he says:

> at the time of the kings, Israel also stood in the right, that is, the natural, relationship to all things. Its Yahweh was the expression of a consciousness of power, of joy in oneself, of hope for oneself: through him victory and welfare were expected; through him nature was trusted to give what the people needed - above all, rain. (A 25)

This passage evokes a time of health and innocence, prior to the Great Value Inversion, in which noble human beings could trust their instincts and even religion was a world-affirming concept. One might compare this to "The Tomb Song," where Zarathustra mourns the loss of such a vision of life:[243]

> You murdered the visions and dearest wonders of my youth. My playmates you took from me, the blessed spirits. In their memory I lay down this wreath and this curse. ... Thus spoke my purity once in a fair hour: "All beings shall be divine to me." Then you assaulted me with filthy ghosts; alas, where has this fair hour fled now? "All days shall be holy to me" - thus said the wisdom of my youth once; verily, it was the saying of a gay wisdom. But then you, my enemies, stole my nights from me and sold them into sleepless agony. (Z II:11)

"The Tomb Song" ends with an image of tombs being shattered and the affirmative visions of his youth being redeemed. In other words, Nietzsche does not merely look back towards a "lost Eden." In his account of a time before Christianity, and before Platonism, he is engaged in what he calls monumental history, finding models and inspiration in the past. This complements the critical dimension of his genealogies. History done in this way is intended to serve life

- to have an untimely effect within the present, thus working to the benefit of the future (HL P).[244]

Nietzsche strongly identifies with the nobles and their mode of valuation. But there is also a Hegelian moment in his thought - a sense in which "negation" in various forms has enabled the human spirit to grow in depth and self-consciousness.[245] Thus, for good and for ill, Nietzsche's ideal is post-Christian. It owes something to the spirit that the impotent have introduced into history (GM I:7), the legacy of many centuries of conscience-vivisection (GM II:18), and the twists and turns of the ascetic ideal (GM III:25). In his account of the virtues, many of the pagan virtues that he admires have been internalized and radicalized. Honesty has evolved into an intellectual conscience which even forbids self-deception. Courage and independence now have a lot to do with being true to oneself and following one's unique path. And in Nietzsche's own struggle with nihilism, the will to affirm life has been deepened, becoming more reflective and philosophical.

Yet in Nietzsche there is no triumphant sense of progress. He is dissatisfied with his age and with himself. He declares that he is "at the same time a decadent and a beginning," for despite being sick, he has the power to reverse perspectives, to look at things from the perspective of overflowing health (EH I:1). His ultimate ideal tends to be a synthesis - a marriage of his own philosophical virtues and depth of soul with healthy instincts and nobility of character. Such a person would be a higher human being, or overman [Übermensch]. The overman is a concept which bulks much larger in commentaries than it does in Nietzsche's actual works. Largely confined to the beginning of Zarathustra, it is preached to the people in the marketplace, in the context of the death of God (see section 2:2). What is said about the overman is not particularly informative in regard to Nietzsche's virtue ethics. It is rather a highly rhetorical call to strive and create beyond ourselves.

Only a few things about the overman emerge with any degree of clarity. First, the overman is an earthly ideal. Instead of looking to God for our highest ideal, Zarathustra declares: "the overman shall be the meaning of the earth" (Z P:3). Second, it is an ideal of individual excellence. Zarathustra is not one of those who makes

an idol of the state or dreams of a utopian Überstaat (Z I:11). Third, the overman is presented as something which may be realized in the future. Zarathustra thinks that we (or at least the people in the marketplace) need to create beyond ourselves if we are to avoid becoming complacent last men or despairing nihilists. Like God, the overman is a conjecture. But it is a conjecture that is within the scope of our creative will:

> Could you create a god? Then do not speak to me of any gods. But you could well create the overman. Perhaps not you yourselves, my brothers. But into fathers and forefathers of the overman you could re-create yourselves: and let this be your best creation. (Z II:2)

Some commentators have emphasized the open and unspecified nature of this ideal. For Nehamas, the overman is a framework within which many particular lives can fit, as long as they are unified and coherent. Creating the overman is a matter of creating one's own self.[246] For Alderman, it is a model that can never be perfectly exemplified, since the overman is a person who practices self-overcoming and "must necessarily continue to overcome himself."[247] Kaufmann also emphasizes self-overcoming, but sees it as a matter of overcoming our animal nature and acquiring self-mastery.[248]

But these interpretations have their drawbacks. The first leaves us with a rather vacuous call to self-creation. The second idealizes endless striving. The third makes Nietzsche seem very traditional, a teacher of the doctrine that we must overcome and discipline the animal within. None of this seems to take into account the cultural or religious context in which the overman is taught - the death of God, the spectre of nihilism, the need for a new ideal. This, I think, explains why Zarathustra's account of the overman is so oriented towards the future. For the overman is not the summation of a pre-existing way of life, but an ideal taken from varied sources. Like Nietzsche, he would have to exhibit such virtues as intellectual honesty, autonomy, and amor fati. And like the ancient masters, he would have to be healthy and strong, with an exuberant vitality. Such a person would bring together virtues old and new, noble and philosophical. Thus, Nietzsche identified with Goethe's ideal of wholeness: a human being who would integrate

reason, senses, feeling, and will; who would be highly educated yet skillful in bodily matters; who could "afford the whole range and wealth of being natural, being strong enough for such freedom" (TI IX:49).[249]

II

We have seen that Nietzsche's virtues are largely those of the noble and the philosopher. One might well ask: of what relevance are such types today? Nobility is an anachronism in the modern world, while philosophy has always been something for the few. One might also ask: why base one's ideal on these particular modes of life? Other excellences may be called for in being a successful shopkeeper or a good mother. Such questions pose a challenge, not only for Nietzsche, but for Platonic and Aristotelian ideals of virtue as well. Plato held that reason and spirit should rule in the soul, just as the rational and spirited classes should rule in the city. His ideal is the philosopher-king. Aristotle's ethics is also tied to a particular socio-political context. His virtues are those of the gentleman and the philosopher - someone who has the resources to be magnificent, who need not engage in manual labour, and who considers the life of the mind to be supreme.

If any virtue-ethical ideal is to be justified, it must not depend essentially on any pre-modern form of social organization. And it must not be arbitrary in its preference for some human types over others. Rather, there must be a sense in which arete (virtue or excellence) is linked to eudaimonia (flourishing). The ethical ideal must be related to the telos of human life. And the virtues described must still ring true today when we consider our ideal of the fully realized human being.[250]

How can Nietzsche meet these challenges? Let us consider the meaning of several key concepts. When he speaks of nobility, he is not merely speaking of a particular social class and its interests. When he refers to health, he is not merely referring to physical fitness or the absence of disease. When he talks of power, he is not merely talking about brute force or political domination. For each of these terms has an extended meaning.

In the case of power, we saw what this involves in section 3:1. Power is an aretaic concept. It is desired by human beings as

an end in itself. The "will to power" is a will to flourishing or self-actualization. And once attained, an abundant feeling of power is the source of many virtues. Nietzsche's ideal of health is very similar. To be healthy is to attain our telos as an organism. At the same time, healthy instincts are a source of noble traits of character.[251] Health, like power, has a psychological or spiritual dimension. To be a person of overflowing health is, for Nietzsche, equivalent to being abundantly powerful.

Nobility is a third closely related concept. Originally, as we saw in section 2:6, the nobles were simply those who had sufficient strength and vitality to be masters and commanders. Nobility, in this primitive sense, was a matter of power of the cruder sort - that is, of force and domination. But gradually ideals of what is noble evolved. The concept came to be associated with character traits that were typical of the nobility, or that the nobles were especially proud of. Among those were courage, honesty, and other Nietzschean virtues (GM I:5). Nietzsche is inclined to accept the evaluations of the nobles because they are the product of healthy, powerful, flourishing human beings. Such people are likely to act out of psychological abundance and affirm what is life-enhancing. Moreover, it is members of the nobility who have the best chance to realize their capacities. Perhaps only they enjoy sufficient material abundance to obtain the finest education, enjoy leisure, and avoid deadening physical labour (HA 439, HA 479).

There are genealogists who take a more cynical view of these matters. Bernard Mandeville remarked that the virtues are merely "the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride."[252] And Richard Garner has made a similar point in regard to the concept of nobility. Originally, he says, the terms denoting nobility in various cultures - "brahmin" in India, "jun zi" in China, "agathos" in Greece - simply referred to members of the highest class. So far he follows Nietzsche. But Garner sees the extension of "nobility" as a matter of persuasive redefinition. Reformers began to apply the term to those who met a certain standard of conduct. They claimed that anyone who is "really" noble will manifest the virtues, and that "real" nobility has to do with moral character rather than birth. The meaning of nobility was thus redescribed -

not out of ressentiment, but in order to flatter people into being good.[253]

This is not Nietzsche's view. He insists that it was the nobles who first identified virtues of character with nobility (GM I:5). This development was more natural than arbitrary. For in the light of Nietzsche's ideal of power, we may surmise that as the nobles became more secure in their status and more cultivated, they began to turn their attention to higher forms of power. No longer would they be content to base their self-concept or self-esteem on the fact that they could dominate others. Thus, "nobility" came to denote qualities of character and breeding - being able to give one's word as something that can be relied on (GM II:2), or being rich enough in spirit to be magnanimous (GM II:10). For Nietzsche, this is not a matter of noble ideals being moralized or softened to serve the weak (although this also may occur). Rather, it is a result of the growth and evolution of power.

We have seen that central to Nietzsche's aretaic ideal are the related concepts of power, health, and nobility. But we could just as well speak of abundance, flourishing, and self-actualization. To act on the basis of power is to act out of abundance. To be healthy in the fullest sense is to flourish. The link between nobility and self-actualization may seem more tenuous. However, what Nietzsche most admires in nobility is a mode of valuation and a perspective on life which proceeds from great abundance. Noble human beings are seen as having sound instincts and a highly evolved sense of power. And through their social position, they have the resources to actualize their potential. Nietzsche's interest in nobility is, at bottom, an interest in human excellence - not an attempt to glorify or ingratiate himself with a particular high-born caste. Thus, in a passage where Zarathustra calls on us to create a "new nobility," we are warned not to misunderstand:

> Verily, not that you have served a prince - what do princes matter now? ... Not that your tribe has become courtly at court and that you have learned, like a flamingo, to stand for long hours in a colorful costume in shallow ponds ... O my brothers, your nobility should not look backward but ahead! (Z III:12:12)

One can infer that the "new nobility" referred to here will be more like Nietzsche's free spirit or Maslow's self-actualizing person than the remnants of any European royal house. Such an ideal is not dependent on any outmoded social system. As long as humans aspire to realize their capacities, it will remain relevant.

III

At the heart of Nietzsche's ethics is a distinct incentive or source of motivation. This is a feeling of overflowing abundance - a fullness of power which is generous and creative, magnanimous and magnificent, brave and proud.[254] If one misunderstands this, then one is likely to misunderstand everything - his concept of power, his praise of selfishness, his love of nobility, and much else. Consider again the following passages, in which Nietzsche gives an account of the gift-giving virtue and the noble mode of valuation:

> A gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue. Verily, I have found you out, my disciples: you strive, as I do, for the gift-giving virtue. ... This is your thirst: to become sacrifices and gifts yourself; and that is why you thirst to pile up all the riches in your soul. Insatiably your soul strives for treasures and gems, because your virtue is insatiable in wanting to give. You force all things to and into yourself that they may flow back out of your well as the gifts of your love. (Z I:22)
>
> When the ruling group determines what is "good," the exalted, proud states of the soul are experienced as conferring distinction and determining the order of rank. ... such a morality is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow: the noble human being, too, helps the unfortunate, but not, or almost not, from pity, but prompted more by an urge begotten by excess of power. (BGE 260)

The theme of the first passage is selfishness and health. The gift-giving virtue is a "whole and holy" selfishness because it proceeds from health and abundance. It leads us to cultivate our powers, to accumulate riches in our soul, and to become a person with much to

give. The usual dichotomy between self-interest and altruism is thus transcended. One gives birth to works which are a blessing to others and delights in being generous. Selfishness is a problem only when it proceeds from deficiency - when the "self" that it serves is narrow, grasping, and sick (see section 2.5).

As we see in the second passage, Nietzsche's conception of power is analogous. At the root of the noble mode of valuation is a power that seeks to overflow, a wealth that would give and bestow. Such a person acts out of abundance. The will to power of the weak and insecure may stop at nothing. But those who are truly powerful are more noble in their tastes, preferring to exercise their power in ways that are beneficial (D 348, GS 13).

Zarathustra says that "a gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue." One might think that he was referring to a particular virtue, like generosity or benevolence, and putting it above all others. But this is not the case. Generosity in the ordinary sense is admired by Nietzsche. And through his ideal of overflowing abundance, he gives us a way of understanding generous behaviour that has nothing to do with either duty or pity. The noble human being helps others out of "an urge begotten by excess of power." However, the gift-giving virtue goes beyond simple charity (or generosity in the ordinary sense). Like the noble mode of valuation, it is something more pervasive - "a psychological structure that can include many other traits, one of which may be generosity as we ordinarily understand it."[255] Such an attitude pervades all the virtues in their highest form. In some sense, all of them are gifts of a healthy self which flow out of an abundant feeling of power.

What sets an ethics of virtue apart from other approaches? For Nietzsche, the best answer is the distinctive source of motivation from which it springs. Morality, the peculiar institution, has its own identifying themes - acting on the basis of duty, obeying the moral law, denying oneself for the sake of others, and blaming and condemning the wicked. Its genealogy can be traced to the ascetic ideal and the spirit of revenge. However, a deontic and an aretaic ethics may not be all that different in terms of the conduct they recommend. What is decisive is the outlook and motives from which

they proceed. Thus, Nietzsche says that many actions called "moral" ought to be done and encouraged, and many called "immoral" ought to be avoided and resisted, but

> the one should be encouraged and the other avoided for other reasons than hitherto. We have to learn to think differently - in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: to feel differently. (D 103)

Morality teaches us to think of ethics as a matter of obligation, and to feel it as a constraint: "'Man has to have something which he can obey unconditionally' - that is a German sensation ... to be encountered at the basis of all German moral teaching" (D 207). But in the light of ancient virtue, this is a rather dismal conception of ethics. And in the absence of a rewarder-punisher God, it is not even clear that it makes any sense (see section 2:3).

Among the main naturalistic alternatives to the peculiar institution are contract theory, care theory, and virtue theory. Each has its own identifying outlook and incentives. The mood of contractarian ethics is tough-minded realism. One ought to keep covenants and behave justly, for one cannot get away with clawing other people without most likely getting clawed in return. The incentives on which it relies include calculating prudence and the fear of death. An ethics of care, in contrast, appeals to our capacity for sympathy, tender affection, and other-regarding love. It may emphasize pity for those who suffer, or focus on the social and relational nature of human beings. Its supporters have taken the lead in arguing that ethics is rooted, not in pure reason, but in our passions and sentiments. Indeed, when we hear talk of basing ethics in human sentiment, the very idea is usually associated with love or caring. It is these motives, rather than fear or prudential concern, which are generally seen as the most likely basis for a passion-based ethics.

Nietzsche's virtue ethics offers us an alternative variety of passion-based ethics. The incentive to which it appeals is the feeling of overflowing abundance which flows out of a healthy and powerful self. One might call this the attitude of generosity. It differs from the sympathetic affections in two ways: it is less other-directed and it is broader is scope. Thus, when we help

someone out of generosity, we need not "suffer-with" their pains or feel "duty-bound" to assist. Rather, like the sun addressed by Zarathustra in his Prologue, which radiates light and energy, the generous person acts freely out of abundance. The fact that such generosity is not essentially or exclusively other-directed gives it a scope that goes beyond charitable giving. Its spirit may be manifest in amor fati, in creative work, or in virtues such as courage. A courage which proceeds from abundance is more than a form of discipline whereby we force ourselves to stand our ground. It is something active which willingly dares to face danger and difficulty.[256] As Zarathustra says:

> there is something in me that I call courage [Mut]; that has so far slain my every discouragement [Unmut]. ... For courage is the best slayer, courage which attacks; for in every attack there is playing and brass. (Z III:2)

Such courage enables him to face the most abysmal truths, to slay nihilism, and to say Yes to eternal recurrence.

We have been discussing contract, care, and virtue ethics - three approaches which rely on different sources of motivation. In each case, the basic conceptual issues are similar. First, if any passion-based ethics is to be convincing, appeals to sentiment and motive must go along with some vision of our nature and needs. If one is a Hobbesian contractarian, one must insist that we have an overriding need for security and capacity for prudence. If one is to make caring the lifeblood of ethics, one must believe deeply in our need for relationship and our capacity for love. And if one identifies with Nietzsche's virtue ethics, one must believe that people aspire to self-actualization and have a certain psychology of power, so that once we feel powerful and fulfilled we are capable of acting from abundance.

Aristotle said that virtues are not passions but states of character.[257] However, in grounding virtue in the passions, we need not deny that virtues are also states of character. The various "sources of motivation" we have been looking at are all rooted in feeling. But they refer to the general outlook or psychological structure of various human types, not anything fleeting or random. All of us know fear and love, but it is only

when these passions are fairly pervasive, or when they can be channelled and directed in a certain way, that we can we talk about grounding ethics in them. The same goes for Nietzschean abundance. The nobles of BGE 260 do not merely feel this way from time to time - it pervades their entire outlook. Yet their generosity is still a kind of passion.

For Aristotle, practical wisdom [phronesis] plays an architectonic role in ethics. To have practical wisdom is to be able to deliberate well about what sort of things are conducive to the good life for human beings. One who possesses this virtue will be given all the others, for practical wisdom implies the presence of the right rule in the soul. Thus, "it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, or practically wise without moral virtue."[258] However, the scope of practical reason in Nietzsche's ethics is much more limited. For Nietzsche follows Hume and Hobbes in conceiving of reason in instrumental terms (see section 2:3). Instrumental reason is the faculty which Aristotle called cleverness [deinotes], the ability to hit the mark which we happen to have set before ourselves.[259] When reason is defined in this way, it is ethically inert. Everything depends on the passions and needs which it serves. If they are noble and generous, reason will direct us to act nobly and generously; if they are mean and petty, reason will point us down a different path.

Thus, it is the passions which play the architectonic role in the ethics of Nietzsche and other moderns who take an instrumental view of reason. In the end, it is the sources of motivation to which they appeal that distinguish the ethics of Hobbes, Hume, and Nietzsche from one another, giving each its distinctive mood and character. Contractarians may have a lot to say about what is required by instrumental rationality, but their whole approach depends on "the passions that incline men to peace" - fear of death and desire for commodious living.[260] Nietzsche has little regard for instrumental reason. Our virtue, he says, grows out of our passions, and "there is little prudence in it, and least of all the reason of all men" (Z I:5). The noble perspective, overflowing with life and passion, is the opposite of that low degree of warmth presupposed by every calculating prudence (GM I:2).

IV

If virtue ethics is passion-based, the question arises as to how it is an improvement on other passion-based ethics. The answer is that it reflects a perspective that is more abundant or more self-actualized than any of its rivals. One might say that it reflects a higher stage of psychological development. In contrast, the attitude of the contractarian agent is one of poverty and deficiency. Such a person behaves justly as a matter of prudence; he is not strong enough to be successfully unjust. The sentiments of benevolence are more attractive. But even when we get beyond the sort of pity which merely suffers-with, such caring for others tends to focus on the provision of safety and comfort rather than the fulfilment of their highest potential (see section 3:5).

Of course, the outlook of overflowing abundance that Nietzsche admires is the outlook of only a few, and those capable of such generosity may not be consistent in adopting this attitude. For this reason, contract and care theories have a place in the scheme of things. They provide incentives to behave justly or concern oneself with others in cases where more distinctively aretaic motivation is lacking. Those who will not keep covenants out of pride or a sense of honour must be shown that injustice does not pay. Civil society cannot depend on justice being offered as a free gift in the spirit of the gift-giving virtue.[261] When virtue is absent, tough-minded contractarian considerations must fill the breach. The same goes for cases in which people cannot agree on what is right. Contract theory thus provides a kind of ground floor for ethics. But those who would look upon it as the pinnacle are deficient in vision and aspiration.

The differences between care ethics and virtue ethics are far more subtle. An ethic of care emphasizes our relational nature, the tender sentiments, and the value of mutual concern. In Nietzsche's virtue ethics, on the other hand, the emphasis is on an outlook of abundance which is overflowing rather than needy, and which shines from within rather than being essentially oriented to the pains and pleasures of others. One is reminded of Maslow's account of love in self-actualizing people:

> What such people do emanates from growth ... They love

> because they are loving persons, in the same way that they are kind, honest, natural, i.e., because it is in their nature to be so spontaneously, as a strong man is strong without willing to be, as a rose emits perfume, as a cat is graceful ... [Yet] self-actualizing people maintain a degree of individuality, of detachment, of autonomy ... They do not cling to each other or have hooks or anchors of any kind.[262]

Nietzschean generosity is like this. It flows from health, and it is spontaneous rather than duty-bound, independent rather than bound up with other people.

However, it is not always easy to draw a clear line between care and virtue-ethical abundance. Consider the example of Hume. His virtue ethics gives a central role to sympathy and the tender sentiments. It is clear, he says, that the benevolent or softer affections engage our esteem, for

> the epithets sociable, good-natured, humane, merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, beneficent, or their equivalents, are known in all languages, and universally express the highest merit, which human nature is capable of attaining.[263]

This is suggestive of a care approach.[264] Yet Hume's account of the virtues is closer to Nietzsche than one might realize. First, he speaks in praise of greatness of mind and the shining virtues in a way that is reminiscent of Aristotle and Nietzsche. These traits, rooted in pride, are seen as immediately agreeable or attractive. Second, Hume's esteem for benevolence and the social virtues is aretaic in the same way. These traits are also valued, not just for their public utility, but because they have a natural beauty and agreeableness, antecedent to all precept, which engages our affections.[265] When Hume describes the beneficent man he imagines him, not as dour or full of pity, but as a fountain of overflowing abundance:

> From him the hungry receive food, the naked cloathing, the ignorant and slothful skill and industry. Like the sun, an inferior minister of providence, he cheers, invigorates, and sustains the surrounding world.[266]

The solar metaphor here parallels that of Zarathustra. Here tender affection and noble generosity come together. Such benevolence is itself a kind of greatness of mind directed towards other people. Similarly, Nel Noddings sees her ideal of caring as sharing in the spirit of Nietzsche's noble type. For it has its source in natural human affect; it is life-affirming, finding joy in its relation to the other; it is proud, rejecting many options as beneath its vision; and in its high-spiritedness, it resembles the attitude of abundance that would give and bestow.[267]

Moreover, there are features of the ethic of care - its emphasis on sympathy and relationship, for instance - that can never be superseded no matter how one tries to act from abundance. To feel pity is natural. When Nietzsche says that the noble human being acts "not, or almost not, from pity," he acknowledges that such feelings are part of the make-up of even the strongest and healthiest of persons (BGE 260). To need love is also natural. As the example of Zarathustra shows, the gift-giving virtue can be rather lonely if it is not sustained by love and relationship. Of particular importance here is "The Night Song," which obviously meant a lot to Nietzsche, since he quotes it in full in Ecce Homo. There he describes it as the loneliest of songs - Zarathustra's "immortal lament at being condemned by the overabundance of light and power, by his sun-nature, not to love" (EH III:Z7).

> Night has come; now all fountains speak more loudly. And my soul too is a fountain. Night has come; only now all the songs of lovers awaken. And my soul too is the song of a lover. Something unstilled, unstillable is within me; it wants to be voiced. A craving for love is within me; it speaks the language of love.
>
> Light am I; ah, that I were night! But this is my loneliness that I am girt with light. Ah, that I were dark and nocturnal! How I would suck at the breasts of light! ... But I live in my own light; I drink back into myself the flames that break out of me. I do not know the happiness of those who receive ... This is my poverty, that my hand never rests from giving; this is my envy, that I see waiting eyes and the lit-up nights of longing.

> Oh, wretchedness of all givers! ... Oh, ravenous hunger in satiation! (Z II:9)

Light and the fountain are metaphors for overflowing abundance. But Zarathustra is weary of being his own source of light. He longs to receive as well as to give, to "suck at the breasts of light," and to be loved rather than simply creating in isolation. He feels cut off from others and surrounded by ice. It is only those who receive that "create warmth out of that which shines." This suggests that our need for love and appreciation is not something to be overcome, no matter how strong and creative we may be. One is reminded of a point made by Noddings, that our caring is sustained by reciprocity and "energized by the reciprocal gifts of the cared-for."[268] Even gift-giving abundance, at times, needs a chance to feed off the creativity of others and the gratitude of those who receive.

V

We have characterized Nietzsche's virtue theory in terms of the source of motivation at its heart. As for the question of how the virtues relate to human flourishing - that is, to Nietzsche's standard of value - the answer is that the virtues flow from an attitude of abundance, which is itself the product of a healthy soul. All of Nietzsche's aretaic concepts are thus interrelated. For such abundance is both a sign or direct manifestation of psychological well-being, and a source of traits and actions that are conducive to human well-being. It is a state of character that is desirable for the person herself, and desirable for those around her. One can say the same of the particular virtues that flow from such an attitude. They too leave us with no clear dichotomy between ends and means, or between self and others.

Hume defined a virtue as a mental quality "useful or agreeable to the person himself or to others."[269] This definition is worthy of reflection, for it suggests four possible ways in which virtue may be linked to flourishing. Such qualities may be "immediately agreeable" - admirable or desirable for their own sake, as elements of flourishing. Or they may be "instrumentally useful" as means to some end which is identified with flourishing. The "flourishing" at issue may be that of the particular agent, egoistically considered. Or it may be that of the entire human race, with the individual

counting only as one among millions.

For Hume, any or all of the above were grounds for regarding a trait as a virtue. From a contemporary perspective, however, his position is a mixture of utilitarian and virtue-ethical elements. Classical utilitarianism, as developed by Bentham, makes virtue entirely subservient to utility. And it submerges the interests of the particular agent in those of collective humanity. The general utility - that which serves to maximize the pleasure of all, or is useful for others - is set up as the proper end of ethics. Virtue or excellence becomes a means to this end. The individual may be treated, or may be required to treat herself, as an instrument of the general utility. The theory thus opens up an unbridgeable gap between the personal point of view and the demands of impartial morality (as Sidgwick admits at the conclusion of his magisterial Methods of Ethics).[270]

Virtue ethics moves in the opposite direction. It focuses more on character than consequences, and more on agents than actions. The virtues are upheld, not merely as a means to flourishing, but as constituents of flourishing - qualities immediately agreeable or intrinsically valued. The virtues are admired in others as signs of health and growth, and they are also desirable from the point of view of the agent who wants to flourish. As Hurka says:

> If the virtues are identified as causing some separately existing good, then that good seems primary and the virtues only secondary. ... [However] if the virtues are necessary constituents of flourishing, then the reason a person has to act virtuously is always present.[271]

The virtue approach avoids splitting off the "moral point of view" from the interests and motives of the self. Traditionally, it has tried to show that people have egoistic grounds for practising the virtues. Plato, in the Republic, saw virtue as essential to the health of the psyche. Aristotle held that the self-love of the good man would lead him to perform noble acts that would benefit both himself and others (see section 2:5). Hume is much closer to the ancients than to later-day utilitarians when he asks:

> what theory of morals can ever serve any useful purpose, unless it can show, by a particular detail, that all the

duties, which it recommends, are also the true interest of each individual?"[272]

In these terms, Nietzsche's position is clearly virtue-ethical. For a trait of character to be a virtue in the fullest sense, it must be something that we admire for its own sake or desire for ourselves. Thus, he denies that judgements of "good" began with proto-utilitarians who "approved unegoistic actions and called them good from the point of view of those to whom they were done, that is to say, those to whom they were useful" (GM I:2). Rather, such judgements began with the noble, powerful, and high-minded, who felt and established their own qualities of soul and character as good. Such qualities were valued for their own sake, because they were immediately agreeable or intrinsically valued by their possessors, not because they served some instrumental or altruistic end. The noble mode of valuation was thoroughly aretaic. When it comes to the question of "what is noble," for Nietzsche it is not actions or works that are fundamental, but a certain state of soul, a certain reverence for oneself (BGE 287).

Nietzsche does not deny that what counts as a virtue has been influenced by utilitarian considerations. He suggests that the utility of the herd has played a role in the changing reputation of certain powerful and dangerous drives. In a society facing external threats, such things as an enterprising spirit and the lust to rule may be honoured as socially useful. But in more secure conditions, in which there is less need for such drives and the channels to divert them are lacking, they may be condemned by the herd (BGE 201). Nietzsche is aware that a person's virtues are often praised according to "their probable consequences not for him but for us and society" (GS 21). For example, he notes that industriousness and obedience are praised, even though they are harmful to their possessor, turning a person into "a devoted instrument, ruthless against itself" (GS 21).

Nietzsche is critical of such "virtues." It may be useful to the herd to encourage the talented to work themselves into the ground for the greater good. It may be to the advantage of the authorities to encourage their underlings to be obedient. However, traits harmful to their possessor cannot be counted as genuine

Nietzschean virtues. Such "virtues" make dupes of people. And once seen through, we have no reason to practice them. If we really cared about our neighbour, Nietzsche tells us, we would refuse to turn him into a public instrument or a sacrificial animal merely for our benefit. We would refuse to uphold virtues that deprive another individual of "his noblest selfishness and the strength for the highest autonomy" (GS 21). In the same way, the fact that our aggressive and creative drives may not always serve herd-utility is no argument against them. The development of human excellence is, for Nietzsche, an end in itself.

What about justice? Strangely, it is one of the qualities harmful to oneself that are listed in GS 21. Its inclusion here is rather puzzling, since this is given no explanation, and since Nietzsche's contractarian view of justice holds that justice arises out of mutual advantage. Perhaps what Nietzsche has in mind is the sort of egalitarian justice that would level everyone down. For it seems that basic justice - the five or six "I will not's" on which the advantages of society depend (GM II:3) - is of use to all, even if it is not as "immediately agreeable" as the noble qualities that arise out of abundance.

Nietzsche's virtue theory has been criticized by Hunt on the grounds that it has no place for justice. It makes virtue depend entirely on states of character and psychological facts about the agent, rather than on upholding interpersonal justice.[273] However, we should keep in mind that Nietzsche usually emphasizes character in opposition to utilitarian calculation rather than contractarian justice. The point is that <u>aretaic</u> judgements are not to be reduced to what promotes the general utility. Of course, what is admirable in terms of character may not always coincide with what is required by justice. As Hume observes, our sympathy with those in need may run counter to the requirement that we restore a great fortune to a miser. And there is something so dazzling in heroic ambition that we cannot refuse it our admiration, even though it tends to the detriment of society.[274] Nietzsche's rather notorious admiration for various great rulers and men of action can be understood in similar terms. However, this does not mean that justice counts for nothing, or that it is to be overridden by <u>aretaic</u> judgments. There

is nothing inconsistent in admiring certain qualities in a tyrant or a criminal - ambition, courage, or strength which might have been put to better use under more favourable conditions - and yet still acknowledging that their path must be prohibited if civil society is to prosper (TI IX:45, Z I:6).

So how does virtue relate to flourishing? Consider again the basic questions concerning value judgements that are posed in the Genealogy. Nietzsche asks:

> Have they hitherto hindered or furthered menschliche Gedeihen? [human flourishing] Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plentitude, force, and will of life, its courage, certainty, future? (GM P:3)

The first sentence is open to a consequentialist reading.[275] One might assume that human flourishing is some separately existing good which it is the business of ethics is to promote. However, the second and third sentences reveal Nietzsche's emphasis on qualities of soul and character. What matters is whether value judgements flow from degeneration and poverty, or from health and abundance. Ultimately, that which flows from abundance is also likely to further the flourishing of life. From the perspective of abundance, there is no deep-seated conflict between ends and means, or between self and other. The highest selfishness is compatible with a spirit of gift-giving generosity. For the self is fluid, and in developing virtues that are valued for their own sake, we tend to act in ways that enhance flourishing more generally.

8. Sources of Tension

The previous chapter sought to develop a unified account of Nietzsche's virtue theory. We saw that at its heart is a distinct source of motivation - a spirit of abundance and generosity, which is a mark of a healthy, powerful, and noble soul. We saw that Nietzsche gives priority to individual character over collective utility, and that a genuine virtue must be somehow admirable or desirable for its possessor. We also distinguished virtue ethics from some rival approaches, and made some comparisons between

Nietzsche's view and the theories of Aristotle and Hume.

The emphasis in the last chapter was on unity and generality. One might even get the impression that virtue is a single thing, definable in advance, the same for each and every person alike. But this would be a mistake. There are three major sources of tension or disunity in Nietzsche's virtue ethics. First, he rejects the unity of the virtues thesis, insisting that particular virtues do come into conflict. Second, autonomy is an important Nietzschean virtue, and the ideals of individuality and self-creation which it involves tend to subvert the notion that standards of virtue can be specified in universal terms. We must wrestle with the apparent paradox that Zarathustra is both a teacher of virtue and one who bids us to follow our own path. Third, Nietzsche upholds amor fati and what I have called the pearl principle. But love of fate seems to imply a quietism that does not fit with other elements of the virtue-ethical point of view. And from the perspective of the pearl principle, one could argue that any natural evil is potentially a good thing, providing us with an opportunity to become stronger. However, properly understood, these sources of tension or disunity need not undermine the account of Nietzsche's theory that was given in section 3:7. Rather, they make it richer and more multifaceted.

I

The unity of the virtues is a doctrine that was held in one form or another by Plato, Aristotle, and Kant. It may involve the claim that the virtues are a single trait, that they cannot truly be had separately, or that they cannot come into conflict. The doctrine originated with Plato and it has always been closely associated with moral rationalism. Aristotle held that virtue in the strict sense involves phronesis, and that one who has phronesis will be given all the virtues.[276] Kant maintained that a collision of duties and obligations is inconceivable.[277] And following in this tradition, Kohlberg claims that (1) "virtue is ultimately one, not many"; (2) "the name of this ideal form is justice"; and (3) "virtue is knowledge of the good."[278]

Nietzsche breaks radically with this tradition. Not only are the virtues not a unity, but they also have a tendency to quarrel among themselves. Zarathustra declares:

> My brother, if you are fortunate you have only one virtue and no more: then you will pass over the bridge more easily. It is a distinction to have many virtues, but a hard lot; and many have gone into the desert and taken their lives because they had wearied of being the battle and battlefield of virtues. ... Behold how each of your virtues covets what is highest: each wants your whole spirit that it might become her herald; each wants your whole strength in wrath, hatred, and love. Each virtue is jealous of the others, and jealousy is a terrible thing. (Z I:5)

This comes in a section "On Enjoying and Suffering the Passions" in which we are told that our virtues grow out of our passions. The context here is noteworthy, for it reveals that the disunity of the virtues is related to their passion-based nature. Since there are many passions which may be cultivated in various directions, there are many separate and distinct virtues. For example, fear may give rise to contractarian prudence, sympathy to an ethics of care, and abundance to the Nietzschean virtues. A person may be prudent but lacking in other-regarding concern, or caring but lacking in such traits as courage and autonomy. And things may be divided up even further. Someone may care about their nearest and dearest while not caring about the distant other, or they may sympathize with basic needs but not with self-actualization needs. There are many types of other-regarding sentiment. Similarly, the spirit of abundance may be spotty in its application or irregular in its growth. A highly evolved sense of honour in regard to promise-keeping, gift-giving, and physical courage may co-exist with ruthless treatment of prisoners or unthinking conformity to group norms. Courage in battle may co-exist with cowardice in the face of public opinion. A sense of power and creativity in one dimension of life may go along with weakness and insecurity in another. The virtues are irreducibly plural.

In denying the unity of the virtues, Nietzsche's position is in line with contemporary virtue theory, common sense views, and the results of psychological research.[279] More debatable, however, is his claim that the virtues conflict or quarrel among themselves.

To say that it is "a hard lot" to have many virtues may seem, at best, to be hyperbolic. Anyone who had "only one virtue" in the literal sense would soon come to grief. To achieve any worthy end, a variety of relevant virtues must collaborate and work together. Benevolence may need the help of practical wisdom, wisdom may depend on intellectual autonomy, autonomy may require moral courage, and so on. However, the virtues need not collaborate on equal terms. The source of conflict among the virtues, according to Zarathustra, is that each wants our whole spirit and seeks to rule. Thus, it is possible to have "only one virtue" in the sense that one is ruled by a single drive that determines one's highest goal. Other traits are shaped to its requirements, perhaps in the process being reduced to mere means.

Take the example of benevolence. If benevolence were to be one's only virtue, one might very well cultivate other virtuous traits but look upon them as instrumental to the goal of helping others. We might imagine such a person earnestly studying medicine or sociology, not with any intellectual relish or thought of a fulfilling career, but so that she will be better able to help the afflicted or advance the cause of justice. Many moral theorists would have us believe that such single-minded devotion to helping others is in fact the height of virtue. But any single virtue, pursued in this way, has a tendency to crowd out other admirable traits or at least subordinate them to its ends. Even benevolence can be a jealous virtue. In the name of improving the world, values such as intellectual honesty may be subordinated to "advocacy," "commitment," or "political correctness." Or the demands of being a loving saint may leave little room for the full and harmonious development of personality.[280]

Thus, Nietzsche resists those who would make pity or altruism the single ruling virtue of the modern soul. One of the reasons that Nietzsche is so critical of such virtues is that they are the preeminent ideals of today, while the task of the philosopher is to be <u>untimely</u>, to restore the balance, to point the way to new and higher forms of greatness (BGE 212). Modern industriousness comes in for criticism on similar grounds. When Nietzsche speaks of this trait as harmful to its possessor (GS 21), the point is not that

working hard and accomplishing tasks is a bad thing. For a certain amount of industriousness is essential to creative achievement. What Nietzsche really objects to is the tendency of the work ethic to become an end in itself - an instinct that dominates all others and resists the efforts of reason to keep it in balance:

> How often I see that blindly raging industriousness does create wealth and reap honors while at the same time depriving the organs of their subtlety, which alone would make possible the enjoyment of wealth and honors ... The most industrious of all ages - ours - does not know how to make anything of all its industriousness and money, except always still more money and still more industriousness. (GS 21)

Here we see how a "virtue" can make one its victim. In the case of industriousness, this is particularly tragic. For Nietzsche does not even regard this trait as an end-in-itself or a genuine virtue. But the same thing may happen when any virtue assumes exclusive rulership of the soul.

What of conflict among Nietzsche's virtues? In his books, we hear little about potential conflicts between courage, discipline, pride, autonomy, and <u>amor fati</u>, or between the ideals of health, power, and nobility. Nietzsche tends to see them as complementary rather than as quarrelsome. The one great exception is <u>intellectual honesty</u> or <u>truthfulness</u>. This virtue, above all others, was "his" virtue in the personal sense which Zarathustra speaks of:

> My brother, if you have a virtue and she is your virtue, then you have her in common with nobody. (Z I:5)
>
> You love your virtue as a mother her child; but when has a mother ever wished to be paid for her love? Your virtue is what is dearest to you. (Z II:5)

Intellectual honesty was particularly dear to Nietzsche - a virtue that he lived by, took pride in, and valued for its own sake. It was in the name of truthfulness that he first questioned and threw off the Pietist Christianity of his youth, thereby bringing the disapproval of his family down upon his head. In a letter to his sister written in 1865, he presents the religious issue as a stark choice between faith and truth. The former may bring peace of soul,

but the goal of the genuine inquirer is "only truth - even if it be the most abhorrent and ugly."[281] Nietzsche continued to criticize faith in such terms to the end of his career (A 53-55). And he continued to raise the issue of whether truth might ultimately be something harmful and dangerous:

> Indeed, it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who would know it completely would perish, in which case the strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the "truth" one could still barely endure. (BGE 39)

Nietzsche gloried in having the strength to face hard and unpopular truths, and he challenged his readers to do likewise. However, the mature Nietzsche also turned his questioning against the ideal of truth itself. For if truth conflicts with what is life-enhancing, what justification can there be for choosing truth? Isn't the ideal of truth above all, truth for its own sake, merely the latest form of the ascetic ideal? (BGE 2-4, GM III:23, see section 3:1).

Thus, Nietzsche's thinking pulls in different directions. On one hand, he questioned the value of truth and insisted that life is the standard of value. On the other hand, intellectual honesty or truthfulness remained "his" virtue to the end. In Ecce Homo, he goes so far as to say of Zarathustra that "his doctrine, and his alone, posits truthfulness as the highest virtue" (EH IV:3).[282] What are we to make of this conflict? The best answer, I think, is that Nietzsche experienced the virtue of truthfulness in the way that he describes in Z I:5 - as a drive that covets what is highest and wants your whole spirit to be its herald. This would account for Nietzsche's special relationship with this virtue and why his commitment to it engendered conflict with other virtues. Consider the following:

> The thumbscrew. - One finally grows indignant to see again and again how cruelly everyone reckons up a couple of private virtues he happens to possess to the prejudice of others who happen not to possess them, how he plagues and teases others with them. And so let us act humanely with our 'sense of honesty' - even though we do possess in it a thumbscrew which we could fasten on to all those

> great self-opinionated believers ... and torment them to the quick: - we have tested this thumbscrew on ourselves. (D 536)

One point made here is that intellectual honesty may be a source of cruelty against others and against oneself. Elsewhere, Nietzsche speaks of the conflict between love and truthfulness and how it leads the thinker to drive away those he loves (D 479). A second point, more generally, is that <u>any</u> virtue which plays a leading role has a tendency to run roughshod over everything else. It is tempting to plague others with our personal virtues instead of recognizing that they have merits of a quite different order. As Zarathustra says "Of the Virtuous," there are those who "are proud of their handful of justice and commit outrages against all things for its sake, till the world is drowned in their injustice" (Z II:5). Single-minded virtue is a source of viciousness.

Nietzsche leaves us with a conflict between truthfulness and other values that is never fully resolved. Intellectual honesty remained something profoundly attractive for Nietzsche, something which is an expression of strength and abundance, even if the truth is mean and ugly. But it is life that is the standard of value, and in the climax of Part Three, Zarathustra declares life to be dearer to him than all his wisdom ever was (Z III:15). However, there is still something tragic in a world where truthfulness and honesty are in conflict with the flourishing of life. Nietzsche's universe of value is not like that of the utilitarian, in which everything is reducible to a single formula and there are no tragic dilemmas, because that which increases the amount of utility is simply good and that which decreases it is simply bad. Nietzsche recognizes a plurality of virtues which are good in themselves. Truthfulness and love are valued for their own sake, not merely as a means to something else. And their hold on our heart does not give way, even when they come into conflict.

In allowing for such a collision of virtues, Nietzsche comes close to the spirit of Greek tragedy. This spirit is polytheistic, in that it recognizes a plurality of norms (GS 143). This opens up the possibility of conflict, not merely between good and evil, but between goods or norms which are each partially justified. It is

this that is the root of tragic conflict in works like Sophocles' Antigone. As Martha Nussbaum says:

> If an agent ascribes intrinsic value to, and cares about, more than one activity, there is always a risk that some circumstances will arise in which incompatible courses of action are both required; deficiency therefore becomes a natural necessity. The richer my scheme of value, the more I open myself to such a possibility; and yet a life designed to ward off this possibility may prove to be impoverished.[283]

In other words, it is a distinction to have many virtues, but it can also be a hard lot. To value many things intrinsically is to open oneself to the possibility of mind-wrenching conflict.

II

We are now ready to address the thorny issue of autonomy. Some commentators have a problem reconciling Nietzsche's emphasis on self-creation and following one's unique path with the fact that he is an aretaic naturalist. Such a commitment to autonomy, they think, is inconsistent with recommending a particular catalogue of virtues. So Nietzsche's position is simplified. Autonomy, rather than being one virtue among others, becomes the single overriding ideal of Nietzsche's philosophy. Everything else is subordinated, relativized, or cast aside.

Consider the influential reading of Nehamas. He thinks that Nietzsche's main objection to morality is that it is absolutist - that it requires everyone to follow the same principles, and that "its avowed aim is to be unconditional and universal and to apply equally to all human beings on the basis of reasons provided by some features in which we all essentially share."[284] However, Nehamas assumes that this leaves no room for virtue ethics. On his reading, Nietzsche does not just object to categorical imperative morality, or affirm individuality, or recognize that there are different types of people with different needs and potentialities. His Nietzsche has no desire to replace morality with any positive ideal or code. Rather, he seems interested only in creating himself as a work of art and summoning other exceptional human beings to do likewise - to create their own values and be true individuals.

However, there is nothing to be said about this which could be generally applicable. Nehamas points to a paradox:

> To try to follow rules and principles in order to become able to create one's own values is to find oneself in Wotan's predicament, when he exclaims in the second act of Wagner's Die Walküre, "What good is my own will to me? It cannot will a being that is free." A true individual is precisely one who is different from the rest of the world, and there is no formula, no set of rules, no code of conduct that can possibly capture in informative terms what it is to be like that.[285]

In short, to specify that an ideal human being must have any particular virtue would be to infringe on creative autonomy. So Nehamas, who is opposed to absolutism, ends up absolutizing the ideal of self-creation. Autonomy is given priority over any other consideration. The features of self-actualized individuality cannot even be specified in informative terms, for to do so would block the possibility of originality.

There are several passages in which Nietzsche may appear to uphold autonomy in such radical terms. In The Gay Science, after criticizing Kantian morality and the categorical imperative, he insists: "we, however, want to become those we are - human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves" (GS 335). He tells us that the one thing that is needful is to give style to our character: to survey our strengths and weaknesses and then "fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye (GS 290). And Zarathustra declares: "'This is my way; where is yours?' - thus I answered those who asked me 'the way.' For the way - that does not exist" (Z III:11).

However, there is no justification for interpreting autonomy in a way that allows it to eclipse all else. What Nietzsche says here must be read in the light of other compelling passages in which he celebrates other virtues. Even the passages that seem to support Nehamas the most also acknowledge virtues besides autonomy. Thus, GS 335 ends with a paean to intellectual honesty - necessary if we are to "learn physics" and uncover morality. In GS 290, the

reason we are to give style to our character is so that we can attain satisfaction with ourselves and overcome the desire for revenge. And Thus Spoke Zarathustra, taken as a whole, suggests a more interesting and dialectical view of autonomy than one might gather from the above quotation.

Let us try a thought experiment. Imagine someone who creates his own values, who is unique and independent, who flies in the face of convention, and yet is thoroughly despicable. Imagine him a coward, dishonest with himself, slack and undisciplined, slavish before authority, merciless to the weak, and full of resentment. The question is, can one really imagine Nietzsche admiring such a character? If Nehamas was right, if Nietzsche's ideal was simply to create oneself as a work of art, then the answer would have to be yes. An autonomous person would rate very highly in Nietzsche's terms, even if he were a liar and a resenter. But this is not the case. Nietzsche may speak well of strong and creative individuals who are lacking in conventional goodness, but those who are lacking in all noble qualities do not receive his admiration. There is no question of someone choosing to be base and spiteful, and yet being held up as an existential hero, because the choice was somehow "authentic." While originality and independence are highly valued, they do not trump Nietzsche's other virtues or his ideals of health and flourishing.

In this context, Welshon has made a very useful distinction between "specific" and "pervasive" virtues.[286] Specific virtues are relative to specific individuals and their modes of life. They derive from the fact that each of us is unique, having our own nature, talents, and tasks. Although virtue flows from the health of the soul, there are different kinds of health:

> "Your virtue is the health of your soul." For there is no health as such, and all attempts to define a thing that way have been wretched failures. Even the determination of what is healthy for your body depends on your goal, your horizon, your energies, your impulses, your errors, and above all on the ideals and phantasms of your soul. (GS 120)

Thus, Nietzsche seeks to carve out a place for the particular in

the face of "one size fits all" moralities. In keeping with this, some of the traits that he praises should be seen as specific to his own path as a man and a philosopher. But much that Nietzsche says about health, will to power, and the virtues goes beyond this. It is predicated on the assumption that there are pervasive virtues - virtues which pervade all forms of flourishing and are found in all healthy souls. The attitude of abundance, central to Nietzsche's virtue-ethical ideal, most clearly belongs in this category. And a good case can be made for regarding the virtues catalogued in section 3:6 as pervasive, although in some details they may be specific to the lives of the nobles and philosophers who exemplify them.

We have been arguing that autonomy is one virtue among many, not a consideration that overrides everything else. Yet autonomy may appear to sit uneasily among the rest of the virtues. Other virtues are substantive, they can be defined in advance, and they involve a particular way of being and doing. One can imagine such qualities as courage, honesty, discipline, and even amor fati being inculcated, in the Aristotelian manner, by means of habituation. But autonomy is different. It involves the blossoming forth of something unique and independent, that by its nature cannot ever be attained by simply adhering to convention. It may incorporate other virtues, but to insist that it must do so would seem to compromise its very nature. As Nehamas points out, there is a paradox in the idea of specifying some formula for autonomous individuality. For to the extent that others follow it, they will not be following their own path. Indeed, a form of this paradox haunts all those who would instruct others on how to be original and creative, or who would prove their uniqueness by following some unconventional convention (e.g., by adopting the most outrageous fashion or buying the most exclusive product).[287]

Autonomy, if it is genuine, can never be a merely conventional virtue. It is conceivable that I could become brave by modelling myself on a brave hero. But if I want to realize my individuality, I cannot simply imitate another, no matter how unique and creative he may be. There is indeed a paradox here. But precisely how deep it cuts, how much of a gap it opens up between autonomy and the

other virtues, depends of how we understand autonomy.

Here it is essential not to confuse Nietzsche's ideal with certain rival conceptions of autonomy. First, Nietzschean autonomy has nothing to do with Kantian morality, the metaphysical freedom of the will, or the self-legislating rule of reason over passion. Nietzsche is a joyful naturalist. To become who we are, to become autonomous, does not require us to transcend natural necessity or subdue our natural inclinations (contra Kant).[288] For all he says against the English thinker, Nietzsche's ideal is closer to the "individuality" of John Stuart Mill.[289] It involves thinking for oneself and developing one's nature - not tyrannizing over one part of our nature in the name of "reason," or seeking to escape from contingency by conforming our will to universal law.

Second, Nietzsche departs from most liberals in regarding autonomy, not as a matter of negative liberty and Lockean rights, but as something to be cultivated like any other virtue. It is an achievement, requiring education and struggle, not something that every human being possesses if they are simply left alone. Thus, Nietzsche doubts the ability of liberal institutions to foster real autonomy. In a passage entitled "My Conception of Freedom," he says that liberal institutions promote freedom (i.e. autonomy) while they are being fought for, but once attained, they undermine the will to power and usher in a levelling, hedonistic, commercial spirit (TI IX:38). Freedom in his sense is something positive, an aretaic ideal, not merely the absence of constraint. It involves a will to assume responsibility for oneself, and the growth of power that comes from confronting obstacles, overcoming resistance, and learning to draw on the resources of our own spirit. This is what Nietzsche means when he says that "war educates for freedom" (TI IX:38). Likewise, in the Genealogy, he presents the sovereign individual as the flower of a protracted process of discipline. He is described as autonomous, liberated from the morality of custom [die Sittlichkeit der Sitte], with an independent will, the proud consciousness of his own freedom, and the strength to honour his pledges. So we see that autonomy is linked to several substantive virtues and involves the development of higher forms of power.[290]

What of the view that Nietzsche has no desire to advocate an

ethics, but merely to summon us to self-creation? This might be plausible (1) if autonomy had normative priority over everything else, and (2) if autonomy was a matter of being left alone to do one's own thing. But Nietzsche recognizes a plurality of virtues, and his view of autonomy is dialectical rather than something to be cultivated in isolation. Consider Zarathustra's relationship with his disciples. On one hand, at the end of Part One he tells them to go away and think for themselves:

> Now I go alone, my disciples. You too go now, alone. Thus I want it. Verily, I counsel you: go away from me and resist Zarathustra! And even better: be ashamed of him! Perhaps he deceived you. The man of knowledge must not only love his enemies, he must also be able to hate his friends. One repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil. And why do you not want to pluck at my wreath? ... You say you believe in Zarathustra? But what matters Zarathustra? You are my believers - but what matter all believers? You had not yet sought yourself: and you found me. Thus do all believers; therefore all faith amounts to so little. Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you. (Z I:22)

This can be read as a parody of the Gospels, bringing out the contrast between his attitude to faith and discipleship, and that of Christianity. Zarathustra does Jesus one better: he would have his disciples learn to <u>hate their friends</u> as well as love their enemies, and he says that only when they have <u>all denied him</u> will he return. He wants them to become independent thinkers rather than mere believers. At another level, this speech is Zarathustra's way of addressing the paradox of autonomy. The teacher of autonomy must warn his students against himself. He must teach them to distrust the friends in whom they have placed uncritical trust. And he must challenge them to be active learners - to critically appropriate what he has taught them and develop ideas of their own.

However, the fact that Zarathustra sends his disciples away does not mean that his setting out as a teacher was a mistake, that what he has just said about the gift-giving virtue and remaining

faithful to the earth has no relevance beyond himself, or that one need only "seek oneself" to become autonomous. We should keep in mind Nietzsche's own process of intellectual development - how he credits Schopenhauer with being his "educator" (UM p.129, SE 1), and declares that only as a student of Ancient Greece was he able to develop such an untimely view of the present (UM p.60, HL P).

Zarathustra's final speech in Part One can be read in the light of his first, "On the Three Metamorphoses." There he tells us "how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child" (Z I:1). This parable may be taken to refer to various things.[291] But in any case, it suggests a process of dialectical development. To become autonomous and creative, the spirit must pass through a series of stages. One begins as a camel who kneels down and is well loaded. One is socialized in tradition and loaded down with the knowledge and the values of others. At a later stage, one's task is to become a lion "who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert" (Z I:1). The student learns to question the master and take on the dragon of established values. He or she learns to be critical, skeptical, tough-minded, and independent. Finally, if all goes well, the spirit becomes a child and is able to be truly creative: "a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes'" (Z I:1). The child has not only emancipated itself (like the lion), but it has freed itself from this emancipation.[292] However, this is only possible after passing through the previous stages of discipline and conflict.

When Zarathustra sends his disciples away, he bids them to enter the "lion" stage of critical independent thought. This does not mean that they are simply to reject his teachings,[293] or that the role of the student is irrelevant to the process of becoming autonomous. Rather, he wants them to critically appropriate what he has taught them and carry it forward, not as camel-like disciples, but as creative children. The same dialectic is at work in the development of artists who are both technically proficient and original, or scientists who are truly capable of carrying forward a research program. Autonomy involves the development of one's unique nature, but this can only take place within the matrix of

culture. The human form of individuality unfolds in a dialectical manner rather than simply unfolding of itself like a rosebud.

III

Amor fati is another virtue which may appear to sit uneasily among the others. The problem, as we saw in section 3:6, is that it "wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity" (EH II:10). But in his critique of the tradition and presentation of his own ideal, Nietzsche makes it clear that there are better and worse ways to live. As Clark says: "the attitude of wanting nothing to be different ... is completely incompatible with Nietzsche's emphasis on change and creation and the connection between creation and destruction."[294] So how are we to reconcile his love of fate with the fact that he is in no way a quietist?

Two answers are clearly inadequate. First, we cannot simply ignore amor fati. Too often, this theme has been marginalized by those who approach Nietzsche as an ethical-political thinker.[295] In other cases, interpretive discussions are given over entirely to the metaphysics of eternal recurrence. The problem here is that amor fati - affirming life, affirming recurrence - is an important virtue-ethical ideal for Nietzsche. It is central to Zarathustra and Ecce Homo, and bound up with his teachings about psychological abundance and overcoming the spirit of revenge.

On the other hand, there are those who take amor fati as basic and interpret it in a way that leaves no room for other elements of Nietzsche's ethical thought. For Claudia Crawford, Nietzsche is an immoralist, not merely because he rejects the peculiar institution, but because he points us towards a world free of values. The immoralist, she says, is at home in

> the Dionysian world, where affirmation even of negation reigns, the world of Nietzsche's amor fati, where nothing needs to be different, indeed, where nothing can be different than it is.[296]

Key to this reading are a couple of passages in Twilight of the Idols, where Nietzsche rejects the moralistic condemnation of human beings and the world, invoking his own love of fate and acceptance of determinism:

> One is necessary, one is a piece of fatefulness, one

> belongs to the whole, one is in the whole, there is nothing which could judge, measure, compare, or sentence our being, for that would mean judging, measuring, comparing, or sentencing the whole. But there is nothing besides the whole. That nobody is held responsible any longer, that the mode of being may not be traced back to [God] ... that alone is the great liberation; with this alone is the innocence of becoming restored. (TI VI:8)

The mood of this passage is mystical. It suggests a piety towards the cosmos which accepts and loves everything as it is. The process of becoming is affirmed as innocent. And this is felt by Nietzsche as a great liberation from the traditional religious outlook, with its rewarder-punisher God, its emphasis on sin and guilt, and its tendency to look upon the world as fallen. In moving beyond such doctrines, the de-deified, de-moralized world is experienced as gracious.[297] Nietzsche has no desire to pass judgement on anyone, or even to preach self-improvement. Instead of telling other people "You ought to be such and such!" he bids us to enjoy the enchanting wealth of human types that nature shows us (TI V:6).

Where Crawford goes wrong is in taking this as Nietzsche's last word on ethics. Much as Nehamas puts aside the virtues in the name of autonomy, she puts them aside in the name of amor fati. Nietzsche's new philosopher, according to her, is not something that we can become by cultivating the virtues - the point is simply to "affirm what we are without the fictions of moral imperatives, guilt, or fear."[298] Here again, one part of Nietzsche's ideal is put in the place of the whole. We are left to wonder about those who may affirm themselves in a thoroughly self-satisfied and unreflective manner. The example of the last man comes to mind, and he certainly falls short of the mark.[299]

Amor fati, wanting nothing to be different, is one moment of Nietzsche's thought. In loving one's fate, in saying Yes to the possibility of recurrence, Nietzsche embraces Life as she is. This is expressed, in the culmination of Book Three of Zarathustra, as a kind of erotic rapture. Zarathustra dances with Life and declares his love of recurrence (Z III:15-16). However, Nietzsche is also a teacher who bids us to aspire towards excellence, and a critic of

every nihilistic doctrine of existence. As a teacher and critic, his goal is to actualize Life's fullest beauty and splendour. He wages intellectual war against the afterworldly and the despisers of the body who would slander Life. In the passage from Twilight quoted above, Nietzsche distinguishes between those who condemn for its own sake, taking revenge against the world, and those who do so "out of regard for the concerns, considerations, and contrivances of life" (TI V:6). He declares that although his desire is to be affirmative, he must deal in contradiction and criticism as a means (TI VIII:6). Clearly, the attainment of a perspective of amor fati does not preclude the need for critique - for the negation of life-negating forces and the encouragement of self-overcoming.[300] In commenting on his career after Zarathustra, he says:

> After the Yes-saying part of my task had been solved, the turn had come for the No-saying, No-doing part: the revaluation of our values so far ... This included the slow search for those related to me, those who, prompted by strength, would offer me their hands for destroying (EH III:BGE1).

Nietzsche is no quietist. He does not "affirm even negation" if by this one means that he desires the continuation of life-negating or reactive forces.[301] It is one thing to affirm the past and affirm the basic ontological conditions of our existence; this is required if we are to say Yes to life. But this does not preclude attempts to influence the future in a life-enhancing direction.

Up to a certain point, the ideal of amor fati can give us practical guidance. To love our fate we must come to terms with the human condition, with its suffering and finitude, and overcome all forms of ressentiment. But the love of fate - at least in its most hyperbolic form - is something more. One wants nothing to be different, even forward into the future. One feels oneself a piece of fate which belongs to the whole. Such total acceptance takes us beyond the realm of world improvement.

However, this hyperbolic love of fate, this sense of wanting nothing to be different, seems to be the fruit of a momentary epiphany rather than a steady attitude of mind from which every literal implication may be drawn. As Alderman says:

> Those occasions in which Nietzsche achieves [a full human acceptance of himself and the whole of his life in the unity of the moment] are themselves experiences which, like the mystic's experiences of the unity of the divine and the mundane, are transient and incapable of perfect, non-temporal realization. They are achieved as epiphanies of self-realization to be remembered and re-won. The dialectic of experience which leads to these moments must be repeated; the experience itself re-newed. Were it otherwise we would not be men, whose thought is only play, but gods.[302]

There is much to said for approaching Nietzsche's experience of amor fati as a kind of mystical experience. The point of this is neither to denigrate nor to supernaturalize. It is to remind us of the ideal's origin in experience (not abstract speculation); the fact that the experience is momentary (not a permanent shift in consciousness); and the fact that it is focused on the whole of being (rather than on practical measures for living in the world). Consider the following experience described by Nietzsche at the age of twenty-one:

> Yesterday a magnificent thunderstorm built up in the sky. I hurried up a nearby hill ... The storm broke with tremendous force, gusting and hailing. I felt an incomparable upsurge ... What was man and his restless striving to me then! What was that endless "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not"! How different the lightning, the wind, the hail - sovereign powers, without ethics![303]

This passage, with its celebration of the innocence of becoming, its identification with natural forces, and its desire to get beyond striving and moralizing, anticipates many themes of the later Nietzsche. One might compare it to "Before Sunrise," where Zarathustra speaks to the night sky - something pure and deep, beyond good and evil, "a dance floor for divine accidents" and a table "for divine dice and dice players" (Z III:4). Or one might recall "At Noon," where Zarathustra awakens from a blissful nap to declare: "Did not the world become perfect just now!" (Z IV:10).

Such idyllic moments tend to be fleeting. They may inspire one

to be an affirmer rather than a resenter. But they cannot simply be translated into ethical-practical terms without remainder. The need to strive for one's goals and distinguish better from worse must reassert itself as soon as one re-enters the hurly-burly of life. Thus, after basking in the perfection of the moment, Zarathustra is soon telling the higher men that the Übermensch is his "first and only concern," and that they are to overcome the petty prudences and wretched contentment of the last man (Z IV:13:3). In affirming recurrence, Zarathustra does not cease being an advocate of virtue and self-overcoming (contra certain developmental interpretations of this work).[304] To be a Yes-sayer, in his sense, is not to be merely complacent and satisfied with everything, like the ass which always brays Yea-Yuh (Z III:11).

The bliss of "wanting nothing to be different" is only one moment of Nietzsche's thought. For he is also a teacher and a critic, trying to influence the future. If he is a mystic, he is a "mixed" rather than a "pure" mystic.[305] His experience of loving fate and affirming recurrence fills him with a resolve to remain faithful to the earth and overcome the spirit of revenge. But it does not prevent him from upholding other active ideals or promoting ethical change.

IV

We have seen that amor fati does not lead to quietism. In practice, Nietzsche never loses sight of the fact that to enhance life one must negate as well as affirm, and that his moments of identification with the whole are not simply convertible into a guide to human flourishing. What I called the pearl principle, however, raises more serious problems. For it seems to distort Nietzsche's judgements on a number of topics. The pearl principle arises out of Nietzsche's determination to affirm his own life. As such, it is entirely commendable. Where it becomes problematic is where he begins to generalize it beyond his own case.

The logic of the pearl principle proceeds as follows. First, there is the fact that people suffer misfortune. The oyster gets sand under its shell. Nietzsche himself seems to have endured more than his share of ill health, physical misery, and loneliness. Second, we try to find a way to love, accept, or make sense of our

own fate. We try to understand how even bad accidents have played a role in our "becoming who we are," and how what has not killed us has made us stronger. The point is to convert the dross of our experience into gold and precious gems. One way to do this is by becoming the artists or poets of our own lives, turning our flaws into beauty as part of the whole, and showing how even misfortune has contributed to the development of our powers (GS 290, GS 299). Nietzsche does something like this in Ecce Homo. He also reflects on how sickness and suffering have afforded him certain insights. Looking back on the writing of The Gay Science, he says:

> You see that I do not want to take leave ungratefully from that time of severe sickness whose profits I have not yet exhausted even today. ... [We philosophers] have to give birth to our thoughts out of our pain and, like mothers, endow them with all we have of blood, heart, fire, pleasure, passion, agony, conscience, fate, and catastrophe. ... Only great pain, the long, slow pain that takes its time - on which we are burned, as it were, with green wood - compels us philosophers to descend into our ultimate depths and to put aside all trust ... I doubt that such pain makes us "better"; but I know that it makes us more profound. (GS P:3)

This ode to pain exemplifies the pearl principle and how it enabled Nietzsche to love his fate. He is able to look back on days of illness with gratitude, knowing that the peaks are connected to the valleys, and that without enduring his deepest pain he would not have arrived at his profoundest insights.

One might have doubts about the educative value of suffering. But there is something admirable in how Nietzsche looks back on his existence, finding profit and meaning in even its most questionable aspects. It is certainly better than bemoaning one's victim status or feeling that one's life has been ruined by misfortune. Here we should reflect upon the popularity of Nietzsche's maxim: "What does not kill me, makes me stronger" (TI I:8). It suggests that the pearl principle has been a inspiration to many who must deal with adversity or suffering. A person who could really live according to this maxim would have a marvellous defence against misfortune, for

she would find a way to turn every setback to her advantage. Such a person would be invulnerable against many of life's ills - not through cultivating detachment or hardening oneself against the world (like the Stoics), but in a much more vital, engaged, and creative way. One would have the spiritual resilience of the hydra, which had the power to grow two new heads for every one that was cut off. Wounds and attacks would only make one stronger.

It is at the third stage that the pearl principle becomes problematic. One begins to universalize, not merely the general idea of turning sand into pearls, but one's method of affirming particular evils. From the premis that struggle has afforded one certain benefits, one concludes that it would be beneficial if others had to struggle as well. This, I suspect, is how Nietzsche arrived at some of his more extravagant claims on behalf of suffering and solitude. It is the discipline of suffering, he says, that has created all enhancements of man so far - all that has been granted to us of profundity, spirit, and greatness (BGE 225). Taken as a contribution to philosophical anthropology, such a claim seems excessive or bizarre. But if we keep in mind the Preface to The Gay Science, it is clear that Nietzsche is generalizing from his own experience. Having granted that suffering has given him depth and spirit, he claims that it has this effect in other cases as well, playing a key role in the enhancement of man.

Similarly, Nietzsche describes solitude as a cardinal virtue (BGE 284), the way of the creator as inherently lonely (Z I:17), and marriage as a calamity and a hindrance to the philosophical life (GM III:7). Yet we know that he valued friendship, loved Lou Salomé on a personal and intellectual level, and suffered from the neglect of his work. In 1882, he wrote to Lou: "I don't want to be lonely any more and wish to rediscover how to be human."[306] But after their break (which also cost him the friendship of Paul Rée and strained relations with his family), Nietzsche had little choice but to make a virtue of necessity.[307] For him, loving his fate meant making the best of his solitary condition. Thus, I am hesitant to regard solitude as a pervasive virtue which is part of all forms of flourishing. Rather, it is bound up with Nietzsche's amor fati, an ideal in terms of which almost anything can be made

to serve one's self-actualization.

Earlier I suggested that the pearl principle is the personal equivalent of theodicy (see section 3:6). It seeks to show how "natural evils" contribute to "soul-making," thereby allowing us to reconcile ourselves to the ways of nature. The main strengths and weaknesses of the pearl principle also parallel those of theodicy. To begin with, many theodicies correctly point out that an ideal world without evil should not be seen as a hedonistic paradise (the Garden of Eden without the apple) in which there is no opportunity for growth, development, or human autonomy. In the same way, Nietzsche makes a convincing case when he argues (usually against utilitarians) that the good life consists not merely of pleasure, but of self-actualization, and that it is inseparable from a certain amount of challenge and adversity. In his portrait of the last man, he warns us that what some people see as utopia is really the diminution of humanity.

Theodicies eventually come up against their limits. There are some evils which cannot be justified, some experiences which have no redeeming qualities, some burdens which crush the spirit rather than fostering its growth.[308] Indeed, something like this is implicitly acknowledged by most religious thinkers. Few if any of them are willing to take the logic of theodicy all the way, and argue that pain and other natural evils are to be promoted for the sake of soul-making. To argue like this would be subversive of all ethics. Nietzsche's pearl principle is also limited in what it can do. We humans are not as resilient as the hydra; we cannot turn every wound into a source of redoubled growth. Even the strongest among us may be thwarted in their development if certain things are lacking. However, Nietzsche's belief in the pearl principle leads him to carry such ideas further than most - for example, into politics. He tells us:

> The peoples who had some value, <u>attained</u> some value, never attained it under liberal institutions. Danger alone acquaints us with our own resources, our virtues, our armor and weapons, our <u>spirit</u>, and <u>forces</u> us to be strong. <u>First</u> principle: one must need to be strong - otherwise one will never become strong. (TI IX:38)

Here, politics becomes an arena for the pearl principle. What people need is danger and hardship if they are to become strong. The aim of politics becomes - not liberty or security, not meeting people's basic needs or educating their highest powers - but "to create conditions that require stronger men" (WP 981).

The pearl principle has very different implications for human development than other elements of Nietzsche's aretaic naturalism. Contract theory appeals to our need for security and gives us a way to negotiate terms of justice. An ethic of care appeals to our capacity for mutual concern, seeing us as social creatures which need each other's help and affection. Virtue ethics focuses on cultivating certain excellences which flow from an attitude of abundance. In every case, however, the implication is that human beings need to be protected, assisted, or educated in some way. A politics with a contractarian basis is likely, under modern conditions, to put a premium on protecting individual liberty. An aretaic or perfectionist politics is likely to create a framework of laws and institutions which will try to help people satisfy their needs and realize their potential. If autonomy is valued, people will be educated with this ideal in mind. Critical and creative thought will be encouraged, along with respect for individuality. If an attitude of abundance is recognized as the basis of virtue, people will be raised to be healthy in body and spirit, to feel empowered, and to suffer from no deficiencies that may be remedied. One may hope, like Maslow, that if a child grew up in conditions of material and psychological abundance, he or she would become a self-actualizing adult.

The practical implications of the pearl principle veer off in another direction. The way to make people stronger, it tells us, is to make them confront harsh conditions. Suffering and strife cannot be dispensed with. So-called evils are needed if we are to achieve the highest good. Perhaps the value of all good and revered things is "insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things" (BGE 2). Many a glittering talent has originated where "mutilation, crippling, a serious deficiency in an organ offers the occasion for an uncommonly successful development of another organ" (HA 231). Nietzsche even raises the question of

whether knowledge and virtue may "require the sick soul as much as the healthy" (GS 120).

While this has a certain truth, it is not very helpful - indeed, it may be downright pernicious - when taken as political advice. First, it is subversive of all standards of value. If pain, deficiency, and illness are held to make us stronger and better, what point can there be in trying to meet human needs? Second, it ignores the question of how human beings become strong enough to cope with adversity - to pull off the trick of converting sand into pearls. This is a capacity that must be developed, in the same way that one becomes psychologically healthy or self-actualizing. Otherwise, suffering may overwhelm people or embitter them against life. As Nussbaum points out, some forms of deprivation for some people may be so severe "that thought and character are themselves impaired or not developed."[309] Third, it is one thing for human beings to deal cheerfully with irritants that have got under their skin naturally or by accident - another to expect them to accept adversity that has been artificially or politically created in the name of making them stronger. It is hard to image Nietzsche's free spirit taking kindly to this sort of treatment. Thus, attempts to produce "cultured pearls" are likely to go astray, leading instead to bitter indignation and cynical mistrust.

Perhaps we should not be too hard on Nietzsche here or make too much of the political implications of the pearl principle. In GS 120, the value of sickness for virtue is raised only as a "great question." This comes at the end of a discussion based on the usual premis that virtue is a matter of health. In BGE 2, the idea that the value of every good thing is insidiously bound up with evil is offered only as a "dangerous maybe." Such thoughts are the fruit of philosophical questioning and honesty, not a practical prescription for social engineering. The idea that we need to create conditions that require stronger human beings is presented more often, and with greater political seriousness. But it amounts to little more than a call for something like William James' "Moral Equivalent of War" - some form of the strong life that demands hardihood, takes us beyond the realm of money-making, and gets "the extremest and the supremest out of human nature."[310]

9. Conclusion

I set out to show in this study that Nietzsche deserves to take his place in the ranks of such ethical thinkers as Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes and Hume, Kant and Mill. For he has important contributions to make in a number of areas, both critical and constructive. He shows us why and how we need to move from "the peculiar institution" of Christian-Kantian morality to an ethical approach that is aretaic and naturalist. He has intriguing things to say about the genealogy of our moral concepts, the death of God and its implications, and what is at stake in embracing egoism and determinism. His ideas about "life" and "value" are still relevant to the naturalist meta-ethical project. His ambivalent reflections on contractarian justice are a worthy supplement to Hobbes and Hume. He challenges us to think critically about pity and altruism, and his treatment of the sentiments of benevolence is richer and more subtle than is generally acknowledged. And I would argue, he is the greatest philosopher of virtue since Hume - if not Aristotle - with original and instructive things to say about intellectual honesty, the modern virtue of autonomy, the world-affirming ideal of amor fati, and the outlook of abundance which is central to the motivation of all the virtues.

There are several directions in which the ethical framework set out here remains to be developed. First, there is the question of applying Nietzsche's ideals of virtue to politics, and giving his aretaic ethics a plausible political identity. We have seen that the contractarian element in his thought stands in the way of some of his more elitist flights of fancy. The noble few cannot expect the many to willingly subordinate themselves. Those who excel at brute force and ideological manipulation are unlikely to be very noble in the sense that Nietzsche admires. Beyond this, there is the issue of whether, or to what extent, political legislation can advance perfectionist goals. One might argue, as Rorty does, that Nietzsche would do better to reserve the quest for self-creation and the good life to the private realm. Or one might argue, in perfectionist terms, that society has a role in enabling valuable options and activities, and that this need not mean forcing people to conform to any pre-defined ethical standard.[311]

Before we can resolve such issues, we must think through some questions of moral psychology. Consider the growth and development of autonomy. To the extent that it involves the self-unfolding of uniqueness, it is in harmony with liberalism; to the extent that it is a product of discipline and struggle, it calls for something more demanding and invigorating. Or consider the tension between the psychology of abundance and the pearl principle. The former suggests that if our basic needs are meet, if we enjoy plenty of everything and grow to be healthy, we will tend naturally to move up the ladder of power and ethical motivation. In such a case, the recommendations of perfectionism would not be all that different from those of liberal welfarism. The pearl principle, on the other hand, suggests that conditions must be made challenging for human beings if they are to become stronger and avoid the fate of the last man. Its policy implications would be almost the reverse, very different from any variety of liberalism.

Finally, my approach to Nietzsche's ethics could just as well be applied to his view of religion. Just as I have sought to show why Nietzsche rejects Morality and what ethical ideas still remain viable following his critique, one could explore his critique of "religion, the peculiar institution," sorting out those aspects of our spirituality that continue to make sense in a post-Christian context from those that are anti-reason or anti-life. My analysis of the meaning of the death of God and my treatment of amor fati as a kind of naturalistic piety represent a start in this direction. Because religion is a concept that is deeply bound up with theism, revelation, and the quest for immortality, some may wonder whether anything would remain of it once those notions were dispensed with. The religious impulse, however, can be seen as an expression of our "ultimate concern" - our highest values and our desire to give meaning to existence.[312] There is thus no reason why it cannot be naturalized; why religious sentiment cannot be refocused on human life and nature, learning at last to "remain faithful to the earth" (Z I:22).

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Martha Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.171-173, Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p.112.

2. See Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.102, pp.382-384; Robert C. Solomon, "A More Severe Morality: Nietzsche's Affirmative Ethics," in From Hegel to Existentialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.105-121; and Lester Hunt, Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue (London: Routledge, 1991).

Bernd Magnus, on the other hand, takes issue with Kaufmann's position in "Aristotle and Nietzsche: 'Megalopsychia' and 'Übermensch'," in The Greeks and the Good Life, ed. David Depew (Fullerton: California State University, 1980), pp.260-295. Magnus denies that Nietzsche was directly influenced by Aristotle, though his argument leaves open the possibility of there being a family resemblance between their views. Both, after all, were influenced by non-Socratic Greek ethics and culture.

3. G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," Philosophy 33 (1958), pp.1-19.

4. Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p.196.

5. Bernard Williams, Shame and Necessity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.166.

6. Maudemarie Clark reads the Second Essay of the Genealogy as upholding a non-moral contract theory of justice; see "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, ed. Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp.28-29. Contractarian themes are also touched on by Lester Hunt in Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue.

7. Hume and Nietzsche are both methodological pluralists; they make use of contractarian insights when thinking about justice (which Hume calls an "artificial virtue") but they see other excellences of character (which Hume calls the "natural virtues") as grounded in the passions. For more on the similarities between these two philosophers, see my article, "Hume and Nietzsche: Naturalists, Ethicists, Anti-Christians," in Hume Studies 22:2 (1996), pp.299-324.

8. David Gauthier, "Why Contractarianism?" in Contractarianism and Rational Choice, ed. Peter Vallentyne (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.15-30. This paper begins and ends with quotations from Nietzsche's Genealogy.

9. Two of the least charitable recent treatments of Nietzsche's ethics are Ofelia Schutte, Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche Without Masks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), and John Andrew

Bernstein, Nietzsche's Moral Philosophy (London: Associated University Presses, 1987). Schutte's perspective is left-liberal and feminist, while Bernstein claims "that much that is most valuable in Nietzsche had already been expressed more adequately and nobly ... in Christianity, especially in its Pauline formulations" (p.19).

10. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p.143, p.207.

11. Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.21.

12. Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.108.

13. Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.240.

14. For Maslow's theory, see Motivation and Personality, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), especially ch.4.

15. I have identified the "morality of the mature individual" of HA 95 with the "highest stage of morality" of HA 94, because they are both autonomous. However, one also could argue that they are slightly different - that the third stage of HA 94 is described in Kantian-coloured terms, and thus it is only the highest stage hitherto, while the ethic of the "mature individual" goes further, and transcends the impersonal element in morality. Such subtleties, however, do not undercut my basic line of interpretation.

Another subtle point concerns Nietzsche's use of the term "morality." In HA 94-95 he uses it in a broad, conventional sense, which includes his own ideals, while in his later works he tends to reserve it for the complex of Christian-Kantian notions that he vehemently attacks. This change is a matter of terminology, not of substance.

16. Lawrence Kohlberg, Essays on Moral Development, Vol. 1: The Philosophy of Moral Development (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), pp.409-412. See also Owen Flanagan, Varieties of Moral Personality (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), ch.7-11, for a lucid and critical discussion of the moral psychology of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Carol Gilligan. Flanagan also notes that Maslow's ideal of self-actualization is "Nietzschean through and through" (p.22).

17. Flanagan reports: "according to Kohlberg's original scoring system, and across a wide array of independent observers, stage 6 is never achieved with any consistency in more than 2 percent to 4 percent of subjects responding to his standard dilemmas. And on the new scoring system the highest stage has no empirically confirmed instances (Varieties of Moral Personality, p.187).

18. I borrow this way of formulating the issue from Margaret Moore, Foundations of Liberalism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.3.

19. There is thus no basis for sharply distinguishing between Nietzsche's "middle period" (or "positivist") and "late period" (or "mature") works, as is often done. This division of his works goes back to Lou Andreas-Salomé, Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken (Vienna: Carl Konegan, 1894), which appears in English as Lou Salomé, Nietzsche, trans. Siegfried Mandel (Redding Ridge, CT: Black Swan Books, 1988). I suspect that Salomé may have over-emphasized the break between these "middle" and "late" periods because it corresponds with her own personal break with Nietzsche in November 1882 (between the writing of The Gay Science and Thus Spoke Zarathustra). Salomé also lacked access to Nietzsche's own account of his career in Ecce Homo (published only in 1908), which stresses the continuity of his thought and writing (with the partial exception of The Birth of Tragedy).

20. In reading the Genealogy as an ethical treatise which condemns one cluster of moral concepts (slave morality, guilt, the ascetic ideal) while endorsing other ethical ideas, my position follows the same lines as Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality."

21. This analysis is confirmed by Nietzsche's commentary on the Genealogy, in Ecce Homo: "The third inquiry offers the answer to the question whence the ascetic ideal, the priests' ideal, derives its tremendous power although it is the harmful ideal par excellence, a will to the end, an ideal of decadence. Answer: ... because it was the only ideal so far, because it had no rival. 'For man would rather will even nothingness than not will.' - Above all, a counterideal was lacking - until Zarathustra" (EH III:GM).

CHAPTER ONE

22. This tripartite division is central to MacIntyre's reading of the history of moral philosophy, both in After Virtue and in his Gifford Lectures, Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry (London: Duckworth, 1990). In the latter work, he contrasts Encyclopaedia (the Enlightenment), Genealogy (Nietzsche), and Tradition (Aristotle). Here it becomes clear that MacIntyre's "Aristotle" is rather Catholic and his "Nietzsche" is rather Postmodern. Thus, it would be more accurate to speak of Thomistic Tradition versus the Genealogy of Foucault.

23. Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, ed. and trans. Peter Fuss and Henry Shapiro (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p.56. Letter to Franz Overbeck, dated 30 July 1881.

24. For a fuller discussion, see Paul Redding, "Child of the English Genealogists," in Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory, ed. Paul Patton (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.204-224.

25. Nietzsche's "Enlightenment project" has nothing to do with rationalism or foundationalism. Rather, it has to do with his critical attitude towards Christianity, his naturalism, and his skeptical will to truth. In this sense, the paradigm Enlightenment

thinker is, not Descartes or Kant, but David Hume.

Among commentators, Walter Kaufmann emphasizes Nietzsche's admiration for the Enlightenment and his affinity with such figures as Spinoza, Voltaire, and Goethe. Kaufmann quotes Kant's definition of enlightenment: "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred minority. ... Sapere aude! Have the courage to avail yourself of your own understanding - that is the motto of the Enlightenment" (Nietzsche, p.421). This could equally serve as a motto for Nietzsche's philosophizing.

26. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott (New York: Collier Books, 1962), ch.11, p.80. Oakeshott aptly observes that death, for Hobbes, is the summum malum or greatest evil. See his Hobbes on Civil Association (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p.34.

27. For a particularly good account of Hume's ethics, see Annette Baier, A Progress of Sentiments (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

28. Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.49. For a contrasting view, see Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation/ The Rise of Modern Paganism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966). Gay emphasizes two things about the 18th century philosophes: their resolute campaign against Christianity, and the fact that they derived significant inspiration from antiquity (hence their "paganism"). Nietzsche fits this model to a tee.

29. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. J.B. Schneewind (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), p.105. The square brackets indicate insertions.

30. The idea of distinguishing "morality" and "ethics" in this way I owe to Bernard Williams, although it is implicit in Nietzsche. Both denigrate "morality" (in various senses) while making use of other broadly ethical ideas. This subject is treated in more detail in section 2:1.

31. Here I cite the translation of Peter Preuss, On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980).

32. On the link between Greek tragedy and the Yes-saying of Zarathustra, see not only TI X:5, but also BT "Attempt at a Self-Criticism", and EH III:BT. Also of relevance is Martha Nussbaum, "The Transfigurations of Intoxication: Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Dionysus," Arion (Spring 1991), pp.75-111.

33. Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, trans. David Ross, rev. J.L Ackrill and J.O. Urmson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1127a, 1124b.

34. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1125a.

35. As Robert Solomon notes, for all his talk about "creating values," Nietzsche does not suggest a single new value that we might create: "What he does is to remind us, again and again, of

old and established values which can be used as an ethical Archimedean point, to topple the professions of a too abstract, too banal morality that fails to promote the virtues of character" ("A More Severe Morality: Nietzsche's Affirmative Ethics," p.118).

36. Annette Baier, "Civilizing Practices," in Postures of the Mind (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp.259-261. For a similar critique from an Aristotelian perspective, see Martha Nussbaum, "Recoiling from Reason," New York Review of Books, December 7, 1989, pp.36-41. Nussbaum's review of Whose Justice? Which Rationality (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) is harsher than Baier's treatment of After Virtue, perhaps because MacIntyre's identification with Augustine and Aquinas becomes clearer in the more recent book. Also relevant is R. Kevin Hill, "MacIntyre's Nietzsche: A Critique," International Studies in Philosophy 24:2 (1992), pp.3-12.

37. Supporters of a broadly postmodern reading of Nietzsche include David Allison, Eric Blondel, Arthur Danto, Paul De Man, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Sarah Kofman, Bernd Magnus, Alexander Nehamas, and Richard Rorty. Despite their differences, all of them either interpret perspectivism as a radical, negative, skeptical doctrine, or focus on issues of textuality and style. In most cases they do both. The strongest and best-argued representitive of this tradition is Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

38. Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Other un-postmodern treatments of Nietzsche's view of truth and knowledge include John Wilcox, Truth and Value in Nietzsche (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), Richard Schacht, Nietzsche (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), and Brian Leiter, "Perspectivism in Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, pp.334-357.

39. Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, pp.29-30. Her approach has been criticized; see R. Lanier Anderson, "Overcoming Charity: The Case of Maudemarie Clark's Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy," Nietzsche-Studien 25 (1996), pp.307-348. Anderson sees the principle of charity as a legacy of analytic history of philosophy, which "provides a rationale for appealing to the most recent advances of 'scientific' philosophy to illuminate the insights of older texts, because the best interpretation will be the one which attributes the most defensible position (given our best current philosophical knowledge) to the historical text (p.339). However, something like a principle of charity can be derived, not only from Donald Davidson (who is mentioned by Clark), but from the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. It is also made necessary by Nietzsche's rhetoric, as I will show in section 1:5.

40. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, 2nd ed., trans Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992).

41. On Nietzsche's early essay on truth, see Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, ch.3. On the status of Nietzsche's Nachlass, see Clark, pp.25-27, and Bernd Magnus, "The Use and Abuse of The Will to Power," in Reading Nietzsche, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp.218-235. Magnus distinguishes between "lumpers" who treat Nietzsche's books and literary estate as equivalent (and rely heavily on the latter), and "splitters" who distinguish sharply between the two, preferring to base their readings on his published works. The most radical of the lumpers, Martin Heidegger, claimed that Nietzsche's books were merely foreground, and that his real philosophy was contained in his unpublished notes. This allowed him to interpret Nietzsche as the "last metaphysician" of the West, reserving the honour of overcoming metaphysics for his own abstruse thought. Among the splitters are Kaufmann, Alderman, Magnus, and Clark. I tend to agree with the splitters, for the Nachlass (including The Will to Power) contains material that Nietzsche rejected, or never intended, for publication. Where it differs from the published works, it usually is philosophically weaker. In this category I include many of the cosmological or metaphysical speculations in Book Three of the Will to Power, as well as much of the political material assembled in Book Four under the heading "Discipline and Breeding." However, I will occasionally cite Nachlass material when the point it makes is consistent with or sheds light upon material in Nietzsche's published works.

42. Richard Schacht, Nietzsche, p.267.

43. Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.3.

44. Martha Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge, pp.170-171.

45. For example, Nehamas' interpretation in Nietzsche: Life as Literature is probably at its weakest in this area. According to Nehamas, what Nietzsche chiefly cannot tolerate in Christianity is that it "has always been dogmatic, and has always tried to conceal the fact that its direction is only one direction among many others" (p.48). And the crucial problem with (traditional) morality is that it "is essentially absolutist" (p.209). Such "dogmatism" is hardly sufficient to account for Nietzsche's campaign to "Ecrasez l'infâme!"

46. Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.105

47. Metaphysical realism is the idea that truth is independent, not only of our cognitive capacities, but of our cognitive interests - that is, of what we would want from a theory, or set of beliefs, at the ideal limits of inquiry for beings such as ourselves. See Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, pp.40-51. Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty both reject metaphysical realism - with the difference that Putnam develops an account of internal realism, while Rorty takes a purely deflationary, postmodernist stance. Although Nietzsche is often grouped with Rorty, I do not think that his perspectivism precludes an internal form of realism (although

such philosophical vocabulary is alien to his thought).

48. This discussion of perspectivism is almost always taken out of context. Much like Hume's famous aside concerning "the is-ought distinction," it has taken on a life of its own. One commentator who does consider the "ascetic" context is Maudemarie Clark; she argues that perspectivism (which denies the thing-in-itself) is presented by Nietzsche as an "alternative to the metaphysician's ascetic understanding of knowledge and truth," with its demotion of the empirical word to illusion (Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.179). This is in keeping with the anti-metaphysical-realist aspect of perspectivism (discussed above).

49. I am thus in agreement with Clark in denying that Nietzsche equates truth with omni-perspectival seeing, for "if one perspective is cognitively superior to another, why should the truth it makes manifest need supplementation by the interpretation of things from an inferior perspective?" (Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.148).

50. For discussions of the self-referential paradox, see Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, pp.65-67, who tries to escape it, and Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, pp.154-158, who argues that Nehamas does not succeed.

51. For a similar view of the implications of perspectivism, see John Richardson, "Is There a Nietzschean Post-Analytic Method?" in International Studies in Philosophy 29:3 (1997), pp.32-33. Richardson sees considerable merit in Nietzsche's suggestion (GM I:17) that philosophers and scholars should examime and mediate between the many perspectives from which value-systems can be evaluated. Such a concept of philosophy has important affinities with hermeneutics. The role of the philosopher would be to take on many perspectives and to discipline them, "setting them, as voices in oneself, into a certain process of cross-criticism, a process that gradually organizes them into a certain rank-order" (p.33).

52. Such insights are not unique to Nietzsche. His pragmatist and pluralist comtemporary, William James, wrote: "But think of Zeno and of Epicurus, think of Calvin and of Paley, think of Kant and Schopenhauer, of Herbert Spencer and John Henry Newman, no longer as one-sided champions of special ideals, but as schoolmasters deciding what all must think, - and what more grotesque topic could a satirist wish for on which to exercise his pen? The fabled attempt of Mrs. Partington to arrest the rising tide of the North Atlantic with her broom was a reasonable spectacle compared with their efforts to substitute the content of their clean-shaven systems for the exuberant mass of goods with which all human nature is in travail, and groaning to bring to the light of day. ... Better chaos forever than an order based on any closet-philosopher's rule, even though he were the most enlightened possible member of his tribe." - "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," in The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p.204.

53. Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p.13. Future references to this book in this section will be given in the text.

54. An analogy can be drawn between seeing as described by Nietzsche and the Aristotelian concept of perception as explicated by Martha Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.69. She describes how a particular kind of perceptive thought is required, and fostered, by a particular style of writing. She examines the style of Heraclitus and the choral lyrics of Greek tragedy: "The lyrics both show us and engender in us a process of reflection and (self)-discovery that works through a persistent attention to and a (re)-interpretation of concrete words, images, incidents. We reflect on the incident not by subsuming it under a general rule, not by assimilating its features to the terms of elegant scientific procedure, but by burrowing down into the depths of the particular, finding images that will permit us to see it more truly, describe it more richly ... The Sophoclean soul ... advances its understanding of life and itself not by a Platonic movement from the particular to the universal, from the perceived world to a simpler, clearer world, but by hovering in thought and imagination around the enigmatic complexities of the seen particular (as we, if we are good readers of this style, hover around the details of the text), seated in the middle of a web of connections, responsive to the pull of each separate thread." This is of relevance to the style of Nietzsche, who greatly admired Heraclitus and Greek tragedy.

55. For a fuller account of Nietzsche's remarks on women in Beyond Good Evil 231-239, which reaches broadly similar conclusions, see Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Misogyny," International Studies in Philosophy, 26:3 (1994), pp.3-12.

Nietzsche wrote that "everyone bears within him a picture of women derived from his mother" (HA 380), and that "it is perhaps no rare occurrence that noble-minded and aspiring people have to undergo their severest trials in their childhood: perhaps ... like Lord Byron, to live in continual conflict with a childish and irritable mother. If one has experienced such a thing one will, one's whole life long, never get over the knowledge of who one's greatest and most dangerous foe has actually been" (HA 422). He is thus aware that people's generalizations about the opposite sex (including those he makes) are especially liable to be bound up with their own psychological baggage. For a look at Nietzsche in these terms, see Alice Miller, The Untouched Key, trans. Hildegarde and Hunter Hannum (New York: Doubleday, 1990), pp.73-133. Like many psychoanalytic writers, Miller is overly determined to reduce the philosophical to the personal, and to explain the personal strictly in terms of early childhood, but she does have a point.

56. See Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, ch.7, especially pp.218-227. She rejects any metaphysical view of the will to power, and shows how material in Part One of Beyond Good and Evil undercuts the hypothetical speculations of BGE 36.

57. For criticism of Nehamas' aestheticism, see Leslie Paul Thiele, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul (Princton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.133, and Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche and Aestheticism," Journal of the History of Philosophy, 30:2 (1992), pp.275-290.

58. For a discussion of what Nietzsche rejects when he rejects "dogmatism," see Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, pp.201-202. Clark interprets him as using "dogmatism" in the Kantian sense, and as rejecting the idea that we can know things-in-themselves. She cites the Preface to Beyond Good and Evil in defence of her view. Nehamas, on the other hand, sees "dogmatism" in every statement that is presented as true-in-general. Perhaps the most promising passage for his position is the following (which he quotes): "Are these coming philosophers new friends of 'truth'? That is probably enough, for all philosophers so far have loved their truths. But they will certainly not be dogmatists. It must offend their pride, also their taste, if their truth is supposed to be a truth for everyman - which has so far been the secret wish and hidden meaning of all dogmatic aspirations. 'My judgement is my judgement': no one else is easily entitled to it - that is what such a philosopher of the future may perhaps say of himself (BGE 43, quoted by Nehamas p.33). This passage is part of a discussion of esotericism and masks (BGE 30, BGE 40). Its point is more elitist than skeptical or anti-metaphysical. Others are not "easily entitled" to "my truths" - not because I am too modest to uphold their general validity, but because "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" (BGE 43).

59. Symposium, in Plato: The Collected Dialogues, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 218a.

60. See William Schaberg, The Nietzsche Canon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

61. Phaedrus, in Plato: The Collected Dialogues, 275e.

62. See Leo Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1952). Strauss and his disciples rely heavily on the esoteric\exoteric distinction in their interpretation of the classic works of political philosophy. The most thorough and sympathetic Straussian interpreter of Nietzsche is Laurence Lampert; see Nietzsche's Teaching (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). Lampert (much as I do) sees Nietzsche as attempting to win over free spirits by presenting his teaching "as utterly novel, a wicked allurement, a thing of the devil - though in its way it is a vindication of the gods" (p.8). His reading of Nietzsche, however, relies too heavily on Strauss and Heidegger. He regards a metaphysics of will to power as Nietzsche's esoteric teaching.

63. Arthur Danto, "Some Remarks on The Genealogy of Morals," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, ed. Richard Schacht, p.40. Walter Kaufmann, in particular, has come under attack for producing an overly whitewashed portrait of Nietzsche's ethics and politics. John Andrew Bernstein (a very hostile commentator who sets out to prosecute Nietzsche) expresses frustation at the amount of charity Nietzsche's thought has elicited: "since the death camps, the author of many passages of a brutality unparalleled in the history of Western philosophy at its highest levels of sophistication has been attacked less frequently, and with far less venom by specialists, than Rousseau has been for two centuries, to say nothing of Marx. ... Nietzsche's advantage as an 'immoralist' was that he needed only to let fall a crumb of edification in order to be quoted with reverential relief" (Nietzsche's Moral Philosophy, p.14, p.44). This bears witness to the power of Nietzsche's counter-rhetoric.

64. Straussian commentators often take this line. For example, see Bruce Detwiler, Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). Detwiler tells us that he has "no desire to promote Nietzschean politics, which ... are intriguing but odious" (p.5). Yet he insists that we must not "sanitize" Nietzsche, and goes on to interpret him as a nihilist, a radical anti-liberal, and an "immoralist" (in a crudely political rather than a meta-ethical sense). He concludes that "Nietzsche's thought points towards the abyss," and also points beyond it, for his "social political views can rekindle conviction not because of our agreement with them but because of the strength of our disagreement" (p.196). Since his politics are a "plausible result" of nihilism, they "encourage a quest for grounds among those who are reluctant to attribute their abhorrence to taste alone" (p.196). The upshot is that Nietzsche has nothing positive to offer, that his thought is "nihilistic," and that we must find our way back from the abyss - to what? Certainly not back to liberalism and the Enlightenment, for Detwiler (as a Straussian and a student of Werner Dannhauser) delights in developing Nietzsche's criticisms of modernity, perhaps (one suspects) even using him as a mask through which to express his own Straussian views.

CHAPTER TWO

65. There are broad and narrow concepts of morality, just as there are broad and narrow concepts of religion and metaphysics. When someone rejects religion or metaphysics, few are confused, for it is the narrow sense of these terms which is prevalent. (Although it is possible to define "metaphysics" so that it includes virtually all attempts to make sense of the world, or "religion" so that it includes secular humanism.) In the case of "morality," however, broader and narrower uses of the term are common in both academic theory and in ordinary language. Some define morality narrowly, in Christian or Kantian terms. Others define it broadly, in classical or naturalistic terms. Still others accept a narrow and rigorous definition of morality, but actually care about something that is much broader and more pragmatic. (Self-sacrifice is the epitome of

morality, but what does morality have to do with business?) By defining morality narrowly and attacking it, Nietzsche not only provokes us to take notice, but also forces us to disentangle various types of ethical thought.

66. Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, p.196. "Morality, the Peculiar Institution" is the title of the last chapter of this work, thus applying to morality an epithet given to slavery in the antebellum South. This title reflects both the "bondage" of moral obligation (which Williams criticizes), and the fact that morality is a "peculiar" form of the ethical. Thoughts of the "slave" origins of our concept of morality also come to mind if one recalls the First Essay of the Genealogy.

Williams regards morality as a special variety of ethical thought - a special system, dominant in modern philosophy, whose purest, deepest, and most thorough representative is Kant. On his relation to Nietzsche, see Maudemarie Clark, "The Critique of Morality: Williams' Debt to Nietzsche," forthcoming.

67. Michael Slote, From Morality to Virtue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). He claims to discard morality "not self-righteously or gleefully, like Nietzsche, but reluctantly and in the wake of extended argument" (xx).

68. J.L. Mackie, Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), especially ch.1. He does not distinguish between morality and ethics (as Williams and Slote do), but some such distinction seems implicit in his analysis.

69. Frithjof Bergmann, "Nietzsche's Critique of Morality," in Reading Nietzsche, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins, p.40. Other illuminating accounts of what it means for Nietzsche to reject morality include Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," and Robert C. Solomon, "A More Severe Morality: Nietzsche's Affirmative Ethics."

70. This is probably the best way of translating "Zur Genealogie der Moral." In their recent editions, both Keith Ansell-Pearson and Carol Diethe (Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Maudemarie Clark and Alan Swensen (Hackett, 1998) call the book "On the Genealogy of Morality." The German word "Moral" may be rendered either as "morals" or as "morality." "Morality" suggests something fairly universal, precise, and imposing; the sort of thing that a Kantian or Thomist would uphold, and that Nietzsche has in mind when he speaks of his "Feldzug gegen die Moral," his "campaign against morality" (EH III:D1). "Morals" suggest something more customary, cultural, or practical, like Hegel's Sittlichkeit. It would be odd to speak of Nietzsche's "campaign against morals." Here and elsewhere, he seems to be out to combat a singular and distinct entity, and one has little choice but to translate "Moral" as "morality." Morality in this sense, however, has little to do with what Nietzsche calls "the morality of mores" (die Sittlichkeit der Sitte), an older and more primitive ethic of custom, tradition, and taboo.

71. Brain Leiter has developed a similar schema; see his "Morality in the Pejorative Sense: On the Logic of Nietzsche's Critique of Morality," British Journal for the History of Philosophy 3:1 (1995), pp.113-145. Where I speak of three "levels" of critique (ontological, evaluative, and genealogical), he speaks respectively of the Presuppositions approach, the Catalogue approach, and the Origins approach. Leiter wants to combine these approaches (much as I do), but he makes the Catalogue approach fundamental, arguing that for Nietzsche what really defines "morality in the pejorative sense" is its "distinctive normative agenda" (p.123); the fact that it is harmful to higher men and thwarts human excellence.

However, the fact that an ethic favours the "least advantaged" over "higher men" need not be bound up with any presuppositions concerning metaphysics or human agency. It would be odd to call one normative position a "morality" simply because it favours the interests of B over A, rather than A over B. Thus, in analyzing Nietzsche's rejection of morality, I think it is better to leave such conflicts of interest until after one has established which aspects of morality he can properly reject (1) as based in error, or (2) as generally harmful for all.

72. As J.L. Mackie points out in Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong, p.16. Another morality critic of this type is James Garner, Beyond Morality (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), who defends a view he calls "amoralism."

73. Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints," Journal of Philosophy 79 (1982), pp.419-439, Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, ch.10, and Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche and the Morality Critics," Ethics 107 (1997), pp.250-285, who places Nietzsche in the context "of modernist discontent with bourgeois Christian culture that runs, we might say, from Baudelaire to Freud" (p.252).

74. Bernard Mandeville, "An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue" (abridged), in British Moralists 1650-1800, ed. D.D. Raphael (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), vol.1, pp.229-236, and G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy."

75. For Nietzsche, it is possible that truth may conflict with what is valuable for life. But this is not an issue here, for morality (in the sense that he rejects it) is both untrue and harmful. Many of the passages which most strongly point to a conflict between "truth" and "life" involve the sort of "metaphysical realist" view of truth that Nietzsche ultimately seems to have rejected. For example, he says that untruth is a condition of life (a slogan used by Nehamas as a chapter title) on the grounds that humans could not live "without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical" (BGE 4). However, Nietzsche did value human truth, and admired those who are strong enough to face up to the truth about life and affirm it (rather than merely affirming illusions about life).

76. For Nietzsche, there is no sharp distinction between the human sciences, such as philology, and the natural sciences. The "Wissenschaft" that he respects has broader connotations than "science" does in 20th century English. Nietzsche speaks of himself as a "wissenschaftlichen Menschen" (scientific man) because of his philological training (BGE 204). But he also protests against the reduction of philosophy to a timid abstinence doctrine of "theory of knowledge," and maintains that "philosophy," as an inclusive form of inquiry and reflection, should rule over "science," that narrower enterprise which has nothing to say about questions of value, or purpose, or the place of knowledge in human life (BGE 204). His naturalism is closer to Hume, whose "science of man" gathers its "experiments" from "a cautious observation of human life" (A Treatise of Human Nature, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, xix), than to the positivism and greedy reductionism of some 20th century naturalists.

77. Jürgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), ch.4, and Edward Andrew, The Genealogy of Values: The Aesthetic Economy of Nietzsche and Proust, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).

78. Jürgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, p.93.

79. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, pp.73-74.

80. Nietzsche regards Christianity as anti-nature, anti-body, and anti-life. These are extreme charges, but Nietzsche is not alone in making them. Hume held a similar view of the Christian religion; see my article, "Hume and Nietzsche: Naturalists, Ethicists, Anti-Christians." And many aspects of Nietzsche's critique are echoed by contemporary feminist and radical theologians. Among the feminists are Mary Daly, Rosemary Ruether, and Carol Christ; for a good overview of their ideas, see Daphne Hampson, Theology and Feminism (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) or Rita Gross, Feminism and Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). Another radical who draws heavily on Nietzschean themes is Don Cupitt; see Taking Leave of God (London: SCM Press, 1980), The Sea of Faith (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1984), and Only Human (London: SCM Press, 1985). All of these figures are critical of otherworldly dualism, affirming nature, finitude, and embodiment.

Of course, Christianity can be re-interpreted in various ways. Some would interpret the Incarnation - the doctrine that God became flesh and came into the world in the person of Jesus - in world-affirming terms. Hegel and Feuerbach interpret it this way, and even Nietzsche, at the age of eighteen, wrote: "the incarnation of God suggests that man shall not seek his salvation in infinity but shall found his heaven on earth" (quoted by Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche and Christianity, trans. E.B. Ashton, Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961, p.9). This, unfortunately, is not how the fathers of the church saw things. They saw Christ coming into the world, not to affirm human life and embodiment, but to atone for our sins by dying on the

cross. The mature Nietzsche thought this doctrine to be "horribly absurd," "revolting," "barbarous," and "gruesome" (A 41).

81. J.L. Mackie, Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong, pp.48-49.

82. J.L. Mackie makes this argument against ordinary language philosophy (Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong, p.35). Nietzsche would certainly agree.

83. On GM II:13 and conceptual analysis, see Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," pp.20-22.

84. "Der Spiegel Interview with Martin Heidegger," in Martin Heidegger and National Socialism," ed. Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering (New York: Paragon House, 1990), p.57. Heidegger also refers to the death of God and the "forsakenness of modern human beings" in his Rectoral Address of 1933 (p.8 of the above volume). Perhaps if Heidegger had not felt such a need for "salvation," he would not have mistaken National Socialism for a "saving power" in the Thirties.

85. The fact that he is a "madman" does not mean that his words are to be dismissed as mere ravings. There is more depth and insight in what he says than is the complacent mockery of the people in the marketplace. The description of him as mad, however, does give us reason to disassociate his reaction to the death of God (which is unbalanced, overwrought, and anguished) from that of Nietzsche.

86. Notice here, that while Nietzsche speaks of "good taste," his criticisms of the Christian god are not trivial points of style, but have to do with the vengeful and judgemental nature of this god - a god who gets angry at heretics who understand him incorrectly, and who punishes creatures who seemingly are predestined to do what they do. Nietzsche could condemn such a god on ethical grounds. However, since the old god is dead, Zarathustra says only: "He offended the taste of my ears and eyes; I do not want to say anything worse about him now that he is dead" (Z IV:6).

87. For my own analysis of how modern values have been leading us beyond old-time Christianity, see "Modern Philosophy of Religion: Hume, Nietzsche, and Beyond," Religious Humanism 32:3&4 (1998), pp.38-49. For a comtemporary update on the death of God theme which is both clearly argued and historically informed, see Don Cupitt, The Sea of Faith.

88. Some might suggest a more optimistic reading of the madman's position, because be speaks of inventing new games: "What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent?" (GS 125). However, as the context here is funereal, it seems likely that the "games" he has in mind are funeral games, like those described by Homer in Book XXIII of the Iliad.

89. Smerdyakov is the fourth, illegitimate Karamazov brother. After philosophical conversations with Ivan, he cunningly kills his father and frames his brother Dmitri. Later he tells Ivan: "I did

it above all simply because 'everything is permitted.' And the truth is, I learned that from you; you taught me ... things like, since there is no infinite God, there's no such thing as virtue either and there's no need for it at all." Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, trans. Andrew MacAndrew (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), p.760.

90. Consider how in contemporary English, "moralizing" has taken on a bad odour; the "righteousness" spoken of so often in the Bible now appears to survive mainly as "self-righteousness"; and to describe something as "sinful" now sounds a bit archaic - unless one is describing a sumptuously rich dessert. For more in this linguistic vein, see Mary Midgley, "Is 'Moral' a Dirty Word?" in Heart and Mind (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp.103-132.

91. In arguing against religious-based moral education in British schools, the humanist Margaret Knight writes: "The Gospel ethic, with its negative, passive, masochistic character and its obsession with suffering and sacrifice, cannot be expected to hold much appeal for children. Injunctions to resist not evil and to turn the other cheek, and pronouncements like 'blessed are the meek' and 'blessed are the poor in spirit,' will make a healthy child's gorge rise. More than this, they will tend to create a most undesirable association between the ideas of goodness and soppiness - an association which, once firmly established in the mind of an adventurous child, could well lead him towards delinquency." Honest to Man (London: Elek Books, 1974), p.196.

92. For a book-length look at the dialectic between the suppression and corruption of sexuality, see Wayland Young, Eros Denied (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964).

93. Among the most prominent Anglo-American interpreters to read Nietzsche as a nihilist is Arthur Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher (New York: Macmillan, 1965), ch.1. For a criticism of his position, see Richard Schacht, Making Sense of Nietzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), ch.2. Schacht argues (1) that Nietzsche is not a nihilist in his own terms, and he does not negate the world or see the death of God as leaving the world empty of value, and (2) that he is not a nihilist in the more general sense, and does not hold that nothing true can be said about reality or that there are no valid axiological principles.

94. Martha Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge, p.307. In this work, she also makes an insightful comparison between the reaction of the madman to the death of God and the reaction of many postmodernists to the demise of metaphysical realism: "Just as, in Nietzsche's account, the news of god's death reduces modern human beings to nihilism ... so for numerous contemporary theorists the collapse of the hope that we could walk out to the world and see it in all its unmediated presentness, as it truly is in itself, has left only the thought that no descriptions can be defended as superior to any others (p.229).

95. "The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts," in Martin Heidegger and National Socialism, p.18.

96. On ultimate concern and idolatry, see Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).

97. "The Self-Assertion of the German University," in Martin Heidegger and National Socialism, p.10.

98. The God that Failed, ed. Richard Crossman (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1983; originally New York: Harper, 1949). Though Communism is officially atheistic, critics from across the religious and political spectrum, from Bertrand Russell to Eric Voegelin, have pointed to its quasi-religious appeal and have seen it as carrying on various traditional religious themes. See especially Robert C. Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

99. G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," p.1.

100. Arthur Schopenhauer, On the Basis of Morality, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p.54.

101. One could develop a concept of "natural law" in ethics that was grounded in the regularities of human nature and what is necessary if we are to flourish. However, such an ethic would have to begin with our needs and motives, and whatever "laws" one might derive from the requirements of flourishing would only be hypothetical imperatives.

102. Here I have in mind, not the latter-day form of intuitionism which claims only to assemble various normative ideas and put them in reflective equilibrium, but the earlier variety which pretended to go beyond the realm of opinion.

103. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ch.13, p.101.

104. Henry Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, 7th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907), p.105. See also Richard Taylor, Ethics, Faith, and Reason (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1985); David Carr, Educating the Virtues (Routledge: London, 1991), ch.10; and Charles Larmore, The Morals of Modernity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), ch.1.

105. Alan Donagan, The Theory of Morality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p.4. For a thorough criticism of Donagan's Stoic-Christian-Kantian view of morality, see Mark Johnson, Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Like Schopenhauer, Johnson argues that Kantian morality is highly dependent on metaphors such as "the moral law."

106. Sometimes Nietzsche treats "conscience" more positively. He speaks of it in connection with intellectual honesty (GS 2) and becoming what one is (GS 270). Here, however, the context is

aretaic rather than moral; such "conscience" tells us only that it is contemptible to believe without evidence or questioning, or to fail to actualize oneself out of fear, laziness, or conformity. This involves no appeal to a "moral law within" - only a call not to deceive oneself or evade one's potential (see section 3:7).

107. Craig Beam, "Hume and Nietzsche: Naturalists, Ethicists, Anti-Christians," pp.301-302. Maudemarie Clark also identifies Nietzsche as holding the Humean position that "valuing is an expression of passion," a projection "of the affective or non-cognitive side of our mental life" ("On Knowledge, Truth, and Value," in Willing and Nothingness, ed. Christopher Janaway. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.68).

108. Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), p.57.

109. See, for example, Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," Journal of Philosophy 73:8 (1976), pp.453-466, and Richard Taylor, Good and Evil (New York: Macmillan, 1970). Taylor rivals Nietzsche in his intense dislike of Kantian morality: "With every year of my life I become increasingly overwhelmed with the basic offensiveness of Kant's system of metaphysical morals ... Kant's tracts present the appearance of things composed precisely to turn all things upside down, to pervert and destroy what feeble basis exists in us for some kind of moral life ... if I were ever to find, as I luckily never have, a man who assured me that he really believed Kant's metaphysical morals, and that he modelled his own conduct and relations with others after those principles, then my incredulity and distrust of him as a human being could not be greater than if he told me that he regularly drowned children just to see them squirm" (xii).

110. The fact that our nature is determined, however, does not mean that we are "unfree." Nietzsche warns us not to reify "cause" as an external power, mechanically pressing on us until it "effects" its end (BGE 21). Our "fate" is not something over and against us that we must passively accept; rather, we ourselves are a piece of fate (WS 61). Nietzsche also thinks it is proper to speak of "freedom of the will" as an expression "for the complex state of delight of the person exercising volition, who commands and at the same time identifies himself with the executor of the order" (BGE 19). Such freedom is psychological, not metaphysical. It involves a healthy order of the psyche, not a non-causal power, and thus it is fully compatible with determinism.

111. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb were two wealthy young men who were convicted of murder in the early 1920s. For a discussion of Darrow's defence, see Nina Rosenstand, The Moral of the Story (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1994), pp.329-331.

112. John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp.72-74. For criticism of this view of desert, see Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia (New York: Basic Books, 1974),

pp.213-231.

113. See David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Appendix IV, p.105. Hume opposes using the distinction between what is supposedly "voluntary" or "involuntary" to separate a class of moral virtues and vices off from other talents and defects.

114. Some Christians, such as John Calvin, have been so intent on upholding God's omnipotence and foreknowledge that they have been willing to accept the predestination of souls, some to heaven and some to hell. Nietzsche, together with most Christians, would find such a doctrine objectionable.

115. For an example of moralistic retributivism, see Immanuel Kant, The Metaphysics of Morals, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Kant writes: "The law of punishment is a categorical imperative, and woe to him who crawls through the windings of eudaemonism in order to discover something that releases the criminal from punishment or even reduces its amount by the advantage it promises ... Even if a civil society were to be dissolved by the consent of all its members ... the last murderer remaining in prison would first have to be executed, so that each has done to him what his deeds deserve and blood guilt does not cling to the people for not having insisted upon this punishment (pp.105-106). For more on Kant's views, see Annette Baier, Moral Prejudices (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), ch.13.

116. Arthur Schopenhauer, On the Basis of Morality, ch.16, p.141.

117. For further discussion, see Craig Beam, "Hume and Nietzsche: Naturalists, Ethicists, Anti-Christians," pp.315-316. There I show how Schopenhauer's ethical views are linked to his world-denying metaphysics.

118. Much the same point is developed at length by Michael Slote in From Morality to Virtue (especially in ch.1). Slote calls this the problem of self-other asymmetry, and argues that it is a serious problem for Kantian and Common-Sense Morality.

119. For an illustration of such "pseudo-egoism" see the character of Peter Keating in Ayn Rand, The Fountainhead (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943). Keating is referred to as a "second-hander."

120. On Eichmann's appeal to Kant, see Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), ch.8. According to Arendt: "Whatever Kant's role in the formation of 'the little man's' mentality in Germany may have been, there is not the slightest doubt that in one respect Eichmann did indeed follow Kant's precepts: a law is a law, there could be no exceptions. ... This uncompromising attitude toward the performance of his murderous duties damned him in the eyes of his judges more than anything else, which was comprehensible, but in his own eyes it was precisely what justified him, as it had once silenced whatever conscience he might have had left. No exceptions - this was the

proof that he had always acted against his 'inclinations,' whether they were sentimental or inspired by interest, that he had always done his 'duty'" (p.137).

121. Nietzsche often expresses contempt for utilitarianism. He says that it "smells of the rabble" (BGE 190), he calls the English utilitarian a "thoroughly mediocre type of man" (BGE 228), and he refers to John Stuart Mill as a "flathead" (WP 30). In general, Nietzsche equates utilitarianism with a kind of crude Benthamism and disregards the modifications that Mill made in the theory, remarking only that utilitarians walk clumsily in Bentham's footsteps (BGE 228). As a critic of Mill, Nietzsche may be unfair. But he has little interest in the technicalities of utilitarian theory. He is repelled by the basic spirit of the theory, which levels and flattens everything out. A rich variety of values is reduced to interchangeable hedons of pleasure, distinctions between human beings are erased, and all things are brought down to the lowest common denominator.

For contemporary criticisms of utilitarianism, see John Rawls, A Theory of Justice; Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, ch.5-6; Martha Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness, ch.4; and Charles Taylor, "The Diversity of Goods," in Anti-Theory in Ethics and Moral Conservatism, ed. Stanley Clarke and Evan Simpson (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989).

122. At his most elitist, Nietzsche remarks: "egoism belongs to the nature of a noble soul - I mean that unshakable faith that to a being such as 'we are' other beings must be subordinate by nature and have to sacrifice themselves" (BGE 265). Notice, however, that he describes this confidence and belief in one's value as a faith, and does not claim that inferior people are obligated to sacrifice themselves for such a noble soul (a claim that he is not entitled to make given his premises), although they may identify with and willingly subordinate themselves to such an person.

123. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1169a. Among modern moralists, Joseph Butler and David Hume also deal sensibly with the subject of self-love. Butler points out that "benevolence is not in any respect more at variance with self-love, than any other particular affection ... The thing to be lamented is, not that men have so great regard to their own good or interest in the present world, for they have not enough; but that they have so little to the good of others." See "Fifteen Sermons" (abridged), in British Moralists 1650-1800, vol.1, pp.334-335.

124. On the potential of the self to encompass widening circles of interest and value, see Warwick Fox, Toward a Transpersonal Ecology (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp.217-221. Fox follows the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, in upholding a version of deep ecology that, rather than postulating some sort of objective intrinsic value in nature that we have a moral duty to respect, seeks instead to expand and deepen our sense of self so that we come to identify with the natural world and take it under our protection.

125. This assumption is a widely held, especially among commentators who focus on Nietzsche's politics or his critique of modernity while neglecting his critique of Christianity. For instance, see Cynthia Willett, Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities (New York: Routledge, 1995), a book whose index does not contain a single reference to "resentment" (despite frequent references to Nietzsche). Or see Irving Zeitlin, Nietzsche: A Re-Examination (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), a book which has many valuable things to say about the historical and sociological background of Nietzsche's theory of value-inversion, but ultimately leaves the reader with the impression that Nietzsche's main animus is directed against the ideals of social justice.

126. Arthur Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher, p.159. These concepts are also discussed in Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," p.24.

127. Thus, Aristotle describes the virtues of the great-souled man, rather than giving us a list of moral rules. According to him: "that which is in truth an object of wish is an object of wish to the good man ... the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them" (Nicomachean Ethics, 1113a).

128. See Richard White, "The Return of the Master," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, ed. Richard Schacht, pp.63-75. White argues that "master" and "slave" refer to basic modalities of individual existence; that Nietzsche desires the return of the master; and that this means, not a return to lost origins, but the overcoming of nihilism, the destruction of the "slave" within ourselves, and the celebration of the active will to self-empowerment.

129. Consider his praise of friendship in Z I:14, good-naturedness in HA 493, sympathy in BGE 284, and the desire for freedom in Z I:1 (among other passages).

130. See Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," p.25. She also argues that the idea of moral blame or culpability is what transforms "bad" into "evil."

131. See Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), especially ch.4. Daly complains that in Christianity, "there has been a theoretical one-sided emphasis upon charity, meekness, obedience, humility, self-abnegation, sacrifice, service" (p.100). This reinforces the oppression of women and other groups, who are forced to act out these "virtues" in the presence of their masters. She goes on: "A basic irony in the phenomenon of this 'feminine' ethic of selflessness and sacrificial love is the fact that the qualities which are really lived out and valued by those in dominant roles, and esteemed by those in subservient roles, are not overtly held up as values but rather are acted out under pretense of doing something else. Ambitious prelates who have achieved ecclesiastical power have been praised not for their ambition but for 'humility.' Avaricious and ruthless politicians often speak unctuously of sacrifice, service, and dedication. ... The Judeo-

Christian ethic has tended to support rather than challenge this self-legitimating facticity ... Since it fails to develop an understanding and respect for the aggressive and creative virtues, it offers no alternative to the hypocrisy-condoning situation fostered by its one-sided and unrealistic ethic" (p.101).

Anyone who is inclined to quarrel with Daly's analysis should reflect upon the following passage in St. Augustine (Confessions, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), where he praises his mother, St. Monica, as a model Christian wife: "her patience was so great that [her husband's] infidelity never became a cause of quarrelling between them ... he had a hot temper, but my mother knew better than to say or do anything to resist him when he was angry ... Many women, whose faces were disfigured by blows from husbands far sweeter-tempered than her own, used to gossip together and complain of the behaviour of their men-folk. My mother would meet this complaint with another - about the women's tongues. Her manner was light but her meaning serious when she told them that ever since they had heard the marriage deed read over to them, they ought to have regarded it as a contract which bound them to serve their husbands, and from that time onward they should remember their condition and not defy their masters" (pp.194-195).

132. For discussion of this note, see Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche and Christianity, pp.90-93. Jaspers sees it an example of Nietzsche's tendency to embody contradictory positions within his thought. One must keep in mind, however, that this passage is in no way an endorsement of Christianity. For Nietzsche, the man Jesus had very little to do with historical Christianity, which was largely an invention of the despicable St. Paul (A 31-42).

133. For a reading of the Genealogy which tries to justify a more positive view of slave morality, guilt, and asceticism, see Philip Kain, "Nietzschean Genealogy and Hegelian History in The Genealogy of Morals," Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 26:1 (1996), pp.123-148. But Kain makes too much of brief asides in the Genealogy, such as GM I:6 and I:7, or when Nietzsche credits bad conscience and self-torture with deepening and spiritualizing man (GM II:18). Such asides are best understood as "giving the devil his due" - a generous acknowledgement that even his priestly adversaries have contributed something to existence (thereby demonstrating his own freedom from ressentiment). Kain ends up giving cruelty and self-torture too large and too positive a role in the genesis of virtue. He also fails to appreciate the extent to which Nietzsche's concept of ressentiment separates his account of masters and slaves from that of Hegel.

134. For a different view, see Max Scheler, Ressentiment, trans. William Holdheim (New York: Collier, 1961). In assessing Christian and modern ressentiment, his position is pretty much the reverse of my own. He defends Christianity (or at least true Christianity) against the charge that it is rooted in ressentiment, but is quite happy to condemn modern humanitarian and egalitarian ideals on this basis. In contrast, I think that Nietzsche's resentment-hypothesis is most persuavive when applied to some of the darker aspects of Pauline and Augustinian Christianity (involving both the moral

negation of noble values and the metaphysical negation of earthly life), while it is less helpful when applied to modern liberalism at its best.

CHAPTER THREE

135. Human flourishing [menschliche Gedeihen] is a term which I will use frequently in the arguments that follow. It is taken from neo-Aristotelian ethics, where it has become the preferred translation of eudaimonia. To speak of "flourishing" brings to mind an image of a healthy organism which is realizing its nature and potential - an image which fits Aristotle and Nietzsche's ethical ideal very well. It is synonymous with well-being, fulfilment, and prosperity. To speak of "happiness," on the other hand, is more likely to suggest a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction - an image better suited to utilitarianism. For Nietzsche, menschliche Gedeihen is closely linked to naturalist ideals of health, aretaic ideals of virtue, and higher forms of power. It is to "become what one is" and to actualize oneself. Flourishing is not just one ideal among many, but a holistic goal, encompassing a variety of virtues and goods. For more on this concept, see Thomas Hurka, "The Three Faces of Flourishing," Social Philosophy and Policy 16:1 (1999), pp.44-71. Hurka thinks that "flourishing" was introduced into contemporary philosophy by Elizabeth Anscombe in her 1958 article "Modern Moral Philosophy." He sees it as having three main facets: it involves a theory of the human good based on human nature, it is used to identify traits as virtues, and it is the central concept in a theory which seeks to derive all moral incentives from the fundamental incentive that we have to pursue our own flourishing.

136. For a fine account of the ascetic ideal which deals with the above issues, see Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, ch.6.

137. Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotle on Human Nature and the Foundations of Ethics," in World, Mind, and Ethics: Essays on the Ethical Philosophy of Bernard Williams, ed. J.E.J. Altham and Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.121. She argues that the Aristotelian ethical project should not be seen as depending on an external, scientific, value-free account of human nature. Such an account is not available, and even if it were, it would leave us with the problem of getting from "facts of nature" to what we value (p.91). Nussbaum sees the task of defining our nature as interpretive and open-ended: "a historically evolving project of self-perpetuation/inquiry/creation" (p.123). Whether or not this is Aristotle's view, it is the sort of answer that a perspectivist like Nietzsche must give. Some philosophers have criticized Nussbaum for robbing the human nature view of its explanatory point. As Hurka asks: if we include certain qualities in human nature because we think they are good, how can we explain their goodness by saying that they make up human nature? ("Three Faces of Flourishing," p.52). In other words, there is a viciously circular relationship between the concepts of "flourishing" and "value." For a counter-argument, see Christine Swanton, Freedom: A

Coherence Theory (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), pp.41-46. Swanton points out that the concept of human flourishing, although partly evaluative, is still thinner than a value system based on it.

138. Richard Schacht, Nietzsche, p.343.

139. Richard Schacht, Nietzsche, p.359.

140. Lester Hunt, Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, p.112

141. Brian Leiter, "Morality in the Pejorative Sense," p.132. He claims that "value for life" refers only to the preservation and enhancement of the highest men. Granted, Nietzsche is no egalitarian, but I see no reason to saddle him with the view that the vast majority of human beings are completely outside the scope of his concern. All humans are value-positing creatures, having desires and needs, a capacity to flourish in their own terms, and the ability to take action against those who would use and abuse them. And as Leiter acknowledges, there is "ample textual support" for the view that life (in some sense that is wider than the interests of the few) is Nietzsche's standard of value.

142. Others who argue against a metaphysical or cosmological reading of the will to power include Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, ch.9, Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, ch.7, and Bernd Magnus, "The Use and Abuse of The Will to Power."

143. Nietzsche uses "life" in more than one sense. In some places, the "life-will" is equated with security and comfort (BGE 44), but more often it is flourishing that Nietzsche has in mind when he speaks of life (GM P:3, TI V:4). A healthy will to power takes us beyond life-as-survival and seeks to realize our highest potential (i.e. our flourishing).

144. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1169a. For a contrary view, see Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Random House, 1955). In arguing against suicide, he claims "that no depth, no emotion, no passion, and no sacrifice could render equal ... a conscious life of forty years and a lucidity spread over sixty years" (pp.46-47).

145. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1174a.

146. For a thorough treatment of the psychology of power, see Jacob Golomb, Nietzsche's Enticing Psychology of Power (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989). Golomb distinguishes between power (Macht) and force (Kraft). Force is simply physical strength, while power is something more sublimated and psychical, which may be destroyed by force (ch.5). This must not be confused with another distinction that he makes, between positive power which proceeds out of inner strength and sufficiency, and negative power which proceeds out of the opposite (ch.6). As one might suspect, Golomb's interpretation owes something to Kaufmann and to Freud.

147. John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, in On Liberty and Other Essays, ed. John Gray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, ch.2, p.140. Gray also interprets Mill in aretaic terms, arguing that his view of happiness owes more to Aristotle than to Bentham. In an explanatory note, he says: "Mill's qualitative hedonism - the view that some pleasures are better than others, regardless of the quantity of satisfaction they give - is hard to distinguish from the eudaimonism of Aristotle, in which human well-being consists in the fullest development of distinctively human powers" (p.587). For Mill, happiness is not just a matter of pleasant sensations but rather "a condition of active flourishing in which the higher faculties are exercised and the higher pleasures enjoyed" (xxiv).

148. Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, p.259. The discussion of power and pleasure in ch.9 of this book is very insightful. Kaufmann points out that both of these terms can have a broad as well as a narrow sense, and are subject to misunderstanding for this reason.

149. Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.210. She claims that Nietzsche values will to power, not because life is will to power or because people want only power, but because it is "the source of what is most valuable in human life, the activities and states of soul that make life worth living" (p.226). This is not exactly wrong, but it does restrict the meaning of the term more narrowly than Nietzsche does. In one sense, the sort of power that he values (i.e. flourishing) can only arise on a foundation of other desires and needs. A newborn baby sucking on a breast is not consciously or explicitly seeking to actualize its potential. But in another sense, one might say that this is "life's aim." It is not much of a stretch to go from saying that power is "what is most valuable in human life" to regarding it as our telos, much as becoming a full-grown oak tree is the telos of an acorn. In this sense, the nursing baby is seeking (implicitly of course) to grow, develop, and actualize itself as a human organism.

150. This may sound peculiar, but no more so than some of the things Plato and Freud say about eros.

151. This comparison was also made by Walter Kaufmann. He refers to will to power as a "creative Eros" which can manifest itself in many ways, and adds that "Nietzsche's development of this point is full of allusions to Plato's Symposium, which, almost certainly, suggested these ideas to him" (Nietzsche, p.249). The discussion of beauty in TI IX:19-24 is especially relevant here.

152. Plato, Symposium, 205d.

153. Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, ch.4. Given the wide-ranging influence of Maslow's ideas, and given their relevance to Nietzsche and Aristotle, it is surprising that philosophers have not made more use of them. Writers on Nietzsche's psychology refer to Freud, Jung, and even James Hillman, but never to Maslow (e.g., Graham Parkes, Composing the Soul, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). One can also read volumes on neo-Aristotelian ethics without coming across any mention of Maslow's name. One exception

is David L. Norton, Personal Destinies (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). This book, dedicated to Maslow, traces the themes of self-actualization and eudaimonia through an impressive variety of sources. See also John Riker, Human Excellence and the Ecological Conception of the Psyche (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). At least one critic of Maslow has linked him with Nietzsche in order to expose his "elitism"; see Jean Grimshaw, Philosophy and Feminist Thinking (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), ch.5. Grimshaw's main targets here are feminists, like Betty Friedan and Mary Daly, who derive inspiration from the Maslovian\Nietzschean themes of self-assertion, self-affirmation, and independence.

154. Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p.150. Richard Lowry also remarks on the similarity between Maslow's self-actualizing person and Nietzsche's overman; see his A.H. Maslow: An Intellectual Portrait (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973), pp.49-50.

155. Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, ch.11.

156. Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p.162. The contrast between growth and deficiency motivation is treated more fully by Maslow in Towards a Psychology of Being (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968), ch.3.

157. Kaufmann translates "umbringt" as "destroy." But this is the version of the aphorism which has made its way into the popular lexicon. Of course, before one can turn adversity to our advantage, one must be inwardly powerful and healthy enough to do so. So this aphorism is not as deeply opposed to Maslow's theories about need-satisfaction as one might think.

158. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, p.416.

159. For a helpful account of these meta-ethical issues, see Richard Taylor, Good and Evil (New York: Macmillan, 1970), ch.9. Taylor argues that "the basic distinction between good and evil [what Nietzsche calls good and bad] could not even theoretically be drawn in a world that we imagined to be devoid of all life" (p.123). Such a world would simply be a world of facts. But introduce one single living being into the picture, and the dimension of good and evil opens up. Those things are good which satisfy the needs and desires of such a creature, and evil which have the opposite effect. It is only when we imagine multiple interacting sentient beings that the dimension of right and wrong emerges - the need to avoid harmful conflict and to cooperate for mutual benefit.

Like Nietzsche, Taylor points us towards a naturalistic mode of evaluating character traits and a naturalistic version of the social contract. His way of setting out the issues is helpful in defending ethical naturalism against charges of committing "the naturalistic fallacy" (G.E. Moore, Principia Ethica, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1902\1988, ch.1). Outside of life, outside of the flourishing of living creatures, talk of "the good" has no meaning

or application.

160. What this means may be illustrated by considering the example of a mountain. A mountain may be good for skiing; it may be sublime to behold; it may be a good habitat for certain kinds of plants and animals. But its value is always relative to life. One might say that the Rockies are "better" mountains than the Appalachians, in the sense that they are closer to our prototypical concept of what a mountain should be. But concepts are created by intelligent life for the purposes of life (i.e. to make sense of things). Large mounds of rock do not seek to maintain themselves in existence, let alone to "flourish."

161. In Nietzsche's early essay "On the Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," he says: "Every concept arises from the equation of unequal things. Just as it is certain that one leaf is never totally the same as another, so it is certain that the concept 'leaf' is formed by arbitrarily discarding these individual differences" (Philosophy and Truth, ed. Daniel Breazeale. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979, p.83).

162. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, p.143.

163. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, p.153.

164. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, p.203.

165. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism," in Existentialism From Dostoevsky to Sartre, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: New American Library, 1975), pp.348-350.

166. Mary Midgley, Beast and Man (Routledge: London, 1978/1995), p.286. She argues that our capacity for culture is best seen as part of our nature.

167. Similar lists are to be found in Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, ch.4; John Riker, Human Excellence and the Ecological Conception of the Psyche, ch.5; and Martha Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," in The Quality of Life, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.242-269. Nussbaum's article deals most explicitly with the issue of relativism, arguing that there are certain grounding experiences and features of human nature that are cross-cultural.

168. On the rise of cultural relativism in early 20th century social science (and the ethical-political motives which contributed to its popularity), see Dinesh D'Souza, The End of Racism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), ch.4. The classic statement of the cultural relativist view is Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934).

169. When Nietzsche says that "only man" placed value in things, the operative contrast is between humanity and the divine, not humans and other animals. The point is that value is not a

transcendent form to be discovered, and good and evil were not dictated by any voice from heaven. Much that Nietzsche says about "life" and "will to power" suggests that the category of value is relevant to non-human forms of life. They too seek to survive and flourish in their own terms. Of course, having little or no capacity for culture, animals do not posit values in the same (explicit and linguistic) way as we do. The ethical status of animals was not an issue that concerned Nietzsche, any more than it concerned most philosophers until the last few decades. However, his naturalism makes it hard to make any radical distinction between homo sapiens and our immediate relatives in the animal kingdom. For more on this topic, one might start with Mary Midgley, Beast and Man.

170. A point argued in my "Liberalism, Globalization, and Cultural Relativism," Dialogos 73 (1999), pp.109-125.

171. George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949), p.215.

172. Richard Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.183. Although a radical relativist, Rorty must be given credit for biting the bullet and drawing our attention to the very scene in the very novel that is most compromising for his view.

173. George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, pp.216-217

174. Philippa Foot, "Nietzsche: The Revaluation of Values," in Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), pp.81-95, and "Nietzsche's Immoralism," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, pp.3-14. In the former work, she counts Nietzsche as an immoralist because he was "prepared to throw out rules of justice in the interests of producing a stronger and more splendid type of man" (p.92). In the latter, she says that justice requires "a certain recognition of equality between human beings" which Nietzsche lacks (p.9). For a criticism of her views, see Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, pp.15-34.

175. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott (New York: Collier Books, 1962), ch.13, p.102.

176. To my knowledge, Maudemarie Clark is the only commentator who attributes to Nietzsche a contractarian view of justice; see "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality." Lester Hunt also explores contractarian themes in Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, especially ch.6 and ch.9. He looks at the relation between virtue and justice, and suggests "that the social framework that makes virtue possible might be founded upon an agreement reached between the elite and their subordinates" (p.172). Such a contract would protect freedom and the pursuit of virtue but it would not permit exploitation. But Hunt treats Nietzsche as having a "pure ethics of virtue," in which the ethical merit of an act depends entirely on the virtuousness of the states of character from which

it arises. This "makes it impossible for him to say, coherently, that justice is a virtue" (p.170). I find this analysis of terms unhelpful. The fact that justice is not a virtue like other virtues does not mean that it is not part of the ethical realm (consider Hume and his concept of an "artificial virtue").

177. According to Keith Ansell-Pearson, Nietzsche "rejects social contract theory as no more than the reflection of a slave morality which aims to seduce the strong and convert them to the morality of the weak" (An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.42).

178. This interpretation of Hobbes would be disputed by some, who see his theory of human nature and ethics as derived from the influence of materialism and physical science. But Hobbes first publication, in 1628, was a translation of Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War. For a look at the influence of the ancients on young Hobbes, see Leo Strauss, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936). He argues that Thucydides was at the centre of Hobbes' interests as a young man, heralding his philosophic life-work. (p.44).

179. The realist tradition of contract theory includes such figures as Hobbes (its classic exemplar), Hume (in his analysis of justice), and David Gauthier (its leading contemporary spokesman). Nietzsche sees it as having roots in the culture of the Sophists of Ancient Greece. Rawls' well-known Theory of Justice is not part of this tradition, because it depends on hypothetical agents who deliberate about justice behind a "veil of ignorance" - a device which is really a thought experiment designed to get us to swallow his egalitarian intuitions about justice. Since Rawls' view of morality is essentially Kantian, many of Nietzsche's strictures against Kant would apply to him as well.

180. At times Nietzsche speaks of justice as an intellectual virtue, which he prefers to objectivity. Only insofar as one "possesses the unconditional will to justice is there anything great in that striving for truth which is everywhere so thoughtlessly glorified" (UM p.89, HL 6). Such justice in non-contractarian, but it has little to do with the basic legal and political issues which are typically seen as central to justice.

181. See David Gauthier, Moral Dealing: Contract, Ethics, and Reason (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), ch.1-3, ch.6. Gauthier follows Hobbes and Hume in arguing that the need for justice arises out of human vulnerability and lack of self-sufficiency. He admits that as a contractarian, he cannot answer Glaucon's challenge in the Republic, for the Ring of Gyges removes the basic conditions of justice. By making its holder invisible, it allows him to inflict what he pleases on other people. He "interacts with his fellows as a god because he does not fear their reprisal" (p.147).

In a well-known passage, Hume expresses the same idea: "Were there a species of creatures, intermingled with men, which, though rational, were possessed of such inferior strength, both of body

and mind, that they were incapable of all resistance, and could never, upon the highest provocation, make us feel the effects of their resentment; the necessary consequence, I think, is, that we should be bound, by the laws of humanity, to give gentle usage to these creatures, but should not, properly speaking, lie under any restraint of justice with regard to them, nor could they possess any right of property, exclusive of such arbitrary lords" (An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, p.25).

182. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ch.13, p.98.

183. A point made in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, in The Social Contract and Discourses, trans. G.D.H. Cole (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1913), pp.155-246.

184. Hume also rejected the idea of an original contract, and yet his understanding of justice is widely regarded as contractarian. In the Treatise, he argues that the convention of justice "is not of the nature of a promise: For even promises themselves, as we shall see afterwards, arise from human conventions. ... Two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, tho' they have never given promises to each other. Nor is the rule concerning the stability of possession the less deriv'd from human conventions, that is arises gradually, and acquires force by a slow progression, and by our repeated experience of the inconveniences of transgressing it" (p.490). Also see "Of the Original Contract," in Essays Moral, Political, and Literary, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), pp.465-487. Against the Lockean view, Hume argues that virtually all governments, present and historical, "have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest, or both, without any pretence of a fair consent, or voluntary subjection of the people" (p.471).

185. The one problem I have with Maudemarie Clark's account of Nietzsche as contractarian is that it makes no distinction between basic and social justice. Thus, she quotes passages where he speaks highly of justice and people's indebtedness for the advantages of community, but does not raise the thornier issue of whether this is an aristocratic or democratic community. What is considered fair in the one may be considered unfair in the other. To deal with these issues, one must look beyond the Genealogy.

186. See Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," p.28.

187. The above argument is a fusion of two traditional strands of liberal argument. It combines what Judith Shklar has called "The Liberalism of Fear" - which has roots in Hobbes, and which is most concerned with guarding our liberty against the abuse of power and the worst evils of political life - with a more romantic liberal defence of personal development and individuality, which might be called "the liberalism of self-actualization." See the essays by Shklar, on one hand, and George Kateb and Nancy Rosenblum, on the other, in Liberalism and the Moral Life, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

188. Thus, I agree with Keith Ansell-Pearson that "Nietzsche, in the writings of his middle period, shows a surer, more insightful grasp of the realities of modern political life than perhaps at any other time in his intellectual career"; see Nietzsche Contra Rousseau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.215.

189. This is something that has been done by various liberal and postmodern interpreters of Nietzsche. Lester Hunt does it in the final chapter of Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, as does Mark Warren in the final chapter of Nietzsche and Political Thought (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988). Warren rightly points out that to develop some aspects of Nietzsche's political thought is to violate others (xii). He takes issue especially with certain "uncritical assumptions" that Nietzsche makes. These include his assumption that higher cultures "require an institutionalized division of cultural and economic labor" (p.237), and his explanation of modern "weakness" in terms of physiology and culture rather than in terms of markets and bureaucracies. Warren concludes that "Nietzsche did not give his own philosophy a plausible political identity"; that he failed to develop the political possibilities of his thought owing to certain assumptions he makes; that some of these "contravene the structures of his own philosophy" while "others are empirically unfounded or inappropriate to modern societies" (p.246). Warren's approach here is sound. It allows him to make an internal and empirical critique of certain strands of Nietzsche's politics, rather than simply rejecting it outright or trying to whitewash it. In the same way, interpreters develop the ethical ideas and problematic of Hobbes while resisting his monarchist political conclusions.

190. On the concept of the legislator, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, Nietzsche Contra Rousseau, ch.6. He makes the case that Nietzsche's later political thought "revolves around a problem that has been of great importance in the history of political thought from Plato to Machiavelli and Rousseau, namely the problem of the legislator or lawgiver." (p.206). He also argues that "Nietzsche's conception of the philosopher-legislator reveals an obvious close link with Plato's conception of the philosopher-king," and that their models of social order are similar as well (p.209).

191. In AC 57, Nietzsche claims that a tripartite division of castes is "natural." By this, he merely means that it has been adopted by many societies, and has been "proved right by a tremendous and rigorously filtered experience" (AC 57). However, it is odd to speak of a social system which requires a law-giver to give it authority as "natural" - especially when the law-giver must resort to pious frauds and noble lies. Moreover, since the "experience" that Nietzsche refers to is limited to pre-industrial societies, it may be the case that such an division of castes is inappropriate (i.e. "unnatural") under modern conditions.

192. In WS 289, Nietzsche adds that democratic institutions are "very boring." However, we should not think that Nietzsche (here or ever) opposed them out of some kind of lust for political excitement. As Zarathustra says: "the greatest events - they are

not our loudest but our stillest hours" (Z II:18).

193. In Nietzsche Contra Rousseau, Ansell-Pearson says: "perhaps the key question concerning Nietzsche's vision of politics is to what extent the breeding of an aristocratic discipline and cultivation is possible without at the same time giving rise to a politics of resentment" (p.211). For this to be a problem, one need not imagine Nietzsche's aristocrats as harsh masters who tyrannize and exploit their subjects. As Ansell-Pearson argues, the root of the problem is the question of legitimacy. In the modern world, political legitimacy has come to be associated with notions of democracy, consent, liberty, and equality. The subordination of one group to another is clearly unacceptable, and the attempt to achieve it is bound to engender conflict. An aspiring Nietzschean legislator would probably have to behave like a despot merely to hold on to the reins of power.

194. For example, Nietzsche suggests that the modern "dwarfing of man" may eventually create a broad foundation on which a stronger species of man can stand (WP 890). Here and elsewhere, Nietzsche sees the masses as becoming more homogenous and herd-like. However, while modern people may have become softer and more hedonistic, they have not become any less critical, educated, or autonomous. In fact, the reverse seems to be the case. Many forms of pluralism are on the rise.

195. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ch.14, p.111.

196. David Gauthier writes: "Morals by agreement ... are the morals of economic man. And economic man is the natural man of our time. His motivation is most succinctly expressed in the word of Samuel Gompers, whose reply to what labour demanded was 'More!' Economic man, whether capitalist or worker, is an indefinite appropriator, seeking to subdue more and more of the world to his power exercised in the service of his preferences" (Morals by Agreement, pp.315-316). This passage is reminiscent of Heidegger and his claim that the will to power is the underlying metaphysics of our age (see his Nietzsche, Vol.3, ed. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987, pp.229-234). Such indefinite appropriation, however, has more to do with modern economics than with Nietzsche's thought.

197. Nietzsche use of the term "duty" here is puzzling, for the term is strongly associated with Kantian-style unconditional morality, which he vehemently rejects. He may be using the word in a loose or hyperbolic sense, to emphasize how unworthy it is for the strong to abuse the weak. Or maybe he assumes that the aristocratic lawgiver (his theme here) would grant certain rights and protections to the lower orders.

198. On this subject, see Paul Patton, "Politics and the Concept of Power in Hobbes and Nietzsche," in Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory, pp.144-161. He argues that for Hobbes, the only mode of increase of power is quantitative, while for Nietzsche, there are qualitative differences in both the way power is exercised and the nature of the subjects exercising power (p.158).

Hobbes' view of power implies a community of "slaves," while Nietzsche's implies the possibility of a community of "masters" (p.154). Walter Kaufmann earlier noted that for Hobbes, power was essentially an instrument, while for Nietzsche, power is not a means but a state of being that is desired for its own sake (Nietzsche, p.360).

In an interesting essay on "Nietzsche and Analytic Ethics," Frithjof Bergmann argues that Nietzsche's ethical project is invariably misunderstood when it is read in terms of Hobbesian assumptions: "If human beings really are compressed and pent-up quantities of sheer rapaciousness, or fundamentally little atomic incarnations of greed, which if left to themselves would devour each other, then there is an imperative need for some power to restrain and tame their demonic impulses" (Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, p.92). If crude egoism is the truth of our nature, then Hobbes is right and his sort of prescription is what we need. However, if human beings are seen as having a potential for self-development which too often is ignored, wasted, or repressed - "then the main core of Nietzsche's message makes immediate and obvious sense" (p.94).

199. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ch.11, p.80.

200. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ch.14, p.111.

201. Michael Oakeshott, Hobbes on Civil Association (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p.120.

202. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ch.6, p.52.

203. Walter Kaufmann discusses Nietzsche's view of laughter in a lengthy footnote to BGE 294. On the spirit of gravity, see Zarathustra I:7, II:13, III:2, III:11.

204. In her review of Gauthier's Morals by Agreement, Annette Baier cites this passage as a fitting response to Gauthier's ethics, with its pure contractarianism and its economic view of man. Nietzsche's powerful human beings say: "What are my parasites to me? May they live and prosper: I am strong enough for that!" (GM II:10). But Gauthier's ideology of justice has no tolerance for parasites and free riders. Since he begins with rational individuals who start as Robinson Crusoes and work their way to social arrangements, he must ignore "our actual progress from being infant parasites, through our childhood free or less free ridership, to adolescent pretences of autonomy" ("Pilgrim's Progress," Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 18:2, June 1988, p.320).

205. What Nietzsche says about mercy and shattering the sword may appear to bear a resemblance to Christian ethics at its best. The difference, for Nietzsche, is that he sees the ethics of the Gospel as an expression of weakness rather than strength; of inability to revenge rather than true forgiveness (see section 2:6).

206. For example, see Dwight Furrow, Against Theory (New York: Routledge, 1995). Furrow argues, following Levinas and Lyotard, "that moral obligation involves a feeling of being bound to another person through a recognition of his or her capacity to suffer - a recognition that cannot be reduced to an instance of understanding, a system of principles or norms, or a coherent narrative" (xix). And he thinks that Rorty is on the right track when he puts the issue of avoiding cruelty before the issue of final vocabularies. My sense is that views which identify the ethical with love and compassion have a great deal of popular currency (just think of the Beatles singing "all you need is love"). On the centrality of benevolence to modern ideals since the Enlightenment, see Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

207. It is important not to equate pity with all forms of sympathy, or altruism with all forms of generosity. My analysis here draws on my earlier essay, "Hume and Nietzsche: Naturalists, Ethicists, Anti-Christians," especially when I trace the anti-Schopenhauerian context of Nietzsche's anti-pity views, and show that he evaluates different other-regarding affects quite differently.

208. The German word (literally Mit [with] Leid [sorrow, pain] or "suffering-with") can be rendered as either pity or compassion. Perhaps because compassion has more positive connotations than pity, in translation, Schopenhauer bases ethics on "compassion" while Nietzsche usually objects to "pity." In my usage I follow Kaufmann, Hollingdale, and various scholars who have discussed Nietzsche's view of "pity." Mitleid should be distinguished from Mitgefühl [sympathy], which is not tied to suffering, and which Nietzsche is willing to count as a virtue (BGE 284).

209. Arthur Schopenhauer, On the Basis of Morality, ch.16, p.146. He cites Rousseau's first maxim: "It is not in the human heart to put ourselves in the place of people who are happier than we, but only in that of those who are more pitiable."

210. Arthur Schopenhauer, On the Basis of Morality, ch.22.

211. Nietzsche does not say much about pity in his genealogies of morality and religion, because he regards the prominence of pity as a particularly modern development. In the Antichrist, he may say that "Christianity is called the religion of pity" (A 7), but what follows is really a quick and rather hyperbolic summery of his many criticisms of pity. It has little to do with Christianity as such. Moreover, the fact that Christianity has been equated with pity (or with love) does not mean that Nietzsche sees it this way himself.

212. Research on nonverbal communication appears to support the idea that females have more expressive faces and are better at decoding nonverbal cues than are males. As to whether this is a product of social subordination or women's role in looking after children, the question remains open; see Judith Hall, Nonverbal Sex Differences (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp.142-143.

213. For an interesting comparison of ideals, see Norman Wirzba, "The Needs of Thought and the Affirmation of Life: Friedrich Nietzsche and Jesus Christ," International Philosophical Quarterly, 37:4 (1997), pp.385-401. Wirzba sees in Christian love "a richer and more complete affirmation of life" than in Nietzsche (p.387). Like many liberal Christians, he reduces the gospel to an ethic of love which wants to make things better in this world. Here one might say that the "bait" has outlasted the "hook" - that love continues to have an appeal for people who have rejected, or who ignore, most of what the churches have stood for over the centuries. The result is that Wirzba's Christianity seems little different from progressive humanism. One is reminded of Nietzsche's remarks concerning "the euthanasia of Christianity":

> the more moderate and reflective people of the intellectual middle class now possess only an adapted, that is to say marvellously simplified Christianity ... one should notice that Christianity has thus crossed over into a gentle moralism: it is not so much 'God, freedom and immortality' that have remained, as benevolence and decency of disposition. (D 92)

The questions that remain unresolved between Wirzba's Jesus and Nietzsche are, first, the relative merits of an ethic of love and an ethic of self-actualization, and second, whether trying to eliminate suffering is sufficient to address the problem it poses, or whether we also need something like Nietzsche's amor fati.

214. Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, p.34. The letter is dated Good Friday, 14 April 1876. Malwida, the author of Memoirs of an Idealist, was a friend and correspondent of Nietzsche from 1872 until the end of his career.

215. Nel Noddings, Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.79. See also Sara Ruddick, Maternal Thinking (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), and Virginia Held, "Mothering versus Contract," in Beyond Self-Interest, ed. Jane Mansbridge (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp.287-304. From the point of view of psychology and moral development, the classic statement of the care approach is Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

216. Philippa Foot remarks that Nietzsche "speaks of gentleness in some convincing passages; and he was himself, I would suppose, for all his insistence on the beneficial effect of suffering, actually oversensitive to it in others, really experiencing pity as he notoriously represented it - as 'suffering's contagion'" (see "Nietzsche's Immoralism," p.8).

217. Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, pp.52-53. The letter is dated 18 July 1880.

218. This, more than anything, reveals the conceptual weakness of attempts to base ethics on love, caring, or compassion alone. Without some implicit idea of flourishing, love is blind. And without the resources of naturalism, it is hard to think clearly

about how or why different forms of love may lead people down different ethical paths.

219. This is in spite of passages like Antichrist 7, where Nietzsche says that pity "crosses the law of development, which is the law of selection," preserves what is ripe for destruction, and defends those who have been condemned by life. I take this as a bit of rhetorical overkill, coming in a passage where he seems to throw everything he can think of against pity. There is no evidence of Social Darwinism in Nietzsche's more subtle and detailed treatments of the subject.

220. The concept of "hedonistic pity" is discussed in Lester Hunt, Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, p.167.

221. Martha Nussbaum, "Pity and Mercy: Nietzsche's Stoicism," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, p.140.

222. Martha Nussbaum, "Pity and Mercy: Nietzsche's Stoicism," p.158.

223. Martha Nussbaum, "Pity and Mercy: Nietzsche's Stoicism," p.160. This criticism of Nietzsche is an extension of her criticism of the Stoics in The Therapy of Desire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

224. For other attempts to catalogue Nietzsche's virtues, see Robert Welshon, "Nietzsche's Peculiar Virtues and the Health of the Soul," International Studies in Philosophy 24:2 (1992), pp.77-89, and Robert Solomon, "The Virtues of a Passionate Life: Erotic Love and 'The Will to Power'," Social Philosophy and Policy 15:1 (1998), pp.91-118. Welshon's list includes separation and love of solitude, spiritual independence, discipline, disdain for equality of humans, courage, and perhaps also love of enemies, pride, being beyond good and evil, and self-overcoming (p.82). Major omissions are honesty (or truthfulness), amor fati (or affirmation of life), and the virtues of benevolence (sympathy, generosity, etc.). To the extent that "disdain for equality" is a virtue, I think it can be properly subsumed under pride or independence. Solomon's list includes such Aristotelian virtues as courage, generosity, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, temperance, pride, friendliness, and wittiness, although he points out that Nietzsche's "take" on these virtues is very different from Aristotle (p.113).

225. Including Arthur Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher, p.199, and Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p.221. Danto calls the Übermensch ideal a bland and familiar recommendation, vaguely pagan, and squarely within a moralistic tradition. There is more to Nietzsche's ideal, however, than a rhetorical invocation of the Übermensch. Nehamas also discounts Nietzsche's positive ideals, calling them banal and vague. He prefers to interpret Nietzsche in aesthetic or postmodern terms, as one whose focus is on creating himself as a work of art.

226. Consider, for instance, the way that W.K. Clifford and Bertrand Russell argued against faith in the name of intellectual honesty, and how Freud and Sartre developed the concept of self-deception.

227. Nietzsche's views here warrant comparison with those of his contemporary, William Kingdom Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," Lectures and Essays (London: Macmillan, 1886), pp.339-363. This essay, which first appeared in 1877, argued that it is wrong in all cases to believe on insufficient evidence. Clifford frames his case in rather high-minded, moralistic terms (perhaps all the better to strike at the Victorian conscience), but his basic point is similar to GS 2 and GM III:27. Clifford's challenge to religious faith was taken up by William James in The Will to Believe. Nietzsche's position on the ethics of belief, however, differs from Clifford's in ways that make it less vulnerable to counter-argument. Nietzsche is aware that honesty may come into conflict with other virtues, and that truth may not always be life-enhancing.

On the relevance of virtue ethics to epistemology, see Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, Virtues of the Mind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

228. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1128b.

229. New Testament, Matt. 10:16. A whole flock of doves does descend on Zarathustra at the end of Part Four, along with a lion.

230. This translation follows Nehamas rather than Kaufmann. For more on this slogan, see Kaufmann, Nietzsche, pp.158-159, and Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, pp.171-175. Kaufmann notes that it is derived from Pindar: "genoi hoios essi."

231. Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p.175.

232. Leslie Paul Thiele, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.207-210. See also Brian Leiter, "The Paradox of Fatalism and Self-Creation in Nietzsche," in Willing and Nothingness, pp.217-257.

233. Leslie Paul Thiele, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul, p.215.

234. Quoted again by Nietzsche in EH III:Z8, where the translation is slightly different. It is this version that I quote from.

235. In defence of this point, see Mary Midgley, Heart and Mind, ch.2. She maintains that it is a complete mistake to think that freedom has something to do with having an indeterminate nature: "To be free, you have to have an original constitution. Freedom is the chance to develop what you have it in you to be - your talents, your capacities, your natural feelings. If you had no such particular potentialities in you for a start, you could have no use for freedom and it could not concern you" (p.35). If we had no nature or constitution, there would be no reason why our children should not be treated as standard material, "dough to be stamped

into any socially acceptable biscuit," rather than as organisms which have their own potentiality and need to unfold it (p.38).

236. Expressive individualism, according to sociologist Robert Bellah et al., "holds that each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that should unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized" (Habits of the Heart, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp.333-334. It must not be confused with "utilitarian" or "possessive" individualism, which has an affinity to liberal contract theory and a basically economic worldview.

237. The concept of healthy-mindedness comes from William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982). James contrasts the "religion of healthy-mindedness," which is optimistic and has no sense of sin, with the darker vision of the "sick soul." Nietzsche straddles this dichotomy, combining the affirmative, this-worldly exuberance of the former with the depth and tragic consciousness of the latter:

> The world is deep,
> deeper than day had been aware.
> Deep is its woe;
> Joy - deeper yet than agony:
> Woe implores: Go!
> But all joy wants eternity-
> Wants deep, wants deep eternity. (Z III:15)

238. See Graham Parkes, "Staying Loyal to the Earth: Nietzsche as an Ecological Thinker," in Nietzsche's Futures, ed. John Lippitt (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp.167-188. Parkes makes an original case for regarding Nietzsche as a significant ecological thinker. He notes that "the earth," for Nietzsche, "stands for all this-worldly value" (p.171). It does not refer explicitly to nature or ecology. However, "the more people can come to an appreciation of Nietzsche's view of the natural world as divine, the better the chances for the earth's future flourishing" (pp.185-186).

239. Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.248. Her treatment of eternal recurrence is most lucid and thorough. She interprets amor fati as "the attitude of one who affirms eternal recurrence" (p.282). Alexander Nehamas also draws our attention to the hypothetical form in which the doctrine is presented in GS 341, arguing that what Nietzsche is interested in is not the truth or the credibility of recurrence, but "the attitude one must have toward oneself in order to react with joy and not despair to the possibility (Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p.151). Bernd Magnus is another who rejects the cosmological reading of the doctrine: see Nietzsche's Existential Imperative (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978). He argues that eternal recurrence "is a visual and conceptual representation of a particular attitude toward life" - an attitude which is the expression of nihilism overcome, and of "the being-in-the-world of Übermenschen" (p.142).

240. The sort of theodicy I have in mind is one in which evil and suffering are said to be essential to soul-making, and thus to the achievement of the highest good. For a version of this argument,

see John Hick, Evil and the God of Love (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). Hegel attempted something similar at the level of world history, arguing that conflict and other evils are essential to the realization of Geist [Spirit]. Of course, amor fati is not a theodicy, but merely its naturalistic equivalent. Nietzsche has no interest in justifying the ways of an all-powerful, all-loving, transcendent God; he merely wants to come to terms with life. Thus, he quotes Stendhal: "God's only excuse is that he does not exist" (EH II:3).

241. Henri Birault, "Beatitude in Nietzsche," in The New Nietzsche, ed. David Allison (New York: Dell, 1977; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), pp.219-231.

242. Plato, Meno, 72b.

243. A comparison made by Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.274.

244. On the relation between the Untimely Meditation on history and Nietzsche's practice as a historian in works like the Genealogy, see Peter Berkowitz, Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

245. Gilles Deleuze has argued against interpreting Nietzsche in Hegelian terms. Concerning the relation between master and slave, he has a point: Nietzsche's contrast between the "active" master and the "reactive" slave is very different from Hegel's master-slave dialectic. Nietzsche stands opposed to slave morality, guilt, and the ascetic ideal. However, Deleuze goes too far when he says that "anti-Hegelianism runs through Nietzsche's work as its cutting edge" (Nietzsche and Philosophy, trans. Hugh Tomlinson. London: Athlone Press, 1983, p.8). Much as Hegel saw conflict and other evils as contributing to the historical development of Spirit, Nietzsche concedes that ressentiment and self-torture have served to make us deeper and more conscious beings. This does not mean, however, that we should desire their continuation.

246. Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p.167, p.174.

247. Harold Alderman, Nietzsche's Gift (Athens: Ohio University Press), p.104.

248. Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, p.312. He interprets Zarathustra's simile of the "overcoming of man" in terms of an early essay in which he claimed that only philosophers, artists, and saints are truly human beings and no longer animals (SE 5). But as Nietzsche's naturalism became more thorough and pronounced in his middle and later period, he became increasingly critical of those who would denigrate our animal nature. His ideal is identified, not with the no longer animal, but with the healthy human animal.

249. See Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, p.316, and Richard Schacht, Nietzsche, p.332, for others who see this passage as an expression of Nietzsche's own ideal of the higher human being.

250. Similar requirements for an adequate modern neo-Aristotelian ethics have been formulated by Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, pp.152-153.

251. On the relevance of the concept of health for ethics, see Neal Weiner, The Harmony of the Soul: Mental Health and Moral Virtue Reconsidered (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993).

252. Bernard Mandeville, "An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue" (abridged), in British Moralists 1650-1800, p.234.

253. Richard Garner, Beyond Morality, pp.122-125, 132-133, 163-164. He derives this view, not from Mandeville, but from the emotivism of C.L. Stevenson.

254. Robert Solomon also sees this "passion" as the key to Nietzsche's virtue ethics: "indeed, what constitutes a Nietzschean virtue is first of all a kind of fullness, a sense of oneself on top of the world. ... The centrality of 'overflowing' and abundance is the key to this new ethics" ("The Virtues of a Passionate Life," p.115).

255. Lester Hunt, Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, p.92. Hunt gives a detailed account of the gift-giving virtue, although he does not link it to the noble ethic of the Genealogy.

256. On Nietzsche's view of courage, see Lester Hunt, Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, pp.85-88, and Robert Solomon, "The Virtues of a Passionate Life," p.114.

257. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1105b-1106a.

258. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1144b.

259. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1144a.

260. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ch.13, p.102.

261. A point made by Lester Hunt: "If the gift-giving virtue is the only virtue that regulates one's relations with others, then if people who possess this trait refrain from killing me and running off with my goods, this means that their not murdering me is a free gift they make to me, like a Christmas present" (Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, p.95). Hunt sees Nietzsche as holding a "pure ethics of virtue" which leaves no room for contractarian justice (pp.170-171).

262. Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, pp.198-199. Such love he calls B-love, love for the being of the other, as opposed to D-love, deficiency love, which is needy and possessive.

263. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, pp.17-18.

264. On the relevance of Hume to the Kohlberg-Gilligan debate, see Annette Baier, "Hume, the Women's Moral Theorist?" in Moral Prejudices, pp.51-75. But she also notes that Hume recognizes the virtues of greatness as well as goodness, the esteemable as well as the amiable (pp.74-75).

265. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, p.40. Hume is here arguing against skeptics, like Mandeville, who argued that all moral distinctions "were, at first, invented, and afterwards encouraged, by the art of politicians, in order to render men tractable" (p.39). On Hume's virtue ethics, see Annette Baier, A Progress of Sentiments, ch.9, and Marie Martin, "Hume on Human Excellence," Hume Studies 18:2 (1992), pp.383-399. Martin argues that Hume valued both greatness of mind and benevolence as "immediately agreeable" intrinsic values, "without reference to (and sometimes in spite of) their effects on either the possessor or others" (p.391).

266. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, p.18.

267. Nel Noddings, Caring, p.108. She quotes from BGE 260.

268. Nel Noddings, Caring, p.108, also pp.69-74.

269. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, p.72. See also Craig Beam, "Hume and Nietzsche," pp.308-311, on the meaning of the "agreeable" and its distinction from the "useful."

270. Henry Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics, pp.496-509. In his terms, the conflict is between universalistic and egoistic species of hedonism.

271. Thomas Hurka, "The Three Faces of Flourishing," p.54.

272. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, p.80. The formally egoistic nature of the virtue tradition has been discussed by Thomas Hurka, "The Three Faces of Flourishing," and Michael Slote, From Morality to Virtue. Hurka summarizes it as holding: "(1) each person's good consists in developing his nature, which (2) involves as an important element his acting virtuously towards others, and (3) is all he ultimately has normative reason to do" (p.45). He denies that the virtues must be connected to the person's own good, but in doing so he leaves with a concept of "objective good" which is problematic (given that it need not impinge on the internal point of view of the agent). Slote comments upon the egoism of various ancient and modern virtue theories (e.g. the Stoics, Spinoza, and Nietzsche), but in developing his own theory, he prefers a more "common-sense" or "intuitive" approach, in which self-regarding and other-regarding considerations are given equal weight (pp.256-257).

273. Lester Hunt, Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, pp.170-171. For a response, see Maudemarie Clark's review of this book in International Studies in Philosophy 26:1 (1994), pp.118-119. She argues that Hunt's interpretation gives insufficient attention to the Genealogy, and that Nietzsche accords justice or rightness a place in his ethics that is independent of virtue or character.

274. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, p.497, p.601.

275. See Steven Hales, "Was Nietzsche a Consequentialist?" International Studies in Philosophy 27:3 (1995), pp.25-34. As evidence of consequentialism, Hales cites passages such as GM P:3 in which Nietzsche appeals to life or human flourishing as the standard of value. He claims that "Nietzsche's complaint against utilitarianism is not so much a gripe about the structure of the theory as it is one about hedonism" (p.29). However, Nietzsche does have a problem with the egalitarian-collectivist structure of the theory and the way it reduces virtue to something instrumental. Hales claims that for Nietzsche, nothing has intrinsic value except for life. He cites GS 301 in support. But here Nietzsche only rejects "intrinsic value" in the sense of value-in-itself, or objective value, independent of living beings. To deny that value is intrinsic in this sense, however, is not to deny that virtues can be experienced as intrinsically valuable - as immediately agreeable or ends in themselves, rather than as merely instrumental to some greater good.

276. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1145a.

277. Immanuel Kant, The Metaphysics of Morals, p.16.

278. Lawrence Kohlberg, The Philosophy of Moral Development, p.30, p.189.

279. See Martha Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness, ch.2-4, and Owen Flanagan, Varieties of Moral Personality, ch.12-13. Flanagan notes that the unity of the virtues thesis, in its strongest form, is not presupposed by lay personality theory: "ordinary persons do not believe that possession of one virtue necessarily betokens possession of the rest" (pp.282-283). And psychological research, he argues, goes even further in showing that people are morally "gappy" and that the virtues are "functionally autonomous modular capacities" which are context sensitive.

280. See Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints," Journal of Philosophy 79:8 (1982), pp.419-439.

281. In The Portable Nietzsche, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), pp.29-30.

282. Actually, Zarathustra says that "a gift giving virtue is the highest virtue" (Z I:22). So perhaps truthfulness is a particular form of the gift-giving virtue. Of maybe it is his own life and career that Nietzsche has in mind in Ecce Homo when he speaks of truthfulness as highest.

283. Martha Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness, p.7. She also makes the connection between polytheism and value pluralism (p.49). And somewhat like Hegel, she examines Antigone as a tragedy of conflicting norms which are both partially justified (pp.67-79).

284. Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p.209, 214, 223-224.

285. Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p.225.

286. Robert Welshon, "Nietzsche's Peculiar Virtues and the Health of the Soul," pp.81-82.

287. On the social psychology of this, see C.R. Snyder and Howard Fromkin, Uniqueness: The Human Pursuit of Difference (New York: Plenum Press, 1980).

288. For Kant, the concept of autonomy is linked to reason and the moral law, while heteronomy is linked to inclination and natural necessity. Kant is concerned to "free" us from physical causality and our contingent desires, but he insists that we must give ourselves a moral law that is categorical and universal (Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, p.49). Nietzsche's concerns when it comes to autonomy are precisely the opposite. On this subject, see Richard White, "Nietzsche Contra Kant and the Problem of Autonomy," International Studies in Philosophy 22:2 (1990), pp.3-11. White points out that for Nietzsche, the categorical imperative entailed the oblivion of the individual, and was a typical metaphysical ploy to redeem existence by directing it after something both universal and necessary. "If autonomy is really the celebration of the individual, or that mode of being in which the individual takes possession of himself, the legislation of any specific formula for autonomy actually denies individuality by attempting to control and order it in advance" (p.8).

289. John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, ch.3. This is not to suggest that Nietzsche was influenced by Mill. More relevant is the fact that Emerson was one of his favourite authors; see George Stack, Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992). Stack argues that "by virtue of his ethics of individuality Emerson entered the stream of existential thought via Nietzsche" (p.9).

290. Nietzsche's view of autonomy, I think, is closer to the views of Lawrence Haworth, Autonomy: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology and Ethics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), or Christine Swanton, Freedom: A Coherence Theory, than to those who champion negative liberty. For Haworth, autonomy involves such things as self-discipline and a capacity for critical reflection (p.55); for Swanton, freedom is a rich concept involving many dimensions, and its value is related to its contribution to human flourishing (p.38).

291. In Craig Beam, "Gadamer and Macintyre: Tradition as a Resource of Rationality," Kinesis 25:1 (1998), pp.15-35, I discuss the three metamorphoses in terms of hermeneutics. The camel symbolizes those who approach tradition entirely in a spirit of humility and trust, the lion symbolizes the hermeneutics of suspicion, and the child symbolizes those who have worked though the tradition and become independent and creative thinkers (p.28). See also Harold Alderman, Nietzsche's Gift, ch.2. He interprets the parable as describing the most general conditions of creativity. We must proceed from some historical or social context if we are to be truly creative (not merely novel), but at some point "we must respond to that actuality not as if it were exhaustive of our being, but rather as if it only provided the conditions and materials with which we might create ourselves" (p.35).

292. In a letter to Lou Salomé (August 1882), Nietzsche wrote: "Finally, my dear Lou, my old, deeply heartfelt plea: become what you are! First one needs to emancipate oneself from one's chains, and then one must free oneself from this emancipation. Each of us, though doubtless in very different ways, has to suffer from chain fever, even after he's broken his chains" (Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, p.66).

293. Consider, for example, Zarathustra's fear at the beginning of Part Two that his teaching is in danger (Z II:1), or what he says "On Apostates" about those who crawl back to the cross (Z III:8).

294. Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.282.

295. The Nazi interpreter, Alfred Bäumler, dismissed eternal recurrence as a passive doctrine and a philosophically irrelevant whim; see Steven Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p.234. From the left, Theodor Adorno is equally dismissive: "No less than in the credo quia absurdum, resignation bows down in the amor fati, the glorification of the absurdest of all things, before the powers that be" (Minima Moralia, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott. London: Verso, 1974, #61). Those whose primary interest is in power politics, class struggle, or cultural criticism are likely to treat eternal recurrence and amor fati as themes of limited relevance. Solomon's virtue-ethical reading of Nietzsche also has little to say about these themes. A notable exception is Lester Hunt, "The Eternal Recurrence and Nietzsche's Ethic of Virtue," International Studies in Philosophy 25:2 (1993), pp.3-11. He sees the point of the doctrine as ethical. It helps us to achieve virtue by delivering us from the spirit of revenge.

296. Claudia Crawford, "Immoralist: That Means the Opposite of Consequentialist: Comment on Professor Hale's 'Was Nietzsche a Consequentialist?'" International Studies in Philosophy 27:3 (1995), p.35.

297. The existential theologian, John Macquarrie, has suggested that the basic religious question be formulated as: "Can we regard Being as gracious?" ("How is Theology Possible?" in New Theology

No. 1, ed. Martin Marty and Dean Peerman. New York: Macmillan, 1964, p.29). This question remains even after we have dispensed with the idea of a God who exists as an being among other beings. Macquarrie, however, continues to think of grace as a power from beyond man which can heal our estrangement (i.e. our sinful or fallen condition). For Nietzsche, the natural world is experienced as gracious when it is liberated from such concepts as sin, guilt, judgement, and the need for redemption through some saving power.

298. Claudia Crawford, "Immoralist: That Means the Opposite of Consequentialist," p.40.

299. Clark discusses this issue in relation to the barbarian nobles of Genealogy I. She argues that "there is no reason to think of affirming eternal recurrence as a complete ideal, one that entails all the values that Nietzsche promotes. This ideal tells us not what all of our values should be, but only that whatever they are, they should be rooted in gratitude and service to life rather than resentment against it" (Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.284)

300. Nietzsche is not alone in grappling with the tension between accepting fate as good and working to make things better. Calvinist theology held that the world is ruled by Divine Providence and that certain people (i.e. themselves) are among the Elect by the grace of God, and yet the Calvinists were far from passive or easy-going in their approach to life. To be among the Elect is to struggle to be righteous. In a similar way, Nietzsche's healthy-powerful-noble individual both loves life as it is and strives to enhance it.

301. On this issue, see Gilles Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy. He distinguishes between forces which are active and affirmative, and forces which are reactive and nihilistic. Eternal return is the self-affirmation of active forces. It would be contradictory if it called for the return of reactive forces. Rather, it is a selective thought - it can turn reactivity into complete nihilism, making "negation a negation of reactive forces themselves" (p.70). One might doubt whether the thought of eternal return can really lead to the self-destruction of nihilism. But Deleuze is correct in seeing Nietzschean affirmation as going hand in hand with a desire to "negate negation."

302. Harold Alderman, Nietzsche's Gift, p.112.

303. Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, p.3. Letter dated 7 April 1866. Some may be inclined to view this experience as merely aesthetic. To take this route, however, is to leave no room for the category of religious experience involving nature rather than a deity.

304. I do not want to reject outright the idea of development in Zarathustra. But I do want to take issue with the idea that there is a radical shift in Zarathustra's teachings, from the overman and the aretaic or striving themes of Part One, to eternal recurrence and amor fati in Part Three and Four. One version of this reading has it that there is "a pivotal turn in Zarathustra from a concern

with a 'political' solution to the sickness of modern European 'spirit' to an 'aesthetic' solution to the private task of becoming who one is" (Jonathan Salem-Wiseman, "Zarathustra's Politics and the Dissatisfactions of Mimesis," Symposium 3:1, 1999, p.82). The problem with this is, first, that one can find some expression of each major theme in each part of Zarathustra, and second, that no such shift is to found in Nietzsche's post-Zarathustra works.

Another version of this reading has it that the overman ideal is "motivated by resentment against life and is therefore replaced by the ideal of affirming eternal recurrence" (Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, p.284). She argues that to value human life only as a means to superhuman life is to deprive it of intrinsic value (p.273). I agree that there is something problematic about some of Zarathustra's "overcoming" rhetoric in Part One, and that the character of Zarathustra is presented as becoming more affirmative as the book goes along (compare "On the Flies of the Marketplace" in Part One with "On Passing By" in Part Three). However, to say that the overman ideal is replaced does not fit with Z IV:13:3, EH III:1, and EH III:Z6, although in Ecce Homo, there is no hint that our life is only a means to a higher form of life. The concept "overman" is said to have become a reality in Zarathustra himself: the Dionysian man who "says No and does No to an unheard-of degree, to everything to which one has so far said Yes," and yet is still "the opposite of a No-saying spirit" (EH III:Z6).

305. James Horne, The Moral Mystic (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), pp.32-40. In pure mysticism, the focus is on achieving mystical states (whether positive and rapturous or negative and tranquilizing) as the final goal, and the world is seen as a distraction. Mixed mysticism, on the other hand, remains engaged with the world. The pursuit of epiphanies is not the final goal, and an awareness of God or Nature goes along with a concern for human life.

306. Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, p.62. In a letter of 1888, he complained: "for years not a word of comfort, not a drop of human feeling, not a breath of love" (p.107).

307. In a letter of this period (December 1882) to Franz Overbeck, Nietzsche wrote: "The humiliating memories of the past summer have been as agonizing as a fit of madness. ... If I don't discover the alchemist's device for making gold even out of this - crap, I'm lost. Here I have the most splendid opportunity to prove that for me 'every experience is instructive, each day holy, and all men divine'" (Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters, p.70). In the final sentence he is quoting from Emerson's essay "History."

Nietzsche's attempt to make a virtue of necessity may remind some people of his accusation against slave morality - that it lied weakness into something meritorious (GM I:14). One might wonder if Nietzsche "lied" his own suffering and loneliness into something beneficial. The question is, just where does the pearl principle end and value inversion begin? The division, I think, has to do with the difference between making the best of the negative aspects of one's fate and recommending such "negatives" as a good thing

more generally. Thus, it is commendable for the fox to "love his fate" and make the best of his failure to get the grapes. But when he begins insisting that the grapes were sour and not worth having by any creature, he falls into self-deception and value-inversion.

308. The crimes perpetrated by the Nazis are often seen as posing an insoluble problem for theodicy. Theodor Adorno wrote in 1944: "Had Hegel's philosophy of history embraced this age, Hitler's robot-bombs would have found their place ... as one of the selected empirical facts by which the state of the world-spirit manifests itself directly in symbols. Like Fascism itself, the robots career without a subject. Like it they combine upmost technical perfection with total blindness. And like it they arouse mortal terror and are wholly futile. 'I have seen the world spirit', not on horseback, but on wings and without a head, and that refutes, at the same stroke, Hegel's philosophy of history" (Minima Moralia, #33).

309. Martha Nussbaum, "Pity and Mercy: Nietzsche's Stoicism," in Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality, p.159. See also her polemic, "Is Nietzsche a Political Thinker?" International Journal of Philosophical Studies 5:1 (1997), pp.1-13. She takes issue with Nietzsche's political thinking because it is coloured by the pearl principle, or what she calls "the extreme Romantic view that a strong spirit survives the worst and emerges stronger still, and that only the weak perish from hardship" (p.11). This, she claims, leads Nietzsche astray when it comes to such political issues as the worth of liberty and the importance of meeting material needs.

310. William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in William James: The Essential Writings, ed. Bruce Wilshire (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp.349-361. This essay was written in 1910 in response to the militarist fervour leading up to World War I. The problem with pacifist arguments emphasizing the horror and futility of war, James says, is that "when the question is of getting the extremest and supremest out of human nature, talk of expense sounds ignominious" (p.355). The equivalent of war he proposes is a kind of mandatory public service - the conscription of the whole of the youthful population for a certain number of years to form "an army enlisted against Nature" (p.359).

311. For Rorty's position, see Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, ch.5. For a reading of Nietzsche as a political perfectionist, see Daniel Conway, Nietzsche and the Political (London: Routledge, 1997). Among recent defenders of perfectionism are Thomas Hurka, Perfectionism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), and George Sher, Beyond Neutrality: Perfectionism in Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

312. On faith (or religion) as ultimate concern, see Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, ch.1. Nietzsche also avoids equating religion with traditional theism. In discussing the reasons for atheism today, he reflects: "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" (BGE 53). Recent works dealing with the religious or mystical side of Nietzsche's thought

include Joan Stambaugh, The Other Nietzsche (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) and Tyler Roberts, Contesting Spirit: Nietzsche, Affirmation, Religion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Two of the most interesting theological attempts to rethink the meaning of religion are Don Cupitt, Taking Leave of God, and Daphne Hampson, After Christianity (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996).

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