

ON "THE PARABLES OF ELEVATION":
A STUDY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF NIETZSCHE .

ON "THE PARABLES OF ELEVATION":
A SHORT STUDY OF AESTHETIC PERSPECTIVISM -
OF THE POLITICS OF OVER-COMING AND
WILL-TO-POWER
IN THE WORK OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

by

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INTRODUCTION

The chief difficulty in our study of Nietzsche is the difficulty of reconciling two fundamental polarities in him; particularly as evidenced in so much of his discussion concerning the multiple ambiguities inherent in the word "truth".

One polarity culminates in the presentation of what Nietzsche calls "Dionysiac wisdom" (and which refers to all of the terrors attendant upon the apprehension of "truth"). The other polarity reflects Nietzsche's analytical dissection of all the subjective prejudices which underlie every attempt at philosophic (especially "systematic") thinking (and which thus refuses to give any objective credence to the notion of "truth").

Our governing concern, then, is to articulate, as precisely as possible, just what Nietzsche himself understood by the use of such polarities; and to see in just how many facets his own philosophy was so deeply involved in this attempt to arrive at a credible definition of "truth".

In terms of the latter polarity, it will be well documented in this paper how consistently and trenchantly Nietzsche disparages all philosophic "systems" both from the perspective of him who invents them and from that of him who is influenced - "seduced" - by them. Nietzsche insists that the former should realize that no system can be "true" because it must ultimately depend upon some unproven assumption originating in the personality of its author. (1)

(1) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, P. 5, 7, 8

But more significantly: to the extent that any philosopher may be said, as Nietzsche puts this, to have a "conviction" about things, to that very extent is any attempt on his part to formulate a "system" irrevocably vitiated. (For "there is nothing impersonal whatsoever in the philosopher"). (2)

"Truth", then, for Nietzsche, is something which can never be determined through any process of rational discourse, for the fact of such a discourse already presupposes the secret demands of a temperament, the hidden compromise of a personality.

Further: in what manner (we shall inquire) are we to understand such admonitions as Nietzsche presents us with (particularly in "The Will to Power") when he proclaims that "The world that concerns us at all is false...for there is no such thing as 'truth'". (3) Or as he even more stringently deepens this insight when he remarks, in an aphorism: "'The will to truth' - is the impotence of the will to create". (4)

In this introduction, we can indicate only certain of these permutations to be dealt with concerning both the origin and final resolution of what Nietzsche understands by the concept "truth"; for it is a question - as he puts it at one point in "The Genealogy of Morals": "what does all will to truth signify?" (5) - which, if only as the product of a religious (specifically Christian) rigor

(2) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, P. 7

(3) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, P. 107

(4) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., P. 89

(5) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, P. 297

and tenacity in thinking has firmly implicated itself in all of later, classical philosophy.

But finally: to "look deep into the world" (as Nietzsche considers this in "Beyond Good and Evil") (6) is to uncover a "truth" which, for Nietzsche, because it both antedates and prefigures all the rational elements of conscious thinking (because it itself is perhaps the governing preform for thought), can be adequately assimilated only by the strongest of wills, only by those who have already learned what it means to suffer unmeaning.

It is the apprehension of such a "truth" - of the realization that it is ultimately chaos, and not coherence, that lies at the ground of all existence - that forms the basis for what Nietzsche describes as "Dionysiac wisdom". (7)

As he remarks, for example, at one point in "Ecce Homo": "Is Hamlet understood? Not doubt, certainty is what drives one insane. But one must be profound, an abyss, a philosopher to feel that way. We are all afraid of truth." (8)

It is to reconcile such an insight as the above - that all creativity, and indeed, every interpretative maneuver of the "will to power" (including the religious) is, at its roots, to be understood only as the conditioned product of such a fear of "truth" -

(6) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, P.65-6

(7) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, P. 273, 306, 309
Twilight of the Gods, P. 38, 73, 103, 109

(8) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, P. 246

with Nietzsche's other most basic requirement (as expressed in the formula to which we see all of his philosophy converging: "To admit un-truth as a necessary condition of life") (9) that we have been most concerned to attempt in this thesis.

(9) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, P. 4

CHAPTER ONE: CONCERNING THE NATURE AND
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "AESTHETIC ENTERPRISE"
AND AN EXAMINATION OF ITS ORIGIN IN THE
WILL-TO-POWER

The aesthetic enterprise, for Nietzsche, begins with quite ruthless an interdiction: to so acknowledge, in his words, that "the world which concerns us at all is false... is not a fact ... for there is no such thing as truth." (1)

Now it is precisely toward any contrary assumption of the concept of truth as providing for either an exact or immutable criterion of reality that Nietzsche instinctively showed himself the most hostile. As he remarks, for example, at one point in The Will to Power :

The belief that the world which ought to be is, really exists, is a belief proper to the unfruitful, who do not wish to create a world. They take it for granted, they seek for means and ways of attaining to it. "The will to truth" -- is the impotence of the will to create. (2)

It is thus, as within the deepest atmosphere of doubt, of relective self-alienation, that Aesthetic Perspectivism begins; as we find Nietzsche speaking, in another example, in Beyond Good and Evil, of his invincible distrust concerning even the knowledge of self, a distrust, he says, which -

(1) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 106-7.
(tr. by Anthony M. Ludivici

(2) Ibid., p. 89.

has led me so far as to sense a contradiction in terms in even the concept 'immediate self-knowledge' that the theoreticians permit themselves. (3)

It is as within the further and more detailed examination of such uncertainties that provide for Nietzsche that formula to which we must see his entire philosophy converging, "To admit untruth as a necessary condition of life." (4)

And so does it become the prerogative of the aesthetic attitude to now maintain, with the utmost seriousness, that any 'reality' is knowable (is "thinkable", to use Nietzsche's word for this) (5) only insofar as the individual perceptant can both decipher and articulate in activity upon it. We are involved in the world only to the extent that both our purposive and creative will is made expressive in all such quests for meaning; or as Nietzsche puts this, "in practical meditation concerning the nature of our existence as investigators". (6)

(3) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 225. (par. 281). (tr. by Marianne Cowan). (Gateway Edition) Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1955.

(4) Ibid., p. 4

(5) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra. pp.86. and 113. (tr. by Walter Kaufman). Compass Book Edition, The Viking Press, N. Y., 1966. ^K

(6) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 99.

It is only as in further extension of such a prerogative that the aesthetic attitude must also acknowledge that there is no essential modality of existence to which - at whatever point in conscious life - the human personality has either been estranged from, or seeks ultimately to be reconciled to.

For every expression of the world (even that which takes its refuge in absolutes), every philosophy, that is, as Nietzsche so carefully dissects it, represents nothing but the objectivication in thought of the temperamental state of the reflective individual; indeed it is as from the very fundamental instincts of the individual, his specific desires and aversions, and in what relation they stand to each other that, for Nietzsche, the primal impulse to philosophize must be seen as derived. In sum: "there is nothing impersonal whatsoever in the philosopher." (7)

Put succinctly: if visions are to appear uncompromised, they must remain private. If, however, they are to stand self-possessedly as philosophy, as openness to discourse, must they be presented not only in full consideration of their origins in motive, but also with the further acknowledgment that they are by no means unique: that they are but one, in Nietzsche's sense of this, of many alternate possibilities of "interpretation". (8)

(7) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 7.

(8) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 101, Cf. also, The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals, p. 255. (tr. by Francis Polffing). Doubleday Anchor Book, Doubleday & Company, N.Y. 1956.

How are we to distinguish between creative (read: 'life-enhancing') and merely normative forms of interpretation. According to Nietzsche, the former is specifically a more forceful, dangerous and explosive way of re-penetrating the world; in a world itself divested of meaning, (9) the command now becomes "to fix a goal and to mould facts according to it: that is, the interpretation of action, and not merely a transvaluation of concepts." (10)

The origin of any authentic vision, thus, or interpretative insight, can only be significantly assessed according to the expression of its need, or motivation; or to what Nietzsche describes, most accurately, as its "will to power". (11) Such an over-flowing, as out of strength, is at the core root of any aesthetic; as Nietzsche makes clear in that remarkable passage which occurs toward the end of the chapter entitled "On Those Who are Sublime" in Thus Spake Zarathustra:

When power becomes gracious and descends
into the visible, -- such a descent I call
beauty.

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- (9) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 90;
Cf. also Beyond Good and Evil, p. 40.
- (10) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 103.
- (11) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 108, Cf.
also Beyond Good and Evil, pp. 43, and 202.

An there is nobody from whom I want beauty
as much as from you who are powerful; let
your kindness be your last self-conquest.

Of all evil I deem you capable; therefore I
want the good from you. (12)

To become valid as "fictions",⁶⁷ in which Nietzsche
means pregnant structures of both self- and societal inter-
pretations, (13) visions can never remain disinterested.
Indeed, if there is any 'absolute ground' for the human per-
sonality itself, according to Nietzsche, it stems from within,
as evolving from this inner need to "legislate one's fictions";
that is, to impose one's 'view', one's measure of interpre-
tation of reality upon the very physical structure of the
social world. (14) Any specific aspect of 'culture', thus

- (12) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 118.
- (13) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 4. (On
"fictions" as those expressive integers of what
Nietzsche characterizes as the "mythology" of
language): p. 24, and 41; Cf. also The Will to
Power pp. 105, 115.
- (14) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil pp 71, 135,
203, Cf., also, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, pp. 59,
202 and The Will to Power, p. 103. (Contained in
these very critical notations, of course, are
references not only to procedural specificity of
"will to power", but also a very exact delineation
of what should constitute the 'soul' of the
"legislator" of the creator of values: of all
of the temperamental nuances, as well as heuristic
demands which must necessarily accompany any process
of "over-coming", any thrust to "sublimity").

is then seen by Nietzsche as originating directly within a particular "will to power". (15)

What, then, Nietzsche understands by the norm word 'reality' is precisely this result of a 'conspiratorial' "will to power" (reality as 'conspiracy'); or as Nietzsche once, with perhaps too mordant an irony, so delineated it: "The phenomenal world is the adjusted world which we believe to be real."(16)

But significantly, even to hint at the nature (at the reality) of such a 'conspiracy' is also, correspondingly, for Nietzsche, to hint at its consistent "overcoming": hence the heuristic fascination that Nietzsche feels is offered by the ascetic; or as he remarks at one point in Beyond Good and Evil -

Perhaps there is a reason, a very great danger, of which the ascetic has inside knowledge, thanks to his secret condolers and visitors ... It was their will to power which made them halt before the saint: they had something to ask him. (17)

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- (15) Friedrich Nietzsche, Cf. Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 115
 "Indeed, the truth was not hit by him who shot at it with the word of the 'will to existence': that will does not exist. For, what does not exist cannot will; but what is in existence, how could that still want existence? Only where there is life is there also will: not will to life but -- thus I teach you -- will to power.

There is much that life esteems more highly than life itself; but out of the esteeming itself speaks the will to power." Cf., also The Will to Power. p. 121.

- (16) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 73.
 (17) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 59.

To the extent, that is, that the ascetic, as understood by Nietzsche, has self-consciously withdrawn from all conventionality of image, from all communality of language, - to that extent is he free, so Nietzsche suggests, to cultivate within himself at least a reflective resilience; and perhaps further is he free to nourish in his mind - as the result of a forceful irruption within him - the power now to originate new and fresh sources of vision; (thus, free from 'conspiracy', so to speak, is he also, at least potentially, free for 'conspiracy'.) (18)

But what constitutes the nature of the aesthetic experience itself? For Nietzsche, there is no expression of vision that is without its corresponding gesture, its concealment both of mask and in mystery; (19) for to signify

(18) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals p. 243: Vide where Nietzsche puts this question to us: "What, then, does the ascetic ideal betoken in a Philosopher?" Then answers: "Ascetism provides him with the conditions most favourable to the exercise of his intelligence. Far from denying 'existence', he affirms his existence, and his alone, perhaps even to the point of hubris..." Vide also, Genealogy, p. 247-8 and Beyond Good and Evil pp 55-6.

(19) Friedrich Nietzsche, "Everything deep loves masks": Vide Beyond Good and Evil, p. 46. and 229. Cf., also Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 217: "Are not words and sounds rainbows and illusive bridges between things which are eternally apart?" But with a caution so as not to intemperately exhaust one's sources of free-forming and beneficence: Vide Zarathustra p. 106. (The Night Song): "They receive from me, but do I touch their souls? There is a cleft between giving and receiving; and the narrowest cleft is the last to be bridged." Cf., also Beyond p. 159.

at all, must it suffer the constant metamorphoses of interior discipline; the recognition, as Nietzsche writes, that in man "there is united both creature and creator"; that in man "there is material, fragment, excess, clay, filth, nonsense and chaos", but also "creator, image-maker, hammer-hardness, spectator-divinity, and day of rest". (20)

So purged within such crucibles of discipline, (21) there are as many 'reasons' for living, Nietzsche attests, as there are forceful and pregnant gestures for its description. Such as are, indeed, those "parables of elevation" which Nietzsche makes to so irrefragably come alive in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. (22)

For the aesthete, thus, to speak of either estrangement or reconciliation of consciousness in any absolute sense is only credible if one is to conceive of all of the sources of human language and symbolism (or

(20) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 159.

(21) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 95; "Every artist knows how far his most 'natural' condition is from the feeling of letting oneself go, how rigorously and subtly he obeys a thousand-fold law in the moments of inspiration ..." Vide also, Beyond, p. 138.

(22) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 75. (On the Gift-Giving Virtue).

further: of even the fact of consciousness itself (23) as existing in pure and distinct separateness from the only origin to which, according to Nietzsche, they ever can be adequately traced: that is, as originating from within the particular 'interpretative bias', the specific "will to power" of the self-expressive individual. (24)

The fundamental premise of the aesthetic, then, lies in this recognition of itself as resident never in terms of some passive, or vaguely spiritual 'conditionality' but always solely in terms of the precise palpable

(23) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 175: As he remarks at one point: "We have absolutely no right to postulate this particle of consciousness as the object, the wherefore, of the collective phenomena of life: the attainment of consciousness is obviously only an additional means to the unfolding of life and to the extension of its power." All necessity, in other words, which may be said to govern the fact of a phenomenal consciousness can never be adequately traced to its origin: but within an existence where even all acts of purposive will may be nothing themselves but a dissimulation, may "be only a symbolic language standing for something quite different"--how then are we ever to be certain of any of the precise determinants for the recognition of an objective identity? Vide, Will to Power, pp. 76, 149. Also Beyond, p. 39.

(24) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 90. There is no genesis of privileged meaning except that to which the concerned individual himself becomes wilful custodian of. In Nietzsche's words: "The degree of man's will-power may be measured from the extent to which he can dispose with the meaning in things, from the extent to which he is able to endure a world without meaning: because he himself arranges a small portion of it.

prejudices of the articulate body, in the determined specificity of the expressive act. (25)

It is this stipulation of the constraint to act (if only as to the denial of the self, so as in compensation to project upon transcendence, upon eternity) (26) that gives both shape and substance to what we have come to understand, though Nietzsche, as the aesthetic enterprise.

Any language, however, which thus takes residence, as Nietzsche makes clear, in what is, at least potentially, so alienated a will to activity can survive only as the

(25) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 121. "Perspectivity is only a complex form of specific-ness." One is present in the world and thus, in consequence, does one seek to take command of its space; expressiveness - all gesture and reverberation - is the form whereby the will seeks ever more strongly to manifest itself: as evidenced in the ability of the artist (as Nietzsche so perfectly inscribes this) "of speaking of oneself in a hundred different languages". Vide The Will to Power, p. 255.

(26) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp 65-6. It is that fear of depth, "that fearful instinct which intuits that man might come into possession of the truth too soon, before he has grown strong enough, hard enough, artist enough" that, in Nietzsche's view, provides for man the first impulse to an adoration of the transcendent. It is this impulse of the will which in its "fear of the void" now seeks to take leave of itself: "It is deep, suspicious fear of incurable pessimism that forces whole milleniums to sink their teeth into a religious interpretation of life." And yet, even within so crippling a "fear of void", "our will requires an aim" - as Nietzsche so astutely notes - "It would sooner have the void for purpose than be void of purpose." The Genealogy of Morals, p. 231. Vide also, Genealogy, pp 299, 290.

prerogative of a very special elite, (an elite of sensibility), of entirely a new genus of philosopher. (27)

For Nietzsche, however, the danger that is inherent in alienation lies not in the nature of the will's expression, but rather in its tendencies toward passivity, its potential for despair; the fact that it is unable to entertain seriously all of the manifold possibilities of its ^{renewal} removal. (28)

To accept the hypothesis, for example, that our acceptance of the reality of autonomous egos is nothing but

(27) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil (References to both the perils and prospects attendant upon this "new species of philosopher" abound in this work): Vide esp. pp. 136, 48, 39, 152, 227. Vide also, The Genealogy of Morals, pp 229-30, 252. Vide also, (as insight by invocation) all of those forceful paeans to the new genus of thinker (of all those pledged to "over-coming") which occur in Thus Spoke Zarathustra: esp. chapters 17, Part One (On The Way of the Creator), 12 and 13, Part Two (On Self-overcoming, and On Those Who Are Sublime), 11, Part Three (On The Spirit of Gravity), 12, Part Three (On Old and New Tablets), 13, Part Four (On The Higher Men).

(28) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp 126-8: Where extended reference is made to the "spiritual malaise" of a will-negating skepticism; whose adherents - as Nietzsche so trenchantly phrases it - "doubt the 'freedom of the will' even in their dreams." Vide also, The Will to Power, pp 88-89.

the result of a mis-appraisal, of an insufficiently-worked diagnosis, (29) and to accept, further, that there may well be an extra dimension of the human personality (though by no means transcendent) to which the body itself is aspiring (30) is, for Nietzsche, by no means to submit to the notion of some sort of ultimate refuge for reflective existence (as in the Platonic sense, for example, of the paradigmatic reality of the ultimate refuge of ideas).

Truth, thus, for Nietzsche, can never be defined as existing, so to speak, territorially, in some form of sacred location (however conceived - as in mysticism - as both non-temporal and non-spatial); for Nietzsche, rather, no image of human existence, no consequent gesture, (and

(29) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp 18-20, As Nietzsche argues: No more than the world is the self apprehensible as a unity and, if we have become accustomed to considering it as a distinct substance, it is by virtue of a "fiction", whose only value is linguistic (p. 24) and as a method for constructing thought. As Nietzsche remarks: "Willing seems to me to be, above all, something complicated, something that is a unity in word only." Vide also, Beyond, p. 230.

(30) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 150. In what is perhaps the most esoterically provocative of all passages in Nietzsche, we find him here speculating: "Briefly, perhaps the whole of mental development is a matter of the body: it is the consciously recorded history of the fact that a higher body is forming. The organic ascends to higher regions ..." And concluding: "In the end, it is not a question concerning man; for he must be surpassed."

whatever the augmented vision of inner space) can be defined, can ever be located, except in terms of the logistics of a particular will to power. (31)

It is only will, thus, which makes us captives of our language; expressiveness, and not territoriality is what defines the nature of the aesthetic. All image-making, in other words, (and this perhaps most flagrantly exposed, as Nietzsche astutely notes, in the development of any given morality) is representative of nothing but a short-hand of consciousness. (32)

"Morality is but the symbolic language of the passions". (33) Nietzsche, thus, would not deny that

- (31) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 146: "All valuations are only the results of, and the narrow points of view in servicing, this one will: valuing in itself is nothing save this, -- will to power."
- (32) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil. p. 39: A short-hand of consciousness, that is, only to the extent that "the decisive value of an action" is seen in its "intentionality"; in the failure to recognize, as Nietzsche submits, "that all its intentionality, everything that can be seen, known, made conscious in it belongs only to its surface, its skin, which like any skin, reveals something but conceals even more!"
- (33) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 94.

we are - as first proposed by our instincts - (34) made passive captives of our language; within a language, that is, which both contains and reifies the debilitating stasis of a falsely altruistic, i.e., of a socially purposive identity; (35) (as the notion of 'to feed on self', for example, for the majority of men, is tantamount to feeding on what is but the socially developed consensus of what the self is: an alienation, in other words, which has become totally oblivious to its own alienation); but we so remain captive, suggests Nietzsche, only to the extent that we do not freely exercise all of the possible

- (34) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 6: As our body, so Nietzsche submits, which we imagine to be subject to the hegemony of the self, is really nothing but a collection, a colony of instincts (20) - so is it to be recognized how "Each individual desire wants badly to represent itself as the final aim of existence and as rightful master of all the others. For each desire (instinct) is autocratic and as such it attempts to philosophize. Vide also, Nietzsche's observation in Thus Spake Zarathustra, p. 37, (on Enjoying and Suffering the Passions): "Each virtue is jealous of the others, and jealousy is a terrible thing."
- (35) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 109: "As long as the principle of utility that rules moral value judgments is only utility for the herd, as long as the outlook is directed solely at the preservation of the social community, and immorality is sought exactly and exclusively in whatever seems dangerous to the status quo -- there can be no 'morality of neighbourly love'". So long, that is, as there is no realization of the necessity for a plurality of moralities; and that "above all, more superior moralities, are possible or should be possible" -(113) - there can be no significant investigation of what are, indeed, the precise determinants of "good and evil". Vide Zarathustra, p. 196 ...

alternate expressions inherent in language (such a capacity, for example, which is most strikingly evidence in the exuberance and free-forming manifest of art); (36) we remain captives of our language, in sum, only insofar, and so long as we do not act as willful custodians of it. (37)

To act as willful custodian: it is within such a conviction that we see, as corresponding, the singular urgency of Nietzsche's exhortations to a creative redemption of time, of the past - not to take refuge in it; for to so 'take the past upon oneself, in an act of conscious

(35) "What is good and evil no one knows yet, unless it (Contd.) be he who creates." Vide also Will p. 234. Genealogy, p. 161.

(36) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, pp 254-5 263, 253, 243-4. Cf, also in The Genealogy of Morals, p. 290: in which is contained the very intricate discussion of the radical antithesis which art, at least potentially opposes to the ascetic ideal. But of an art, further which is representative of the most consummate will to illusion: "In art the lie becomes consecrated, the will to deception has good conscience at its back."

(37) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 59: Only man placed values in things to preserve himself - he alone created a meaning for things, a human meaning. Therefore he calls himself 'man', which means: the esteemer. To esteem is to create ... Through esteeming alone is there value: and without esteeming, the nut of existence would be hollow." Such splendid encomiums to the significance of the creator, as the one above, of course abound in the pages of Thus Spoke Zarathustra; what is most seminal, however, as it occurs to the end of this chapter (on The Thousand and One Goals) is the still enigmatic reference that Nietzsche makes to both the prospects and the need for the establishment of a universal culture, as that of a creative

renewal - even in the concession that all philosophy to date has required a touchstone, that Good indeed, as Nietzsche writes, "is the culminating moment" (38) - is, for Nietzsche, the only effective polarization, and hence creative resolution to the threat of stasis in language.

It is as within this assured tension, this "pathos of distance", (39) this retrieval in irony, this creative custodianship, (this life beyond the "gaps") (40) that for Nietzsche is to be found that manifest of man's responsive presence in the world: whose aim must ever be towards the avoidance of surety, for all "convictions" are but "prisons",

(37) Contd. governance for the whole of mankind. In his words: "A thousand goals have there been so far, for there have been a thousand peoples. Only the yoke for the thousand necks is still lacking: the one goal is lacking. Humanity still has no goal." (60)

(38) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 181.

(39) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: In this persistent reflection upon "the abysmally different orders of rank and the distances between ranks in men" - again references abound. Vide esp. pp. 72, 135, 199. Vide, also The Genealogy of Morals, p. 160.

(40) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 92: In the religious interiorization of pain, of the sublimation of cruelty, only the voids of the body become the residence of knowledge. What life is possible is only a life lived entirely in the margins of things: "Of gaps was the spirit of these redeemers made up: but into every gap they put their delusion, their stopgap, which they called God."

as Nietzsche cautions; (41) and whose subsequent delight in such freedom is perhaps best typified in the ability of the artist - as Nietzsche renders this - to speak of himself "in a hundred different languages". (42)

If only as in the light of these previous reflections, we may see how grossly inaccurate it is to characterize the Nietzschean enterprise, in whatever sense, as nihilistic. But rather: it is against the very constructs of nihilism that Nietzsche is first concerned to invoke an "overcoming". (43)

Hence Nietzsche's dictum: to "live dangerously" (44) must be viewed not in the perspective of nihilist utterance; but rather, and perhaps, indeed, much more tragically, as the attempt in creating an entirely new form of optimism, of reflective hardness, and so specifically to combat the pervasiveness of that spiritual malaise which Nietzsche had so astutely diagnosed as nihilism. (45)

(41) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Anti-Christ, p. 172

(42) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 255

(43) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 90.
(In specific reference to nihilism). Vide also, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 178

(44) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 288: How else to so give credence to danger but in this stipulation that "Man must become better and more evil"? Vide also, the remark in Beyond Good and Evil, P. 150: In man's failure, as Nietzsche reads it, to take a distinguished measure of history - still, says Nietzsche: "Like a rider on a forward-charging horse, we drop our reins when infinity lies before us, we modern men, we half-barbarians. We are in the midst of our bliss only where we are most -- in danger."

(45) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp 126-8. Vide also, The Will to Power, p. 108; The Genealogy of Morals, p. 230.

It is, further, only as within the "hammer-hardness", the "spectator-divinity" of such an optimism that is to be found, for Nietzsche, what can be, perhaps, no more than the basic requisite for an existence which is lived - as he characterizes it in "The Will To Power" - as entirely within "the new desert waste". (46)

This "new desert waste", this void, that Nietzsche, with great pain, both diagnoses and explodes from: is it not specifically that world - at least as philosophically inherited from Descartes - which exists as though entirely divorced from an evocative and expressive Nature; and one which proclaims its assurance of the 'real' only on the basis of the mechanism of Mind - this world, in a phrase, of irrevocable antinomies and despairing solitude?

It is a world, further, in which the biblical dialogue with God (or the medievalist sacramental certainty of Him) has been replaced, (if replaced at all) (47)

(46) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 108.

(47) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 292: As Nietzsche here so slyly questions: "Does anyone seriously maintain today (as theologians did for a while) that Kant's 'victory' over the conceptual apparatus of dogmatic theology (God, soul, freedom, immortality) has hurt that ideal? ... Similarly, does anybody now hold it against the agnostics, those admirers of mystery and the unknown, that they worship the question mark itself as their god?"

by, as it were, the reationalist sotto voce of a God who operates - as in Descartes - almost wholly as deus ex machina. (That God would "not deceive him": is this not how Descartes - at least in one crucial point in his philosophy - is constrained to satisfy his doubts concerning the intrinsic reality of the sensible world?)

It is from his radical diagnosis of such a being: of such a being (as Nietzsche, for example, now considers the wholly presumptive, and thus diseased utilitarianism which governs his behaviour) who has so inexorably, as it were, terminated into miniature; (48) of such a being, further, who - as was suggested of the Cartesian individual - is responsively certain only of the redundant mechanism of his own self-consciousness -- that provides for Nietzsche at least the psychological origin of that "new desert waste" for which he is now compelled to mediate an "overcoming".

(48) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra: Vide, esp. the Chapter On The Virtue That Makes Small, pp 167-9. Vide also, Nietzsche's exposition of "the last man" (pp 17, 18 and 213). It is this omnipresence of the mediocre - as not merely indicative of some idiosyncratic mode of behaviour, but rather as representative of a definite state of being - that Nietzsche both confronts with such anguish and attacks with such vigour: "Naked I had once seen both, the greatest man and the smallest man: all-too-similar to each other, even the greatest all-too-human, All-too-small, the greatest! -- that was my disgust with man." (p. 219). Vide also, p. 93, (in the chapter On Priests) where the gist of these remarks - indeed, almost identical in form - were first put forth.

Such an invocation of change, the heralding "that man is something that must be overcome -- that man is a bridge and no end": (49) it is with this that the deepest ties, the longest resonances of what we have called Nietzsche's "Aesthetic Perspectivism" - his constant call for the cultivation of a new "excellence" in man (50) may be seen as manifest. But let us be very careful at this point: for it must be strongly emphasized that Nietzsche at no point wants to make certain of his "parable": for all parables, as Nietzsche, the aesthete, so scrupulously recognizes, are themselves but auguries of becoming; in sum: it is specifically in deference to his role as both herald and critic that Nietzsche must so resolutely forbear to speak as an ontologist.

Just how close Nietzsche's thought seems to come to ontology, to trespass upon certainty, however, may perhaps be best examined in a discussion of that concept - reflective, as he says, of the "most abysmal" of all his thoughts (51)- which he calls "Eternal Recurrence"; a concept which is (for such will be the very least of our submissions) most conclusively the product of an aestheticism which (unlike so many of

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- (49) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, pp 15. and 198. Vide also, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 219.
- (50) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra: Esp. the chapter On the Higher Men, pp 286-95. Vide also, The Genealogy of Morals, pp.229-30.
- (51) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 157. (On The Vision and the Riddle).

either its philosophic or mystical precursors) most resolutely refuses to despair of immanence.

II

HIS "MOST ABYSMAL THOUGHT"

NIETZSCHE'S DOCTRINE OF "ETERNAL RECURRENCE"

We can only offer a most limited assessment of Nietzsche's doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence". For we see it as having evolved in direct culmination to what we have termed his "aesthetic perspectivism"; we cannot, in other words, attempt an extensive analysis of the vast relation between Nietzsche and the extensive philosophic tradition out of which he himself emerged: that tradition, for example, which he subjects to so detailed a critique in "The Use And Abuse of History". (1)

It is we, thus, who alone must operate within that chaos of purposelessness which Nietzsche had so astutely diagnosed as but the self-interdictions of nihilism. We cannot hope to grasp adequately the full

(1) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Use and Abuse of History. (tr. by Adrian Collins), The Liberal Arts Press, N.Y., 1959. Vide esp. Sections IV-VI, pp 22-42. Cf., also Beyond Good and Evil, Sixth Article, esp. pars. 204-6.

import of Nietzsche's references to "the overcoming of the philosophers" - of that but "intermediary period of Nihilism" - precisely because we ourselves have had no philosophers to overcome. (2) It is, in sum, as we are not sufficient "warriors of knowledge", that the full measure of Nietzsche's scorn - as evinced for example, in his remark - "The arrogance of man: when he sees no purpose, he denies that there can be one!" (3) - must be seen as charging us.

- (2) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 91. Note his full remark: "The overcoming of philosophers by the annihilation of the world of being: intermediary period of Nihilism; before there is sufficient strength present to transvalue values, and to make the world of becoming, and of appearance, the only world to be deified and called good!" Cf., also, Beyond Good and Evil, part 204, p. 120: "Philosophy reduced to theory of knowledge, actually no more than a bashful 'periodism' and doctrine of continence -- a philosophy which cannot get past its own threshold and has painstakingly forbidden its own right to enter -- this surely is philosophy in its last throes, an end, an agony, something that arouses compassion. How could such a philosophy rule? The resolution of such a question as this was of course of great crucial concern to Nietzsche - a Nietzsche, that is, who here represents not only himself but also that long tradition of western philosophy of which he was so singular an heir; but we ourselves, however, who are without significant cultural ancestors -- how can we ever take it upon ourselves to pledge such an "over-coming"?"
- (3) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will To Power, p. 101.

For if we do "war", we war only, as it were, by attrition; in breaking away - only from within the residue of self, of the aesthetic regimen so containing "self-hood". Our "most abysmal thoughts", consequently, are not thoughts which possess us, but only thoughts which we possess. Our chaos reflects only the disorders of an entirely self-implicated personality. Coherence anxieties are succeeded only by retrieval anxieties; we seek to recover in thought only what we suppose that we ourselves have lost - and in every forgetting is there felt a dismembering.

And as within this dismembering, finally within such an interior conventicle of fragments, is there to be revealed - as Nietzsche had already so lucidly noted it - "the most striking characteristic of these modern men - the opposition of something inside them to which nothing external corresponds, and the reverse." (4)

It is we thus, who have remained hidden in that "chaotic inner world that the modern man has a curious pride in calling his 'real personality'". (5) It is we, thus, who have perfected only idiosyncrasy to the level of art; and in such a perfected idiosyncrasy lies our only certainty of self-hood.

(4) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Use and Abuse of History, p.23.

(5) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 23.

But what has all the above to do, properly, with "Eternal Recurrence"? Only, as we have already indicated, by way of exposing our limits: we can only meaningfully deal with the aspect of "Eternal Recurrence" which directly relates to Nietzsche's examination of the interpretative temperament; and with what such a temperament itself further exposes regarding the demands of any particular "will-to-power".

For nothing, as we understand this of Nietzsche's formulation, can ever be revealed to man about the nature of his existence, or of his capacity for its change, except insofar as it is first made manifest in the efforts of "will-to-power", "that every elevation of man involves the over-coming of narrower interpretations; that every higher degree of strength or power attained, brings new views in its trains, and teaches a belief in new horizons..."(6)

There is no world, then, which is ever received as in its entirety; no one, that is, can ever be said to confront the world "ontologically", except insofar as he himself is reduced in his "will-to-power" by the need for an ontology.(7) Consciousness itself, further, can never be properly considered

(6) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 106.

(7) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, par. 34 and 36, pp 40-44. To the extent that faith ("Faith in 'immediate certainties is a moral naiveté" that does honor to us philosophers, but we were not made to be only moral men.") militates against the fullest exercise of "Perspectivity" - must the ontological be

as providing for any sufficient criterion of reality, (epistemology, in other words, can never be made to stand adequately coincident with "Being"); and as for the "forms of reasons" themselves, their only purpose - as Nietzsche notes of them with brilliant economy - "was to master reality, by misunderstanding it intelligently." (8)

To speak, then, in any sense of "unity", or of the need for "unities", is to speak, for Nietzsche, only as the result of the reduced horizons of one's interpretative will; in Nietzsche's words: "Unity (monism) is a need of inertia; plurality of interpretation is a sign of strength".(9)

We must note, further, that such demands for a 'plurality of interpretation' must be seen as just as seriously affecting all judgments made of purely "artistic values"; where, for Nietzsche, the concept of beauty is understood as in no way devolved from any paradigmatic absolute, but

understood as representing a defeat, a refusal to further "experiment". For "in the end, the question is whether we really acknowledge the will as effective; whether we believe in the causality of the will." On the significance of "Perspectivity": Vide, also, The Will to Power, pp. 13, and 121.

(8) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 86.

(9) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 101.

rather as itself self-defined within the powers of the individual expressiveness of will. (9a) Or as Nietzsche, at one point in his discussion of how all epistemological positions are perhaps no more than the "consequence of moral valuations", (10) even more forcibly stipulates,

The absolute is even an absurd concept: an 'absolute mode of existence; is nonsense, the concept "being", "thing", is always relative to us. (11)

The 'limits' of beauty, thus, or the "horizons" of vision, must be seen as ever dependent upon not what can only be falsely construed as the actual constituents of the world (12) but solely upon both the nature and extent of the affirmative will in aesthetic judgment: as in an epiphany: or in what Nietzsche refers to as the "aesthetic Yea". (13)

(9a) Ibid., pp 244-46

(10) Ibid., p. 80.

(11) Ibid., p. 82.

(12) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp 40-41: "It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than a semblance...Why don't we admit at least this much; there could be no life except on the basis of perspectival valuations and semblances."

(13) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 288
Vide also, p. 263: "The essential feature in art is its power of perfecting existence, its production of perfection and plenitude; art is essentially the affirmation, the blessing, and the deification of existence."

The will must never suffer itself in the impotence of negation. For there is no reality of coherence which exists outside itself - thus the will cannot afford to be anything less than unconditional in its affirmative concerns: for to refuse a "virtue" (14) to any part of the universe means only to refuse that "virtue" of itself. It is from within such a conviction that we find Nietzsche, for example, when speaking of the "tragic artist", making reference to that "feeling of plenitude" and "feeling of power" which, in such artists, "utters the judgment 'beautiful' concerning things which the instinct of impotence can only value as hateful and ugly". (15)

There is no meaning in the meaning which lies apart from the will's own affirmative activity. There is no pattern of coherence, in other words, to which the will might direct itself, as if in contemplation. There is no meaning to "outside". But to look for meaning as already existent outside the will is a phenomenon which is understood by Nietzsche only in terms of a negative interiority: of the will turning in upon itself: how it now must secretly conspire against itself - for it can no longer either "impregnate" or "give birth". (16)

(14) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, pp 37, 74, 190.

(15) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will To Power, p. 286.

(16) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 122.

To will, then, even that which stands as repugnant to the self (precisely so that nothing might remain intact of the will's own self-conspiracy, it must take claim of even those most disturbing resonances of the world as chaos - in Nietzsche's words, "one should not desire to deprive the world of its disquieting and enigmatical nature") (17) --- we sense here how inexorably does Nietzsche's presumptive manifest of "will-to-power" lead to its ultimate consummation in his doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence".

For this doctrine of Nietzsche's provides the theoretical nexus for a final stipulation of that "will-to-power" which refuses to invert itself; and such a refusal is now seen most crucially in relation to consciousness as "past time": for now must the "will-to-power" seek to stand in only one relation to the past - that of full-bodied a redeemer. In Zarathustra's words:

To redeem those who lived in the past
and to recreate all "it was" into "thus
I willed it" - that alone should I call
redemption. (18)

Even a retrospective morality - as Nietzsche insists throughout - must be one of an unconditional self-giving (not even the past is neutral territory); but just as all things so persistently conspire for expression - as Nietzsche puts this at one point - "all processes may be

(17) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 101.

(18) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 239.

regarded as beings": (19) so must the will be expected to resurrect and reconfirm, to redeem its past time just as surely as it may be expected to contain its present.

The will, thus, as in past time, must never be allowed to conspire against itself; but all existence must be self-declared as precious. For what is the alternative? According to Nietzsche, to refuse in any respect to take a redemptive responsibility toward the past leads inevitably - as he so strikingly formulates this - to taking a position of "revenge" against time. In his words: "what revenge is - the will's ill-will against time and its 'it was'"; (20) and it is thus that such a position just as certainly entails a subsequently relentless withdrawal from the present - as all strategies of renunciation, of submissive morality so derive from such a withdrawal.

It is also, specifically, from all such feelings of resentment, from despair of the present that in Nietzsche's view, every enactment of the concern for a salvational history of man (of man as piece of estranged consciousness looking for some absolute reconciliation, for a redemptive history which must ultimately explain him; all doctrines,

(19) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 130.

(20) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 139. Vide also, p. 198.

in short, of man as an "end" - and not as a "bridge") (21) must be seen as originating.

Of course, finally, as Nietzsche understands this, all motivational responses to existence - however they are subsequently made captive in language - are, in their essence political acts. Thus: to speak of man, as Nietzsche does, as expressly he who is to be a "bridge for over-coming", is so unconditionally to politicize the present. (22) (It is to proclaim the present as forever an openness; a constant metamorphosis and provocation; as on behalf of a "Becoming" which - as Nietzsche stipulates - "must appear justified at every instant"). (23)

Or conversely; to take any sort of revenge upon past time - even as expressive of the highest spirituality of malice - (24) is still always to take a political revenge: one abstracts from the past only so as to establish more forcibly a guarantee for the future. Thus, as seen by Nietzsche any salvational doctrine, by its degrading of the

(21) Friedrich Nietzsche Ibid., pp.99 and 198.

(22) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, pp. 91,103,182, 177. Vide also, Zarathustra, pp 166 and 198; Beyond Good and Evil, p. 120; The Genealogy of Morals, p. 218.

(23) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 177.

(24) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 143: "The making of moral judgments and condemnations is the favourite revenge of those of limited mind on those whose mind is less so; it is also a sort of compensation for having been ill-favoured by nature; but ultimately it is an opportunity to get a mind to become more subtle. For malice spiritualizes people."

present, can never hope to make pregnant its concerns for redemption except by the processes of either interiorization or abstraction (as the religious man can only interiorize his suffering, and then in the passion of transcendence - "living in God" - seek to abstract his pain). (25)

It is directly by his refusal to submit to such an abstraction of the redemptive (of a redemption, that is, which refuses to being with immanence, in present time, within the utmost and freest affirmative unconditionality of the will) that forces Nietzsche to the final specifications of his doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence".

"For all joy - wants eternity". In consummation of its power (at the "new dawn", in the "great noon") it wants only to repeat itself. "All love does not want -- it wants more." (26) For such a will there is no talk of

(25) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 66. Vide also, Thus Spoke Zarathustra (On The Afterworldly) p. 31: "It was suffering and incapacity that created all afterworlds - this and that brief madness of bliss which is experienced only by those who suffer most deeply. Weariness that wants to reach the ultimate with one leap, with one fatal leap, a poor ignorant weariness that does not want any more: this created all gods and afterworlds." Vide also, Zarathustra, p. 86: "Evil I call it, and misanthropic - all this teaching of One and the Plenum and the Unmoved and the Sated and the Permanent. All the permanent - that is only a parable."

(26) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 293; Cf. Also p. 191: "And whoever proclaims the ego wholesome and holy and selfishness blessed, verily, he will also tell what he knows, foretelling: 'Verily, it is at hand, it is near, the great noon!'"

reconciliation; for as it regards itself, it was never estranged. For such a will there is no search for redemption; for it alone, as it regards itself, is that which redeems.

But for the will to exist continually upon this expressive level, upon this field of vision, it can never permit itself to be inverted. For to invert the will, in so fearful an interiority, is only to despair of the body; and within such a despair, a weariness, lies only the delusive abstract of the spirit. As Zarathustra admonishes:

Believe me, my brothers: it was the body that despaired of the body and touched the ultimate walls with the fingers of a deluded spirit. (27)

For such a will is abstract, Nietzsche argues, precisely because it derives out of an impotence: a will, that is, which begins only in despair of immanence, and then proceeds, so indelibly, to interiorize this despair. (As joy is ultimately displaced by hope, so expressiveness and gesture are replaced by a self-destructive inwardness; and thus one is no longer liberated for creation).

One is no longer liberated, that is, for the free exercise of power (as that which defines itself, always, in terms of both plurality and possibility, and ever in full

(27) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 31.

recognition of its transience); (28) but now, rather, one becomes totally submissive to the monistic interdiction of this power which, so precisely termed, is "violence". (29) Now, for Nietzsche, such a monism of violence, of power, is that which always must abstract itself for certainty, which cannot admit to its transience - which does not sense the need for its "over-coming". (As, for example, one traces with Nietzsche, how the particular language - the rhetoric of morality will describe itself only in the abstract certainty of its violence; and how it must then irrevocably interiorize this certainty, so as no longer to reflect on it). (30)

There is no such thing, thus, as some ultimate triumph of "values". (31) For as under the great interdict

- (28) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 116: "Verily, I say unto you: good and evil that are not transitory, do not exist. Driven on by themselves, they must overcome themselves again and again." Vide also, The Will to Power, p. 181; Zarathustra, p. 75: "All names of good and evil are parables: they do not define, they merely hint."
- (29) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 116. ("With your values and words of good and evil you do violence when you value ---"). Vide also, Zarathustra, pp 59, 196, 202, 218, 288.
- (30) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, par. 19, p. 19 and par. 291, pp 230-1 Cf. also, that examination of the function of the "ascetic priest" as "physician", in The Genealogy of Morals, pp 266-71.
- (31) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 181: "'God' is the culminating moment: life is an eternal process of deifying and undeifying. But withal there

of "over-coming", all true creation is both violent and transient. In Zarathustra's early words: "Man is something that must be overcome; and therefore you shall love your virtues, for you will perish of them" (32)

As creative power, thus, for Nietzsche, works only for openness and possibility - as it must fall toward the lucid ("when power becomes gracious and descends into the visible --") antithetically, the abstract of violence must push always for closure, for "fix", for reification, and (as interiorly contained) for inertia. For creative power can always afford to be "gracious", but abstract violence must always be certain: it cannot suspect itself.

It is in recognition of such a threat as that posed by the monism of power, of abstract violence, of renunciation, of so abstract a certainty which contains itself in that most heinous of all blasphemies, for Nietzsche - that of blaspheming the earth (33) that Nietzsche looks to, if only as in final refuge for "becoming" his final convening of "Eternal Recurrence".

is no zenith of values, but only a zenith of power."

(32) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 37.

(33) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 13: "Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing, and to esteem the entrails of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth."

It is in this refuge, on behalf of all those, as Nietzsche expresses it, "whose one desire is to re-claim innocence on behalf of Becoming" (34) - that is to be found the deepest conviction and source of Nietzsche's "aestheticism": full recognition of all the rights and prerogatives of the consciousness as body.

"Eternal Recurrence" is writ thus, only for all those partisans of a deep bodily existence. It is as a pronouncement made upon the distinct and unestranged prospective apotheosis of the body. (Of the body itself as history). It is a refusal to submit to any concept of estranged spirit as the origin of things; (35) but holds only the creative body responsible for (whatever) "the worth of the world" ("the world which concerns us at all").

For Nietzsche, "Eternal Recurrence" refers exactly to the refusal to so invert the problem of mortality: but rather proclaims that the spirit and all its values and data, indeed, might never have existed if the body, in its "will-to-power", which had at least scented them out, had not been there.

(34) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 213.

(35) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, pp 134-5. Vide also, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 31.

"Eternal Recurrence", then, is that which is writ only in the strongest language of the body, of immediate concern and concreteness; and as it reflects upon the highest duty of the will (as in "the interpretations of actions" :- "To stamp becoming with the character of being"); (36) it is a language, thus (neither abstract nor interior) which can exist only in the flux of constant interdiction and demand. As Nietzsche writes:

A test of man's well-being and consciousness of power is the extent to which he can acknowledge the terrible and questionable character of things, and whether he is in need of a faith at the end. (37)

And if - he is in no need "of a faith at the end" - "Eternal Recurrence" then necessitates for man, for the individual, a recognition of that subsequent demand for an expression of love of existence which must be as unconditioned as it is self-giving; or as Nietzsche gives voice to this conviction in The Use and Abuse of History:

Everything that forces a man to be no longer unconditioned in his love cuts at the root of his strength; he must wither and be dishonoured. (38)

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- (36) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 107.
 (37) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 287.
 (38) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Use and Abuse of History, p. 42.

There is no point, then in piously awaiting the apocalypse; for it is as if the apocalypse (the "dreadful", in Heidegger's transcription of the Nietzschean "abyss", of Nietzsche's "most abysmal thought") "has already happened". In other words: "reality" (or such as we proclaim it) has already taken root, is already inextricably, inexhaustively and repetitiously entangled within itself; (and as already given the free play of illusion, made captive in language - "precisely between what is most similar, illusion lies most beautifully", in Zarathustra's words); (39) nor is there to be found any monism of escape, or monism of governance in such a reality (speaks Zarathustra: "This is my way; where is yours? - thus I answered those who asked me 'the way'. For the way -- that does not exist.") (40)

The foremost demand, then, of such a reality is the demand of expressiveness; as within this great universe of discourse only silence is the absolute betrayal (remarks Zarathustra: "All truths that are kept silent become poisonous"). (41)

(39) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 217. "----for the smallest cleft is the hardest to bridge." Regarding the poignance of the especial metaphor - Cf., Zarathustra (The Night Song) p. 106: "They receive from me, but do I touch their souls? There is a cleft between giving and receiving; and the narrowest cleft is the last to be bridged."

(40) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 195.

(41) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 116.

Our responsibility for the world, so indicates Nietzsche, lies only in our constant invocation of it; in both our ubiquities of presence. For if there is any universality at all in terms, so to speak, of the world's (reality's) governance of itself, it is only in a great universality of relativity; and since all things so conspire: so all things must also conspire to repeat themselves: "To those who think as we do," as Zarathustra's animals, his intermediaries, instruct him, - "all things themselves are dancing: they come and offer their hands and laugh and flee -- and come back; everything goes, everything comes back; eternally rolls the wheel of being;" (42)

It is thus, so as to leave no security at all for the betrayal of the world, (for any betrayal of renunciation); so as to present no security at all to those who "blaspheme the earth", that involves Nietzsche in the necessity of his most terrible abyss which is "Eternal Recurrence".

For all things are already implicated in each other. (43). For, indeed, "the dreadful has already

(42) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ibid.*, p. 217.

(43) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, pp 70-74. (On the psychological determinants of the world as "appearance": we cannot step either "up" or "down" to any different order of "reality"). Cf. Beyond Good and Evil, par. 36, p. 42.

happened." To delineate a presence within any one nuance of reality, is thus to take custodial claim of all such nuances. There is no such thing as "purpose" unless there is all "purpose": existence itself, as an abstraction, is indeed "unredeemable" - but it is ever required, is Nietzsche's firmest conviction that the will "should at last redeem itself". It is thus, forever, to forego, to preclude that revengefully judicial attack upon life (in his profession of what Zarathustra isolates as "what is eternal in the punishment called existence, that existence must eternally become deed and guilt again") (44) that Nietzsche sees as the reason and need for his abyss, for "Eternal Recurrence".

No more then, and no longer to take a revenge upon life. No more to so isolate guilt in the past in order to claim redemption of the future. ("For the dreadful has already happened"). But always to speak in "beautiful folly". And if even - so as to proclaim "the terrible and questionable character of things".

In sum: as Nietzsche records it: it is the body that will be the last judgment. Or, in fact: it is the body which has already made it, and must continue to do so; for no vision is disinterested; and the only honest consumption, ultimately, as in joy, is self-consumption.

(44) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 140.

It is only vengefulness, the negation of life, impotence, all strategies of betrayal which want "heirs", which seek for redemption. "Joy, however," as Nietzsche proclaims this through Zarathustra, "does not want heirs, or children -- joy wants itself, wants eternity, wants recurrence, wants everything eternally the same". (45)

As come to fulsome speech at least (in "beautiful folly") - as subsequent, that is, to all of his diagnostic researches of the politics of language, of language both made, and making captive - at end, then, Nietzsche, in the voice of Zarathustra can speak in no other language than but that of the fool. For there is neither estrangement nor reconciliation to be had of this world; no abstract of redemption; nevertheless it is the fool, as within nothing but the great overflowing of his love, who must so stretch out his will to redeem it: the "whole cosmic economy". (46)

Have you ever said Yes to a single joy? O my friends, then you said Yes to all woe. All things are entangled, ensnared, enamoured; if ever you wanted one thing twice, if ever you said, "You please me, happiness! Abide, moment!" then you wanted all back. All anew, all eternally, all entangled, ensnared, enamoured -- oh, then you loved the world. Eternal ones, love

(45) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 322.

(46) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 288.

it eternally and evermore; and to woe too,
you say: go, but return! For all joy wants ---
eternity. (47)

(47) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 323.

III
ON THE AESTHETICS OF PERCEPTION:
NIETZSCHE'S VIEW OF THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF THE ARTIST AND THE NATURE OF
ASCETICISM

The most immediate threat to the apparent serenity proposed by art is simply that of looking beneath the surface. It is in the furtherance of such an awareness that Nietzsche makes his most singular contribution to the development of an authentic Psychology of Aesthetics: a psychology, that is, which presents for us the constant drama which must exist between the stabilizing illusion which is art, and those deeper urgencies of an as yet unconsecrated chaos to which such an art must always act as both balance and counterpoise.

It is for this very reason, among others, that Nietzsche does not concern himself with the presentation of any formal, or universalist theory of art - such a theory for example, (as Nietzsche here specifically indicts Kant for so propogating) which, "instead of viewing the aesthetic issue from the side of the artist, envisaged art and beauty solely from the 'spectators' point of view".(1)

(1) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 238.

Rather, for Nietzsche, it is expressly in the first trespass of the idiosyncratic, in the personal intervention, and in the specific will to expressiveness that the import of art is most readily to be found.

Such an import, as from the point of view and experience of the artist himself, corresponds most significantly to a state of explosion: it is that bursting forth into images, onto things, surfaces, mute meanings made palpable, panoply of utterances, in languages not only verbal, but as well, both visual and visceral: in sum, it is that state of governance and command which seeks most prodigiously to articulate the "world of becoming" - that world, "which must appear justified at every instant".(2)

It is thus, only within a certain fragrance of power, in plenitude of expressiveness, that, for Nietzsche, one can ever afford to claim insight of the world, to give it credence, and - notwithstanding all of its squalling ephemerera, its harsh antinomies - to propose forms for its coherence. For to so propose a world in terms of its coherence, to so manifest an art which, essentially, is to be "the affirmation, the blessing, and the deification of

(2) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 177.

^eExistence" (3) is thus to seek to endure, for the artist, within a persistently revolutionist consciousness: a consciousness, that is, which must ever remain involved within the dynamic of its expressiveness, of its "seeing", and which can never afford to terminate itself in certainty.(4)

For there is no such thing as certainty. ("For there is no such thing as truth.") ("Truth is ugly.") (5) To live within the aesthetic is thus, for Nietzsche, to live as though in a consistent state of insurrection: an insurrection directly on behalf of that "world of becoming", of surface, of all the shifting manifold of forms and geneses of movements.

(3) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ibid.*, p. 263.

(4) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, pp 255-6 "All seeing is essentially perspective, and so is all knowing. The more emotions we allow to speak in a given matter, the more different eyes we can put on in order to view a given spectacle, the more complete will be our conception of it, the greater our 'objectivity.' But to eliminate the will, to suspend the emotions altogether, provided it could be done -- surely this would be to castrate the intellect, would it not?"

(5) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p. 264: Nowhere is Nietzsche more economically trenchant in his insights, than as aphoristically displayed in the following two paragraphs. "It is absolutely unworthy of the philosopher to say that 'the good and the beautiful are one'; if he should add 'and also the true,' he deserves to be thrashed. Truth is ugly.

Art is with us in order that we may not perish through truth."

For the artist, thus, his art most immediately defines itself as a location of presence; its source is that which falls with the precise will to "specificity", ("Perspectivity is only a complex form of specificity") (6) to take command of one's space - of that charged region which both the body and the will inhabit; and so thus to deploy one's resources, ever-renewing, in the constant re-investiture of immanence.

So prevails the dynamic. But it is a dynamic which plays, always dangerously with the risk of its own annihilation: for it is a dynamic, as Nietzsche further explores it, which is built up, as upon surface, so expressly upon life, upon counterfeit, upon illusion. Just as the will, thus, must inevitably terminate itself - if not in certainty, then at best in image (or just as the image so makes palpable the dream, the mute voice) - so is to be understood the foremost apparitional character of this art as product of the will's resolve: that it must prevail, in serious scrutiny, only on the very surface of things; for to attempt to explore in depth must necessarily involve such an art in a distinct violation of itself.

(6) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 121.

For to perceive "in depth", as Nietzsche understands this, is to force the will into an awareness of that great disparity which exists between the primally unmediated world, and that coherent vision which man's imagination makes of it. For as Nietzsche makes clear: there can be no coherent world other than through that which is created by the effort of will, interpretative imagination. And further: it is only within such manifold of visions, in the plenitude, in the ceaseless experimenting with forms - only, in sum, in the persistent self-giving of this art which either "impregnates" or "gives birth" - can the discipline of illusion be seriously maintained. Art, in other words, can never survive as either disinterested, or purely contemplative inquiry; but its life, rather, must be one of a constant activism and plurality of vision.(7)

It is the continuum of self-bestowal. But only such. For it is only to the extent, so Nietzsche reasons, that the individual artist can forgo yielding to the demands of introspection, to any attempt to perceive critically himself, that he may be judged as creative. As Nietzsche remarks, underlining, as well, some of our points made previously:-

(7) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 255.

In the whole of philosophy hitherto the artist has been lacking ... i.e. as we have already suggested, a necessary fault; for the artist who would begin to understand himself would therewith begin to mistake himself -- he must not look backwards, he must not look at all; he must give. -- It is an honour for an artist to have no critical faculty; if he can criticise he is mediocre, he is modern. (8)

But what when such self-giving ceases? So we must consider now, as Nietzsche delineates it, that profound disparity which exists between the illusory counterfeit of the world as made manifest in art, ("In art the lie becomes consecrated, the will to deception has good conscience at its back.") (9) and that subsequent awareness of the tragic vulnerability to which the human will is subject once, in Nietzsche's words, it "has looked deep into the world." (10)

To "look deep", means essentially, for Nietzsche, to look through (as to look through, and so contend with, one's inwardness); and then as a consequence, in painful sufferance, to discover all too forcibly those immutable limits (that "bedrock of intellectual destiny, of predestined decision") (11) by which such an inward self is

- (8) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 256.
 (9) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 290.
 (10) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil. p. 65.
 (11) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, par. 231, p. 161.

conditioned. But further: such a looking-through occurs most intensely in those occasions when man now seeks to violate himself; as we now encounter, as Nietzsche exposes it to us, that spectacle of the instinct of power which has invented - and so contends with - its own contradiction: in this occasion of "cruelty toward oneself".

For how (as Nietzsche here further questions this thrust into depth, this forage through inwardness) is the strength of the will to be significantly tested except by setting it in variance with that which he knows to be stronger; except, that is, by its coming to both contradict and torment itself?

And as Nietzsche further argues: it is in so perilous an adventure, within such a movement toward cruelty, toward contradiction with oneself, that there is to be discerned yet another means to greater, to self-over-coming. As he first submits:

Practically everything we call "superior culture" rests on the intellectualization and deepening of cruelty: this is my proposition.

Then concluding:-

Ultimately, we must consider that even the man of insight -- insofar as insight is paid for by the mind's opposition to one's heart's desires, by its forcing one to say "no" where one would like to say "yes", to love, to adore -- that such a man, too, operates as an artist and transfigurer of cruelty. Any depth, any thoroughness is already a violation, a desire to hurt the basic will of man's mind whose trend is constantly toward illusion, toward the surface.

In any desire of the mind to penetrate deeply and with understanding there is already a drop of cruelty. (12)

It is such cruelty toward oneself - when taken, as Nietzsche submits of it, as a means itself for the furtherance of the instinct of power, of self-overcoming - for the intricate and yet so intense a dialectic that Nietzsche felt to exist between himself and - in its purest and most radical form - the Christian morality; most specifically (as Nietzsche develops this) in relation to the cultivation, in Christianity, of what Nietzsche refers to as "the ascetic ideal": i.e. for that incessantly harrowing, yet always provisional strategy of renunciation which arises, as Nietzsche insists of it, only "from the protective and curative instinct of a life that is degenerating yet fighting tooth and nail for its preservation... Life employs asceticism in its desperate struggle against death; the ascetic ideal is a dodge for the preservation of life." (13)

But perhaps the most seminal relation between any process of asceticism and the expansive resource which is art, is that, in Nietzsche's view, both their origins are to be found in the palpable fact, the immediate given-ness of the body's own experiments upon itself. What is

(12) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., pp 156-7.

(13) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 256.

indicated here is this notion, so consistent with Nietzsche, of the body itself as a medium upon which either a reflective/introspective, or an expressive/instinctual will operates.

For example: we might compare the two following passages taken from two different books; the former being a description of the aesthetic, and the latter of the ascetic states as they are palpably, i.e. physiologically, to be observed in man -

- (A) All art works like a suggestion on the muscles and the senses which were originally active in the ingenuous artistic man; its voice is only heard by artists -- it speaks to this kind of man whose constitution is attuned to such subtlety in sensitiveness... The aesthetic state represents an overflow of means of communication as well as a condition of extreme sensibility to stimuli and signs. It is the zenith of communion and transmission between living creatures; it is the source of languages. (14)
- (B) Whenever man has thought it necessary to create a memory for himself, his effort has been attended with torture, blood sacrifice... (All asceticism is really part of the same development: here too the object is to make a few ideas omnipresent, unforgettable, "fixed", to the end of hypnotizing the entire nervous and intellectual system; the ascetic procedures help to effect the dissociation of those ideas from all others).(15)

(14) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, pp 252-3.

(15) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 193.

But no matter to what shapes fall the regimen, for man ("the great experimenter on himself") (16) as Nietzsche sees him there can be no expression of his will which - if it is to survive - can remain permanently without a purpose. And if it is not to be the aesthetic sentiment which can compensate, in the individual who enjoys it, for all the suffering endured in the harsh drama of the instincts; but rather a sentiment which awakens, as from the dreams of surface, to that primal fear - "fear of the void" (fear of the demonic in reality, of the essential meaninglessness of human suffering) -- so to that extent will the might otherwise compensate, in "a will to nothingness, a revulsion from life, a rebellion against the principal conditions of living." "And yet", as Nietzsche ultimately insists of this "ascetic ideal": "- despite everything it is and remains a will." (17)

But in sum: whatever value Nietzsche does attribute to such an "ascetic ideal" (as he writes: "I have great respect for the ascetic ideal so long as it really believes in itself and is not merely a masquerade.") (18) he is just as resolute in regarding it as the very condition most

(16) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p 257. Vide also, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 48.

(17) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 299.

(18) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 294.

hostile to the fullest burgeoning of the artistic spirit,
 "An artist who enlists under the banner of the ascetic ideal
 currupts his artistic conscience." (19)

For just as the body, in secret, tremulous recall,
 may be said also to haunt that space which it may seem
 only physically to inhabit, so the artist, in his moves
 outward, must always return again and again in his giving.
 For it is he who gives an impress to things; a man pre-
 occupied with giving voice to still mute phenomena, in
 making clear the obscure. In short, it is a concern for
 form which rules him; or as Nietzsche expresses this:-

A man is an artist to the extent to which he
 regards everything that inartistic people call
 "form" as the actual substance, as the "princi-
 pal" thing. With such ideas a man certainly
 belongs to a world upside down: for henceforward
 substance seems to him something merely formal,--
 his own life included. (20)

But above all, for Nietzsche, if the artist is to
 effectively survive as one who impregnates, or who continually
 gives birth - in his art as that medium by which he makes
 clear all of his formal holds on the world - he must always
 avoid the tendency to identify himself with his creative work,
 he must always resist - in Nietzsche's words - "the temptation
 to 'analogy by contiguity', which would persuade him that
 he, himself, is what he imagines and expresses." (21)

(19) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p.290.

(20) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 261.

(21) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 235.

For the artist must never suspect himself - as in the suspicion of his exile - that he is, as Nietzsche marks him, not like other men, but one "permanently estranged from ordinary reality." (22) He can never seek to prove himself as true, ("to trespass upon actuality"); but his language must always remain the fierce captive of his genius, and as one which might forbear only to dream.

(22) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 235.

IV

ON "LEGISLATING FOR THE ELITE": A FINAL ASSESSMENT OF NIETZSCHE AND "AESTHETIC PERSPECTIVISM"

There remains one more question to attempt, in the last chapter, in making some assessment of what we have termed Nietzsche's "aesthetic perspectivism".

It is this. To what extent can we ever regard the world -- as "interpreted" -- as differing significantly, in principle, from the world -- as "given"? It was, perhaps, Nietzsche's most critical insight to recognize that we can never satisfactorily, i.e. consciously, resolve this problem.

But rather: to speak with certainty about the end of existence as defined in consciousness is, for Nietzsche, to speak either irresponsibly or inadequately of existence.⁸(1) For who determines that criterion whereby conscious thought is understood as paramount? Or as Nietzsche first remarks:

The "conscious world" cannot be a starting-point for valuing: an "objective valuation" is necessary.

(1) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 76. "The origin of thought, like that of feelings, cannot be traced: but that is no proof of its primordially or absoluteness! It simply shows that we cannot get behind it, because we have nothing else save thought and feeling." Vide also, Beyond Good and Evil, par. 36 p. 42.

And then he continues by submitting:

In comparison with the enormous and complicated antagonistic processes which the collective life of every organism represents, its conscious world of feelings, intentions, and valuations, is only a small slice. We have absolutely no right to postulate this particle of consciousness as the object, the wherefore, of the collective phenomena of life: the attainment of consciousness is obviously only an additional means to the unfolding of life and to the extension of its power. That is why it is a piece of childish simplicity to set up happiness, or intellectuality, or morality, or any other individual sphere of consciousness, as the highest value: and maybe to justify "the world" with it. (2)

But what then, as we must enquire with Nietzsche, must truly constitute the rationale of all such secret adventures of order? To ~~being:~~^{begin:} it is only in recognition of the terrible vulnerable state of our coherence, that we exist, in Nietzsche's intuition, as ever over the threshold of chaos, that give our adventures first import. "Because the world is not an organism at all", as Nietzsche says, "but a thing of chaos; because the development of 'intellectuality' is only a means tending relatively to extend the duration of an organisation". (3)

To "believe" in the world is thus only to see the necessity of further legislating for its "fictions". And

(2) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 176.

(3) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 180.

it is only in this corresponding recognition of a direct threat to all such coherence that we may say Nietzsche first becomes eloquent on behalf of an "elite". For in Nietzsche's view, that is to say, it is only those few individuals - "anchorites" by either temperament or visitation - who are so "privileged" first to become aware of all the sensations of disorder; who are first coincident in their culture, in other words, with all of the phenomenal circumstances of a potential nihilism - (its "pathos") (4) - so as to be, as it were, first authors of its "over-coming".

Nietzsche thus, in this very crucial sense of an "over-coming", can never be said seriously to profess either the existence of, or the need for, a specific "elite of power"; it is, rather, only those dangers so attendant upon an "elite of the sensibility" which he is concerned to investigate; an "elite", that is, of whose "footsteps" in being, as Nietzsche remarks, "one can always hear something of an echo of desolation, something of the

(4) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ibid.*, p. 90: "A nihilist is the man who says of the world as it is, that it ought not to exist, and of the world as it ought to be, that it does not exist. According to this, existence (action, suffering, willing and feeling) has no sense: the pathos of the 'in vain' is the Nihilist's pathos ---". For other specific (and trenchant) references to Nihilism, vide The Will to Power, p. 108, also The Genealogy of Morals, p. 178.

whisper and fearful vigilance of solitude".(5)

It is within such a mental landscape as that of the anchorites' that the ruins of all the ancient fictions, of all classical philosophy are first made apparent; and such ruins which, for Nietzsche, are symbolized first of all in the "death of God". For Nietzsche, from so catastrophic disaster, it is impossible to disengage or abstract any significant moral or metaphysical values (this being the point, for example, of his remark in The Will to Power, that "The spiritualisation of the idea of God is thus very far from being a sign of progress"); (6) and yet, as judging from pervasive indifference which he discovers on the face of his culture, Nietzsche, in the person of Zarathustra, must conclude that this dreadful event is still unknown.

As from his own summit, Zarathustra first descends into the valley to encounter the pious hermit, who continues to honour the ancient God in his retreat and fervour. And so Zarathustra is moved to say:

- (5) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 229.
- (6) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 76. Vide also, the remarks of the "old pope" to Zarathustra, in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 314: "He who said, 'God is a spirit', took the biggest step and leap to disbelief that anybody has yet taken on earth: such a saying can hardly be redressed on earth".

Could it be possible? This old saint
in the forest has not heard anything
of this, that God is dead! (7)

It is only in respect to so unprecedented a
phenomenon as that symbolized, for Nietzsche, in the
death of God, and his subsequent realization of the extent
of the cultural ignorance regarding this catastrophic
event, that the full import of Nietzsche's reflection in
part 285 of Beyond Good and Evil, may be seen. To
quote:-

The greatest events and thoughts (and the
greatest thoughts are the greatest events)
are comprehended most slowly. The genera-
tions which are their contemporaries do not
experience, do not "live through" them --
they live alongside them. What happens is
similar to what happens in the stellar universe.
The light of the remotest stars reaches men
last; while it has not yet reached them, they
deny that there are stars there. "How many
centuries does it take before a mind is fully
comprehended?" That is also a standard for
creating an order of rank, of protocol, such as is
need -- for minds as well as for stars. -- (8)

It is only thus, in fearful concern for those few
who already exist at this point of catastrophe; who
silently realize - regarding this death of God - that

(7) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 12.

(8) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, par. 285,
pp 227-8.

"the dreadful has already happened"; or who have already responded to the awareness that now all metaphysical thinking can offer no security; that Nietzsche stands compelled to direct his insights.

But how most forcefully to redress this imbalance (this imbalance of sensitivity)? For if Nietzsche's philosophy is most specifically the expression of a concern for an "elite", then it refers as well, and even more directly to an "elite" which, in Nietzsche's view, is ever in danger, culturally, of being suppressed. As he notes, for example, at one point in The Will to Power:-

My general point of view. -- First proposition:

Man as a species is not progressing. Higher specimens are indeed attained, but they do not survive. The general level of the species is not raised. (9)

Or, perhaps, in a more direct expression of this concern, we find Nietzsche, not much later noting that,

"--- the more promising for the future the modern individual happens to be, the more suffering falls to his lot. This is the profoundest concept of suffering. (10)

Certainly we find in the above passages more than an echo of Nietzsche's earlier reflections - as they were touched upon in Chapter 3 - regarding the particular strategies, and subsequent heuristic significance of

(9) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 157.

(10) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 161.

"cruelty toward oneself"; regarding, that is, the specific trespass of the "virtues" which is at least potentially inherent in the experience of suffering.

But to what extent, might we now inquire, was the full measure of Nietzsche's philosophical irony but a reasoned out-growth of such a "resource of sensitiveness"? (As, for exaple, it was perhaps only in the strongest tradition of Nietzschean irony to so resolutely refuse - or at least, critically suspect - the prospects of an historical destiny for oneself).

In sum, it is as if Nietzsche's attitude to normative philosophy does arise directly out of this concept of irony, this feeling of "suspicion toward oneself"; but it is a reflection, as well, as Nietzsche confronts them, upon all of the myriad disguises, flagrant masquerades of which the conscious mind is capable of perpetrating upon itself, to which it is almost ineluctably prone. That "every philosophy" thus, must be viewed always as "a fore-ground philosophy"; such is indeed, as Nietzsche cautions, "an anchorite's judgment". And as so understood, as Nietzsche continues with this insight:-

Each philosophy also conceals a philosophy;
each opinion is also a hiding place; each
word is also a mask. (11)

(11) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 230.
par. 289.

It is such a conviction as to the perilously ambiguous character of all philosophy, indeed of all conscious thought itself (for as we earlier noted: in Nietzsche's view, there is no other way to regard any philosophy but as the masked objectification of a particular temperament, or as secret confessional) (12) that specifically precludes Nietzsche from seriously entertaining the prospect of "legislating for an elite", that is, in answering only with a monistic assurance to the question of the "creation of values". (13)

For as we have already noted, in Nietzsche's analysis, the only way in which conscious thought itself is open to purview is through a manifold of ambiguities, a variety of "levels of semblance"; and then as Nietzsche goes on to inquire:

Whatever forces us, furthermore, to assume at all that there is an essential difference between "true" and "false"? Is it not sufficient to assume levels of semblance, lighter and darker shadows and tones of semblance as it were, different "values" in the painters' sense of the term? Why couldn't the world which matters to us be a fiction? (14)

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- (12) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., par 6, pp 6-7.
- (13) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, pp.146-7, and 151. As we are made witness here to only the struggle of man's instincts themselves as they each contend for supremacy in valuation. There is, in short, nothing "objective" here'.
- (14) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, par. 34, p. 41.

And what of the authors themselves of such "fictions"?
 Are they not, as well, to be just as questionably inspected?
 As Nietzsche writes:

And in the end, what do we know about ourselves?
 Or about what the spirit who guides us wants to
 be called (for it is a question of naming)! Or
 how many spirits we contain? (15)

If there is indeed a meaningful answer to this
 question, it is an answer which can only, and must always
 perish in its abstraction. For it is an answer which can
 only be willed; and which can explore itself only in the
 purposive expansiveness of the medium - the "method" -
 which is attendant upon such a will. As Nietzsche remarks:
 "The most valuable knowledge is always discovered last:
 but the most valuable knowledge consists of methods." (16)

It is around this demand, in other words, for what
 must always remain "open", as but the continually shifting
 residue of a world which, in the plural innocence of
 "methods" (17) is being taken and retaken, made captive again

(15) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., par. 227, p. 153.

(16) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 3.

(17) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 167: or it is as if,
 in other words, the interpretative individual were
 required to remain as within a permanent state of
 "creative irascibility"; and as in direct analogy
 to that "feeling of happiness" which, as Nietzsche
 defines it, "lies precisely in the discontentedness
 of the will, in fact that without opponents and
 obstacles it is never satisfied".

and again in consciousness that Nietzsche organizes his philosophy of "aesthetic perspectivism".

"For as man now stands liberated in the freest field of his methods"; liberated, that is, as from bondage under only the abstract of purpose, from both logic and rationality of the transcendent. Or has Nietzsche, for example, have Zarathustra celebrate - in his paean "of hazard" - this new freedom:

This freedom and celestial serenity I put like an azure bell above all things, when I taught that over them and through them, no "eternal Will" - willeth. This wantonness and folly did I put in place of that will, when I taught that "In everything there is one thing impossible - rationality." (18)

Thus to deny "rationality", for Nietzsche, is to deny all abstract simplifications of the world; as morality, for example, as Nietzsche defines it, is just such a simplification. (19) But now, as "we have annihilated morality --" he remarks, "we have once more grown completely obscure to ourselves!" (20)

It is only within such a re-invested sense of "otherness", of positive self-alienation, that we can come to

(18) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 166. Vide also, The Genealogy of Morals, p. 219.

(19) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, par. 19, pp. 19-20; also par. 291, p. 230.

(20) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 99.

any meaningful regard of the self (of this possible hypothesis of a "self"); for to work reverentially in relation to the self, is, for Nietzsche, always to work at a distance. For who speaks to whom? And who answers? Or as Zarathustra reflects on this, in part of a meditation:

The hermit ~~The~~ I and me are always too deep in conversation: how could one stand that if there were no friend? For ^{the} friend is always the third person: ~~the~~ third is the cork that prevents the conversation of the two from sinking into the depths. Alas, there are too many depths for all hermits; therefore they long so for a friend and his height.

Our faith in others betrays in what respect we would like to have faith in ourselves. Our longing for a friend is our betrayer. And often love is only a device to overcome envy. (21)

Where even solitude infiltrates the self with peril of distances: such might be well termed the pathos of the anchorite. (22) But even beyond the regimen of such a pathos, is there the further (extrapolative) suspicion in Nietzsche that perhaps even the deepest consciousness of self, even of self as "project", as prospect for "over-coming", is itself perhaps no more than an already determined captive of the phenomenal, already a "given". Or as Nietzsche articulates such a suspicion, by inquiring:

(21) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, pp 55-6.

(22) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp 71, 135-6, 199. The Genealogy of Morals, p. 160. (As analogously: note of these selections how Nietzsche traces the articulations of that terrible "pathos of distance", of all those elitist "semblances" of rank

Are there really such things as will, purposes, thoughts, values? Is the whole of conscious life perhaps no more than mirage? (23)

And yet, as Nietzsche ultimately resolves, what other recourse does one have but than to constantly "explode" oneself as from the tethers of this very suspicion: to speak only, that is, of "over-coming", and in the submission that even as regards the traditional formulae of conscious life - "at least as an interpreter he is creative". (24)

But is this all? Or as we earlier noted, Nietzsche does speak, hints, however tentatively, of the prospects for some ultimate metamorphosis in man; a metamorphosis (" -- that a higher body is forming --") (25) which has as yet to take place. To what extent, in other words, or in what sense is the language of both Nietzsche and Zarathustra meant to be "oracular"? (26) As when, for example, Nietzsche has Zarathustra proclaim of himself:-

which serve to both separate and define human individuals.)

- (23) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 149.
- (24) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 215.
- (25) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 150.
- (26) Friedrich Nietzsche, The Use and Abuse of History, p. 41: We use the word "oracular" as similar, in sense, to the way that Nietzsche employs it in this following passage: "The language of the past is always oracular: you will understand it as builders of the future who know the present." To the extent, in other words, that Nietzsche sees himself as both custodian, and

The most concerned ask today: "How is man to be preserved?" But Zarathustra is the first and only one to ask: "How is man to be overcome?" (27)

How seriously "oracular" is this language? Or in another instance: when Nietzsche has Zarathustra himself refer to the failure of the "higher men" (of those "higher specimens") to achieve -- what? The final metamorphosis of the "overman"? And then has Zarathustra go on to say:

Is it any wonder that you failed and only half succeeded, being half broken? Is not something thronging and pushing in you -- man's future? (28)

So again we must ask: how seriously "oracular" does Nietzsche mean to be this language of "man's future"?

Or as we might otherwise formulate this question: to the extent that Nietzsche may be seen as involved in more than "perspectival valuations", to be seen, that is, as now seriously trespassing beyond either anchorite's judgment, or the explosive affirmation of the artist - to that extent, then, might it not appear as if Nietzsche

prophet of the future: this is the crux of the "oracular".

(27) Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 287.

(28) Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 293.

is now seriously working within the formal architecture of Myth? (29)

We ourselves are by no means certain of any answer to this question. For who exactly, (as we might well ask further with Nietzsche) among the "elite" are so assured in their "self-forming", in their deliverance of all "will-to-power" as to proclaim themselves serious claimants for the role of the new architects of Myth?

Who, in other words, are to be so secure in the interior geographies of their vision that they are prepared to engage with the entire trans-subjective territoriality of the Myth? Who is prepared to speak, in other words, for more than a single consciousness, but ultimately, within the multiple rhetoric of some "collective will"? Who is prepared to so speak? Who are to be those new "laughing lions" who "must come"? (30)

(29) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, esp. pp. 126-7: If Nietzsche, that is, in so proposing (however speculatively) such an ultimate metamorphosis of man is to be seen as prophetically serious: how also, then, to become proper custodian of such a vision, except by augmenting it as within all of the didactic levels and nuances of Myth? In Myth, that is, precisely in the sense in which - as both didactic "parable" and intoxicant of self-deliverance - that intense an amalgam - it was so reverentially analyzed by Nietzsche in The Birth of Tragedy.

(30) Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 283.

To answer this question is to answer only that Zarathustra does not give us an answer. But rather: he gives us only an invocation. He calls for, but he cannot as yet "name" his "lions". At end thus, we must still return to the anchorite. It is still for the anchorite to pronounce judgment. Or for the artist to explode his "fictions".

In the end thus, it is as only under the deep, ironic scrutiny of the anchorite, or as within the continuously re-appraised dynamic of the aesthetic (where even the most fulsome myth must ever come to suspect itself) that, for what at least ^{we} ourselves can claim out of Nietzsche, any self-determined philosophy can either propose a lucidity, or attempt to mediate a survival.

~~SECRET~~

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