

NIETZSCHE AS CULTURAL PHYSICIAN

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BY

DANIEL AHERN

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AUTHOR: Daniel Robert Ahern, B.A. (St. Thomas University)

M.A. (University of New
Brunswick)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Jakob Amstutz

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ABSTRACT

From Nietzsche's early writings to those marking the end of his intellectual life, the dynamics of what he called "physiology" permeate virtually every facet of his philosophical enterprise. In the following investigation, these dynamics are explored as an interpretive key to not only the dominant themes but also the philosophical motive underlying Nietzsche's philosophy. This motive is described in terms of his diagnosis and attempted cure for the disease of nihilism. In this we maintain that Nietzsche's foremost philosophical task is that of a cultural physician.

In pursuit of this theme, Nietzsche's "clinical standpoint" is explored and applied with regard to Socrates and Jesus Christ as two case studies in decadence. These two "cases" are a simultaneous physiological investigation into both the ancient Greek and Hebrew cultures.

This investigation concludes with a detailed analysis of the physiological significance of the Revaluation of all Values, Eternal Recurrence, the Overman and Dionysus as integral to curing the sickness of nihilism.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

I. Nietzsche's Published Works

- A. *The Antichrist*
- B. *Beyond Good And Evil*
- BT. *The Birth Of Tragedy*; BT:S, refers to the "Attempt at a Self-Criticism."
- C. *The Case Of Wagner*
- D. *Daybreak*
- E. *Ecce Homo*. The first three and final sections of this work are cited in the text as E:I, E:II, E:III and E:IV. In those sections wherein Nietzsche comments on his earlier works, I have abbreviated these as E:BT, E:Z, E:GS, etc.
- G:I *On The Genealogy Of Morals*, the first essay; G:II, the second essay, etc.
- GS. *The Gay Science*
- HH:I *Human, All Too Human*, Vol. I.
- HH:II *Human, All Too Human*, Vol. II.
- T:I *Twilight Of The Idols*, part 1; TWI:II, part 2, etc.
- U:S *Untimely Meditations*: "Schopenhauer As Educator."
- U:HL *Untimely Meditations*: "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life."
- Z:I *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Book 1; Z:II, book 2, etc. Since all sections of Z have separate titles, I have numbered each section per book to save room within the bracketed references in the text. The first section of each book is number 1. For example, a reference to book II section 8 is Z:II,8.

II. Nietzsche's Unpublished Works

- HC. "Homer's Contest"
- P. "The Last Philosopher. The Philosopher. Reflections on the Struggle between Art and Knowledge"
- PAC. "The Philosopher as Cultural Physician"
- PH. "Thoughts on the Meditation: Philosophy in Hard Times"
- PTA. "Philosophy In The Tragic Age Of The Greeks"
- SSW. "The Struggle between Science and Wisdom"
- TL. "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense"

III. Nietzsche's Collected Works

- WKG. Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967-1984.
- BKG. Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1972-1984.
- M. Friedrich Nietzsche Gesammelte Werke, Musarionausgabe*, München: Musarion, 1920-29.

IV. Texts used for the translation of Nietzsche's Letters and Early Notebooks

- SPL. Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters*, ed. and trans. Peter Fuss and Henry Shapiro. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.
- SLN. Selected Letters Of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- PT. Philosophy And Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870's*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979.
- PN. The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

In the text all abbreviations for published texts are in *italics* and those for unpublished texts are not italicized.

* * *

The references to Nietzsche's published works are found in brackets within the text. The brackets contain three items the first of which is a volume number of the *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967-1984. Here the reader is referred to the German text the translations of which, unless indicated otherwise, are taken from Walter Kaufmann's translations of Nietzsche. The second item in the brackets is an abbreviation of the title of the published work (see part I of the list above), and the third item is the number of the aphorism or section from which the reference is taken. For example, (V²,GS,377) refers first to Volume V, section 2 of the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, second to *The Gay Science* as the specific text in question and third to aphorism 377 of *The Gay Science*.

The German text of Nietzsche's letters is found in the *Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1972-1984. All references to the letters are found in endnotes indicating the recipient, the abbreviation *BKG*. (see part III of list above), the volume number of *BKG* and the page number. Following this page number, is a slash (/) after which is an abbreviation of the text from which translations of the letters are taken (see part IV of list above), along with the page number. For example, a reference to Nietzsche's letter to Franz Overbeck on February 11th, 1883 would appear in an endnote as:
Letter to Franz Overbeck, Feb. 11. 1883. *BKG*. 111¹, p. 324 / *SLN*. p. 206.

With regard to references to Nietzsche's unpublished works, the majority are to his notebooks between 1883 and 1888. These are all found in brackets in the text. The brackets will contain two items: first the abbreviation *M* (see part III of list above) along with the volume number of *M*. This refers the reader to the German text the translations of which, unless indicated otherwise, are Walter Kaufmann's and R. J. Hollingdale's in, *The Will To Power*, Vintage Books, New York, 1967. Following the volume number is the second item in the brackets; the numbered section where the reference can be found. The numbered sections of the German text are identical to those in the Kaufmann-Hollingdale translation. For example, a reference to note number 4 would appear in the text as: (MXVIII,4)

References to Nietzsche's notebooks between 1872 and 1876 will be found in endnotes containing five items. First is the abbreviation *M* (see part III of the list above) and the volume number of *M* as the source of the German text; second is an abbreviation of the work from which the reference is taken, (see part II of the list above); third, is the page number of the German text. After this page number is a slash (/) followed by the fourth item: an abbreviation of the text from which translations of these early works are taken, (see part IV of the list above) and fifth, the page number of the translation. For example, the quotation, "How did they philosophize in the splendid world of art?" is from "The Last Philosopher" and would appear in an endnote as: MVI, P, p. 3 / PT, p. 4.

The format described above for citations to the unpublished works is utilized in all cases *except* for "Homer's Contest" the German text of which is *WKG* (see part III of the list above). References to "Homer's Contest" will appear in endnotes containing six items: first the abbreviation: *WKG*, the volume number III², the abbreviation HC and the page number. After this page number is a slash (/) fol-

lowed by the fifth item: an abbreviation of the text from which translations of these early works are taken, (see part IV of the list above) and six, the page number of the translation. For example, "Every talent must unfold itself in fighting" is a quotation from "Homer's Contest" and would appear in an endnotes as:

WKG, III², HC, p. 283 / PN. p. 37.

This would be man's fate if he were nothing but a knowing animal. The truth would drive him to despair and destruction: the truth that he is eternally condemned to untruth. . . . Does he not actually live *by means of* a continual process of deception? Does nature not conceal most things from him, even the nearest things--his own body, for example, of which he has only a deceptive "consciousness?" He is locked within this consciousness and nature threw away the key. Oh, the fatal curiosity of the philosopher, who longs just once, to peer out and down through the crack in the chamber of consciousness. Perhaps he will then suspect the extent to which man, in the indifference of his ignorance, is sustained by what is greedy, insatiable, disgusting, pitiless, and murderous--as if he were hanging in dreams on the back of a tiger.

Friedrich Nietzsche
"On the Pathos of Truth"

INTRODUCTION

The idea of the philosopher as a cultural physician is a constant theme throughout the corpus of Nietzsche's works. Though he rarely uses the words "physician of culture," or even "physician," we will see that he maintains a "clinical standpoint" on virtually every topic. In 1873 he spoke of the cultural physician as "most useful when there is a lot to be destroyed, in times of chaos or degeneration."¹ Essentially, this conception of the task of philosophy never changed. It is well known that with regard to "modern culture" Nietzsche felt a lot deserves to perish. In his "*diagnosis of the modern soul*" (VI³,C:Epilogue) he concluded it was sick, degenerate and, "physiologically considered, false." (VI³,C:Epilogue) Consequently: "To be a physician here, to be inexorable here, to wield the knife here--that pertains to us, that is our kind of philanthropy, with that are we philosophers." (VI³,A,7)

The task of destroying what is already perishing is a prevalent theme but what did Nietzsche perceive to be doomed? The foundation of the values of the West. Thus he considered it essential that our culture dissociate itself from moribund values. Integral to this, is the necessity to destroy what is already on the wane. In this, his statement, "I am dynamite" (VI³,E:IV,1) is instructive in so far as the destruction of "everything men have heretofore respected and loved"² permeates Nietzsche's philosophical project. There is a plurality of destroyer and creator motifs in this philosophy and the former should not blind us to the latter.

For Nietzsche, they presupposes each other. But if the themes of destruction and creation are interdependent, by what standard does he determine what deserves to be destroyed? Whatever he perceived to be ill is a candidate for destruction, while manifestations of health had to be preserved and cultivated. Health and sickness constitute the above mentioned standard.

How, then, does Nietzsche determine health and sickness? With this question we move into the central concern of our investigation. Nietzsche's perception of modernity as decadent and Europe as "a gigantic hospital,"³ presupposes his clinical standpoint. Thus we must A) articulate this standpoint and more importantly, B) recognize its pivotal role in the dominating themes of his philosophy: the Will to Power, the Revaluation of all Values, the Eternal Recurrence, the Overman and the symbol of Dionysus. It is fairly common knowledge that Nietzsche emphasizes the body as a philosophical point of departure. And again, it is common to find various commentators referring to Nietzsche's tendency to pursue medical, biological, naturalistic and physiological themes.

What Nietzsche called "my physiological turn of mind"⁴ is not pursued to any great length by these commentators. For example, Martin Heidegger tells us Nietzsche's philosophy is "thought absolutely in terms of the physiology of the will to power."⁵ This, for Heidegger is a strike against Nietzsche since this "turn of mind" cut him off from asking the essential question of Being. Karl Jaspers says Nietzsche's references to the body "allow a biological way of speaking [to] constantly...pass for insight."⁶ Werner Dannhauser points out that for Nietzsche, "Physiology determines philosophy,"⁷ but again, *why* this is so is not pursued in any significant detail.

Walter Kaufmann on the other hand, is so concerned (and rightly so), to attack those who identify Nietzsche

with the aspirations of Nazi Germany, that he is rendered virtually incapable of looking at the pervasive theme of physiology. Indeed, the very word "physiology" is a red flag to Kaufmann particularly in its connotations of selective "breeding."⁹ It is as if he is telling us Nietzsche did not really mean to say what he said because the latter's notions on breeding remained in fragmentary, unpublished notes. But a sustained inquiry into Nietzsche's clinical standpoint shows that: A) the conditions for breeding certain types of human beings pervades Nietzsche's thought; B) he would have considered the experiments of the Third Reich idiotic and, C) the attempted genocide of the Jews was a horrible blunder given that they "are beyond any doubt the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe." (VI²,B,251)⁹

In his, *Prophets of Extremity*, Alan Megill says his views will seem "perversely out of tune"¹⁰ with the usual conceptions of Nietzsche's philosophy. That is, out of tune with the view of "Nietzsche the diagnostician."¹¹ He identifies the diagnostician absorbed with returning culture to its foundation in nature. He proceeds to say that the idea of a culture based on nature is essentially pointless because

in any culture that has become sufficiently self-conscious about its behaviour to articulate moral theories, the very notion of naturalness will have become so distant as to be all but useless....¹²

This suggests that theoretical activity, particularly in the realm of morality, is such that the very self-consciousness it presupposes, negates the significance of animal instincts within this activity.

"Where," he asks,

does the natural end and the cultural, artificial, begin? And, supposing one could have it, would one *want* a "natural" morality? Surely all morality, by the very fact of its being a morality, is in some basic sense unnatural. If this is so, what grounds do we have for choosing between one unnatural moral code and another?¹³

This question reveals the absence of a will to look at the physiological dynamics Nietzsche saw in the creation of morality as a product of nature, a product that is, of the body. Megill claims his views on Nietzsche have a certain proximity to those of Foucault and Derrida.¹⁴ Be that as it may, his statement that the choice of morality is, for Nietzsche, "made on aesthetic grounds,"¹⁵ reveals a lack of serious consideration of Nietzsche's "aesthetics" as an organic necessity for deception as a condition of life.

Gilles Deleuze concentrates more on the dynamics of the body when he speaks of its "active and reactive" forces.¹⁶ These forces are what Nietzsche calls the instincts and Deleuze speaks of them quite effectively though in a general way when dividing them into "active and reactive." He does not identify *which* instincts are active and reactive nor does he pursue their *particular* role with regard to consciousness and what Nietzsche calls "spirit."

We are not saying the views of the above commentators are erroneous. Nor do we mean to suggest the idea of the philosopher as cultural physician goes unnoticed in Nietzsche scholarship. The problem is how this idea is seen as a metaphor to describe Nietzsche's philosophical project. There is something timid about Nietzsche's commentators; as if the dynamics of the instincts, physiology and the conditions wherein a "*species comes to be*" (VI²,B,262) are things not deserving detailed investigation. This is hard to explain. Perhaps much of what Nietzsche says on these matters conjures up (as they did for Kaufmann), too intense an image of the horrors of Nazi Germany. Or maybe his popularity is such that it simply goes against our taste to think Nietzsche's insights could rest on what seem quite antiquated ideas.

We are quick to place Nietzsche in the foremost ranks of Western thought. He deserves this rank but one suspects the almost breathless enthusiasm with which it is

acknowledged. Now, in this era of "Post-Modern" thought, when Nietzsche's name is common coin and "violence to the text" is a celebrated, methodological must, it is easy to indulge in such "violence." But few seem to grasp, as Nietzsche did, how much violence to oneself is required when traditions are destroyed. Many rightly see Nietzsche as the philosopher who made this destruction philosophically necessary, but few will trace it back into the origins of violence Nietzsche saw within man himself.

We are about to trace these origins in coming to terms with Nietzsche's perception of the philosopher as a cultural physician. The "cultural physician" is not a mere metaphor. We will see that Nietzsche's articulation of the instincts, physiology, art, values, culture and even interpretation itself are unified in the clinical standpoint of the physician. We are not saying this is the only way to approach Nietzsche's philosophy. But if, as Nietzsche said, the value of philosophy is a "basic biological question," (MXVIII,41) we shall see that his "clinical standpoint" is a hermeneutical key into every region of his thought.

Chapters one and two are primarily directed at coming to terms with his clinical standpoint *per se*. In this regard the dynamics of the will to power are explored in terms of Nietzsche's unique understanding of "physiology." This physiology is the foundation of the criterion utilized by our physician to determine "health," "sickness," "weakness," "exhaustion" and "decadence." We will describe this criterion via both the individual (chapter one) and culture (chapter two) as organic structures of life as will to power.

Chapter three consists of three separate yet simultaneous enterprises: A) a description of Socrates as a case in decadence, B) how his sickness is symptomatic of that of his culture and C) how this illness is a factor in that of modernity. This chapter constitutes an *application*

of the clinical standpoint delineated in the first two chapters. It is an example of how Nietzsche diagnoses decadence within the philosophical type and the culture within which this type flourishes. Here, as we will see, "decadent" is "a word...meant not to condemn but only to describe."¹⁷

Chapter four has approximately the same goals as chapter three but is concerned with "The Case of Christ and Christianity." Here Christ and Christianity are looked at along the lines of physiological decadence in relation to the relative health of the ancient Hebrew culture.

Since chapters three and four are examples of Nietzsche's clinical attitude in the interpretation of Western history, the problems of historical accuracy emerge. His physiological approach to Greek metaphysics and Christianity is so predominant that his adherence "to the facts" is sketchy and general in nature. Our primary concern however, is demonstrating the pervasive clinical standpoint of the physician of culture, and not what if any gifts Nietzsche possessed as an historian.

The fifth and final chapter again consists of several yet simultaneous concerns: A) a description of nihilism as the disease peculiar to modernity, B) how Nietzsche was himself infected with this disease and C) what our physician proposed as a cure. In pursuing these concerns, we will explore the physiological basis of the Revaluation of all values, the Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, the Overman and the symbol of Dionysus. Our investigation will conclude with several critical observations in regard to the foregoing.

ENDNOTES: INTRODUCTION

1. MVI, PAC. p. 68 / PT, p. 72.
2. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. BKG. 111^a, p. 248 / SPL. p. 106.
3. Malcolm Pasley, "Nietzsche's Use of Medical Terms," in *Nietzsche: Imagery And Thought: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Malcolm Pasley, (Methuen: London, 1978), p. 149.
4. Letter to Franz Overbeck, February 11, 1883. BKG. III^a, p. 324 / SPL. pp. 70-71.
5. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. IV, "Nihilism," trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 134.
6. Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity*, trans. Charles F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmitz, (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1979), p. 315f.
7. Werner Dannhauser, *Nietzsche's View of Socrates*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 210.
8. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 3rd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1968), pp. 304-305.
9. In this regard, one should also look at Nietzsche's conception of a "mixed European race" in *IV², HH: I, 475*.
10. Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1985), p. 29.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
16. See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, (London: Athlone Press, 1983), p. 40.

17. Letter to Carl Fuchs, suspected to have been written around the middle of April, 1886. BKG. III², p. 177 / SPL. p. 83.

*The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run. Over unsounded gorges, through the rifled hearts of mountains, under torrents' beds, unerringly I rush! Naught's an obstacle, naught's an angle to the iron way!*¹

Moby Dick

CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PHYSICIAN: LIFE AS WILL TO POWER

A serious look at the corpus of Nietzsche's texts leave us with many very moving, sometimes disturbing, and certainly strong impressions. No doubt we move through that "bustling jungle full of famished beasts and dizzying orchids" Kazantzakis described Nietzsche's texts to be.² We find his poetry amidst the ruins of moods Nietzsche lingered in and then left as he was, both in life and thought, ever searching for a place he could call his own.

Of the many impressions we receive from Nietzsche, a powerful one is his failure to find that place or spiritual homeland he sought. We find a man describing himself and his epoch in the following way:

Among Europeans today there is no lack of those...entitled to call themselves homeless in a distinctive and honorable sense...their fate is hard, their hopes...uncertain.... We children of the future, how *could* we be at home in this today? ...as for its "realities," we do not believe that they will last. The ice that..supports people today has become very thin; the wind that brings the thaw is blowing; we who are homeless constitute a force that breaks open ice and other all too thin "realities." (V₂,GS,377)

That Nietzsche saw himself as a child of the future, who dreamed of an epoch greater and healthier than his own cannot be doubted. He saw the values embraced by his age leading to spiritual decline and exhaustion. Our morality, with its roots reaching back into Greek philosophy and the history of Christianity, provided him much to criticize. This critique is integral to Nietzsche's thought. It presup-

poses his interpretation of the *history* of Western values and shapes his vision for the future. So, with an eye to both the past and the future, Nietzsche is a drifter through the realms of the human spirit. As he said:

If one would like to see our European morality for once as it looks from a distance, and...measure it against other moralities, past and future, then one has to proceed like a wanderer who wants to know how high the towers in a town are: he leaves the town. (V²,GS,380)³

The future was a profound concern for Nietzsche in light of his conviction that the values of the West had been bled of their once over-flowing vitality. Without this vitality, our future welcomed that "uncanniest of all guests" (MXVIII,1) nihilism. This strange and multifaceted plant, rooted as it is in the decay of old values, is experienced by cultures as a lack of *direction*; the "aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer." (MXVIII,2)

The fragmentation of cultural unity of purpose is a *necessary* consequence of values appropriated from both a decaying Greek culture and "the greatest crime against humanity" (VI³,A,49)⁴. Christianity. This inheritance leads our culture

toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that grows from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect. (MXVIII,Preface:2)

It is clear that Nietzsche not only accepted this state of affairs but even more, wanted to rectify it. If nihilism is the lack of cultural goals for the future, then as a *philosopher* Nietzsche set out to check what he considered the insane course of Western culture.

We are all perhaps familiar with that hypothetical scenario of our world after a nuclear conflict; homeless nomads roaming a dead world, haunted and hating "what was" for its failure to preserve itself, and murdering each other out of despair. Nietzsche would see such a future as *sympto-*

matic of the spiritual holocaust of nihilism; as the most exquisite will to nothingness and desire for death.

Perhaps when one is suicidal, it is easy to murder someone else. In the holocaust of nihilism man would seek not only his own destruction, but, in despairing rage, that of the very cosmos itself since, after all, the "reduction to nothing by judgement is seconded by the reduction to nothing by hand." (MXVIII,24) Thus Nietzsche philosophized with this vision of the future before him, as a "man of unlimited responsibility [having]...the entire development of mankind on his conscience."⁵

On the other hand, Nietzsche believed in other paths for the human spirit because

if one *could* endure this immense sum of grief...while yet being the hero who...welcomes the dawn and his fortune, being a person whose horizon encompasses thousands of years past and future, being an heir...of all past spirit...the most aristocratic of old nobles and at the same time the first of a new nobility...if one could burden one's soul with...the oldest, the newest, losses...and victories of humanity; if one could finally contain all this in one soul...into a single feeling--this would surely have to result in a happiness that humanity has not yet known so far...a happiness that, like the sun in the evening, continually bestows its inexhaustible riches...when even the poorest fisherman is still rowing with golden oars! This godlike feeling would then be called--humaneness. (V²,GS,337)

This remarkable passage affirms a future not haunted by history and an attendant weariness with life, but one wherein history is transformed into a future of human spiritual nobility. Providing a path to this spiritual nobility was Nietzsche's philosophical project. If nihilism is overcome, we shall look back and say there "was a thunderstorm in our air, the nature which we are grew darker--for we had no road." (VI³,A,1) It was in the eye of this storm that Nietzsche philosophized and sought the "[f]ormula of our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal." (VI³,A,1)

Given Nietzsche's perception of his epoch as sick, and the task of the philosopher described above, he felt the philosopher must "demand of himself first and last" that he "overcome his time in himself...whatever marks him as a child of his time." (VI³,C:Preface) Nietzsche continued this "combat" (VI³,C:Preface) until he lost his sanity. We will see the theme of being "untimely" repeatedly occur in speaking of Nietzsche's perception of the task of the philosopher.

The more Nietzsche regarded his Age as sick, the more he identified his philosophical task with that of the *physician*. While the philosophical physician⁶ sees cultural illness everywhere, he must *preserve* whatever remains healthy and possess the *authority* to determine what shall perish. Our investigation will show that in this, Nietzsche was *deadly* serious.

However, if we are to understand this physician, we must look seriously at his conception of the will to power. Jaspers has rightly called this conception Nietzsche's "fundamental principle"⁷ and a failure to examine it will render the judgments of our physician incomprehensible.

THE WILL TO POWER AS COSMOLOGICAL DOCTRINE

In chapters three and four we will look at Nietzsche's portraits of Socrates and Jesus Christ respectively. But without investigating the idea of will to power, his claims concerning these two spiritual giants are only appreciated in a superficial manner. These portraits are permeated with references to "health," "sickness" and "decadence." The foundation of meaning for these terms resides in the ideas of *physiology* Nietzsche used to articulate his conception of the will to power. For this reason the will to power as the "fundamental principle"⁸ of Nietzsche's philo-

sophy is interdependent with his conception of "physiology."

Nietzsche does not think of "physiology" in the same way we do today. Aside from the advances made in physiology since Nietzsche's time, the important difference in how he thought of it and the way we see it today lies in its role within his cosmology. Hence Nietzsche looks at *his* physiology in terms of its meaning from the all encompassing doctrine of will to power. The modern study of physiology is a highly specialized science concentrating on one factor of human life, that being the strict operation of the body *per se*. For Nietzsche the *physiologist* or philosophical physician is concerned with the *totality* of the human being. "Physiology" provides the basis for observations on history, culture, science and, intimately related to these, the question of values.

Nietzsche's conception of physiology is immersed in that of will to power as an attempt to philosophize in the spirit of Greek cosmology and is a far cry from today's science of physiology. Just as the pre-Socratics sought to interpret the *totality* of being from *one* all-encompassing doctrine on the *arché* of water, fire, etc., Nietzsche's idea of will to power attempts the same. If the will to power is manifest in all organic structures, then man will be seen in precisely the same way. Thus, Nietzsche understands "physiology" in the wide cosmological sense wherein man is articulated as an *organic form of will to power*. To see physiology within the context of Nietzsche's thought we must first look at the will to power as a *cosmological principle*, and the significance of this principle as *such*. Second, we will look at this cosmological doctrine as it is manifest in organic life forms. Finally, we will look at the physiology of man as will to power and see sickness and health within the context of will to power as a *cosmological doctrine*. In the specific case studies of the chapters to follow, the purely

formal descriptions of sickness and health here can be properly expanded.

To begin, it should be pointed out that caution is required if we refer to Nietzsche's principle of the will to power as a "metaphysical" one. We hesitate to call this principle "metaphysical" because of Nietzsche's well-known antagonism to the tradition *after* Socrates. Socrates reveals the decline of Greek philosophy for Nietzsche because of the former's emphasis on morality. This emphasis constitutes the first critical step towards nihilism in Western philosophy. Socrates represents "a sign of decline, of weariness, of infection, of the anarchical dissolution of the instincts." (III¹,BT:S,1) From Nietzsche's standpoint, the influence of Socrates is an "infection" pervading all philosophy "which is to say metaphysics, theology, psychology, epistemology." (VI³,T:IV,3)⁹ Thus it is inappropriate to *identify* Nietzsche's philosophy with the tradition of metaphysics.

Nevertheless, we find Nietzsche saying that "the innermost essence of being is the will to power." (MXIX,693) In short, Nietzsche still makes statements concerning "what is" or "being." To this extent we may say he makes "metaphysical" claims. However, since he held all metaphysics *after* Socrates in such contempt, we hold that Nietzsche wanted to philosophize in the spirit of pre-Socratic cosmology. The essential difference between metaphysics and cosmology is that in Nietzsche's mind the latter was always identified with prodigious *health* while the former was the exact opposite. This is what we have in mind when we refer to Nietzsche's idea of the will to power as a cosmological doctrine. We will now proceed to explicate this more fully.

Karl Jaspers said Nietzsche's conception of being purports to be all-inclusive and thus to comprehend the universe as a whole. His fundamental principle is *'the will to power.'* This kind of metaphysical construct places him in a conscious relation to the perennial possibilities of world-interpretation in the grand manner.¹⁰

Yes, Nietzsche's fundamental principle is the will to power and there can be no doubt that he conceived of this principle as a means "to comprehend the universe as a whole."¹¹ In this vein, Nietzsche asks,

"do you know what 'the world' is to me?a monster of energy, without beginning...[or] end; a...magnitude of force ...that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size...enclosed by 'nothingness' as by a boundary; not...endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force...not a space that might be 'empty' here or there, but rather as a force throughout, as a play of...waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing...together eternally changing, eternally flooding back...with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest...toward the...most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple ...out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself...blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming that knows no satiety. ..no weariness: this is my *Dionysian* world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying...my 'beyond good and evil,' without goal...without will...do you want a name for this world? A solution for all its riddles? A light for you...strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men?-- *This world is will to power--and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power--and nothing besides! (MXIX,1067)

Here we find references to Eternal Recurrence¹² and the laughing Dionysus roaring voluptuously within his own destruction knowing he will emerge again out of chaos.¹³ But in this description of everything as will to power, we find Nietzsche's spurning rejection of metaphysics. We find no *man-centered* metaphysics with a built-in moral code here. Indeed for Nietzsche, such a metaphysics points to a lack of philosophical health. Nietzsche's conception of will to power is such that man is one among many of its forms and has no room for "the *hyperbolic naiveté* of man: positing himself as the meaning and measure of the value of things". (MXVIII,12)

Nietzsche sees the greatness of pre-Socratic cosmology in its attempt to see man as *integral* rather than the

focal point of the cosmos. "Beginning with Socrates", says Nietzsche, "the individual all at once began to take himself too seriously."¹⁴ In short, from Socrates onwards "anxiety concerning oneself becomes the soul of philosophy."¹⁵ Nietzsche sees this "anxiety" as a sickness culminating in morbid concerns with "the 'salvation of the soul' or... 'what is happiness?'"¹⁶ As philosophy became more "self-centered," these questions led to the negation of the value of life via an attempt to escape this world. For Nietzsche, pre-Socratic cosmology may moralize, but it neither denies the value of this world nor attempts to escape it. Thus when Nietzsche says, "I wish only to be a Yes-sayer," (*V²,GS,276*) he is echoing what he considered the life-affirming spirit of Greek cosmology. Nietzsche identified "metaphysics" with philosophy from Socrates onwards and hence we must be careful if we are to call him a "metaphysician."¹⁷

Nietzsche's idea of the will to power attempts to articulate everything that is, ever was, and ever will be. He does not resort to speech about ultimate goals or duties; we find no "progress" here. The above description of the will to power has no consolation or belief that life including man has some *a priori* value, since "Life is only a *means* to something; it is the expression of forms of the growth of power." (*MXIX,706*). Man is not in himself an end, or of any ultimate meaning; he is simply another form of the will to power and "it is quite arbitrary to assert that everything strives to enter into *this* form of the will to power".

(*MXIX,692*) Consequently our

conscious world of feelings...and valuations is a small section. We have no right...to posit this piece of consciousness as the aim...of this total phenomenon of life: becoming conscious is obviously only one more means toward the unfolding and extension of the power of life. Therefore it is a piece of naiveté to posit pleasure or spirituality or morality or any other particular of the sphere of consciousness as the highest value--and perhaps even to justify "the world" by means of this. (*MXIX,707*)

In Nietzsche's idea of will to power we find a grand cosmological principle nearly two thousand years after Socrates. Richard Howey speaks of the pervasive influence of pre-Socratic thought on Nietzsche in pointing out how in the latter's "early years of study he was deeply affected by the quest of the ancient Greeks for unity and harmony."¹⁸ From these studies Nietzsche "achieved...a basic insight which was to pervade his philosophy ever after, namely, that the highest and ultimate form of philosophy is cosmology."¹⁹ For Nietzsche,

as for the pre-Socratics, philosophy must 'begin' with cosmology...the 'science of beginnings' (*arché*). It is only in terms of the ultimate principles (*arché*) of harmony and unity that there is any possibility of ordering man's individual existence and the institutions of his social existence.²⁰

Nietzsche's conception of will to power is his attempt to solve the riddle of "the one and the many," (MXIX,1067) or answer what Heidegger called the fundamental philosophical question: "Why is there something rather than nothing?"²¹ An inexhaustible becoming is the will to power, it is

an ebb and flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving for the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most contradictory. (MXIX,1067)

The universe emerges from out of the womb of chaos; nothing is stable, nothing remains. Man's assertions of "reality," "truth" and "value" are the attempts of one form of will to power to realize stability within the vortex of becoming. With the idea of the will to power, nothing remains fixed, everything is swept up into the hurricane of becoming from which all things have emerged, be these planets or man. In this vein, Alphonso Lingis has said:

The will to power is not just power or force, but Will to Power: always will for more power. It is not an essence; it is neither structure, telos, nor meaning, but continual sublation of all telos, transgression of all ends, production of all concordant and contradictory meanings, interpre-

tations, valuations. It is the chaos, the primal fund of the unformed--not matter, but force beneath the cosmos, which precedes the forms and makes them possible as well as transitory.²²

Thus the will to power is a constantly seething volcano of lavish experiments of itself without beginning or end. It is the incessant flux of becoming, which gives us Nietzsche's vision of the cosmos as having emerged from a primordial chaos. To see into this chaos is for Nietzsche to see into the terrifying mystery that our universe is at all. Here is a vision of man and an infinity of worlds hurled helter-skelter along the coast of being; innocent, contingent and forever mauled by the waves of becoming. Thus Nietzsche says:

How greedily this wave approaches.... How it crawls with terrifying haste into the inmost nooks of this labyrinthine cliff... And now it comes back, a little more slowly but still...white with excitement; is it disappointed.... Does it pretend to be disappointed?--But already another wave is approaching, still more...savagely than the first, and its soul too, seems to be full of secrets and the lust to dig up treasures...arch your dangerous green bodies as high as you can, raise a wall between me and the sun--as you are doing now! Truly, even now nothing remains of the world but green twilight and green lightning. (V²,65,310)

From Nietzsche's standpoint, to call will to power "metaphysical" is akin to calling it an "abortion." (VI³,7:IV,3) Rather, this idea has its roots in pre-Socratic thought. Nietzsche viewed post-Socratic philosophy as constituting a denial of *life*, as a "secret raging against the preconditions of life, against the value feelings of life, against partisanship in favour of life." (MXVIII,461) Ultimately it is "the grand school of slander." (MXVIII,461)

This distinction between pre- and post-Socratic thought only reinforces our contention the will to power is a *cosmological conception*. Nietzsche wanted to philosophize in the spirit of what he believed was a healthy philosophical tradition. He says for example that the "real philosophers of Greece are those before Socrates (--with Socrates

something changes)." (MXVIII,437) But why are these pre-Socratics so great? And who are these philosophers for Nietzsche?

They are all noble persons, setting themselves apart from people and state, travelled, serious to the point of somberness, with a slow glance, no strangers to state affairs and diplomacy. They anticipate all the great conceptions of things: they themselves represent these conceptions, they bring themselves into a system. Nothing gives a higher idea of the Greek spirit than this sudden fruitfulness in types, than this involuntary completeness in the erection of the great possibilities of the philosophical ideal. (MXVIII,437)

The problem is that the greatness of pre-Socratic thought has been obscured since an

"adverse fate decreed that the late and decadent forms of Hellenism should exert the greatest historical force.... One must know the younger Greece in great detail in order to differentiate it from the older."²³

Since Nietzsche held the pre-Socratics in such high esteem, believing "they anticipate all the great conceptions of things," (MXVIII,437) he wanted to philosophize within the paradigm of pre-Socratic cosmology. In contrast, Socrates "represents a moment of the profoundest perversity in the history of values," (MXVIII,430) while Plato is "the scarecrow of the ancient philosopher." (MXVIII,430) Seeing Socrates and Plato in this way and their negative influence on Western philosophy, it is no wonder that he calls the tradition after them an "abortion." (VI²,7:IV,3)

This judgement on post-Socratic philosophy is made out of Nietzsche's attempt to speak from an age which is veiled and obscure. The harshness of this judgement to us, indicates to Nietzsche how far *we* are from the ancient spirit of cosmology. Jaspers is therefore correct in saying Nietzsche wanted to return to the

primal source of philosophizing: he sought to base his own thinking upon a renewal of the fundamental form in which the pre-Socratic philosophers--Heraclitus in particular--had interpreted being.²⁴

Yes, "Heraclitus in particular" was esteemed by Nietzsche since Heraclitus talked of flux and becoming. This led Nietzsche to recognize will to power as a philosophical possibility originally seen within the "fire-gaze"²⁵ of Heraclitus. For Nietzsche, Heraclitus' world is one of coming-to-be and passing away, structuring and destroying without any moral additive, in forever equal innocence. And as children and artists play, so plays the ever-living fire. It constructs and destroys, all in innocence. Such is the game that the aeon plays with itself.²⁶

In speaking of that "tragic wisdom" which understands life in the guise of a child's game, as a dionysian affirmation of creation and destruction, Nietzsche says:

I have looked...for signs of it even among the *great* Greeks in philosophy, those...two centuries *before* Socrates. I retained some doubt in the case of *Heraclitus*, in whose proximity I feel...better than anywhere else. (VI³,E:BT,3)

Given this sense of *philosophical* comradery, Nietzsche always "set apart with high reverence the name *Heraclitus*." (VI³,7:IV,3)

In Nietzsche's early lectures on the pre-Socratics he says their philosophical systems are very important since, even if completely erroneous these may be used to reconstruct the philosophic image, just as one may guess at the nature of the soil in a given place by studying a plant that grows there. 'So this has existed--once, at least--and is therefore a possibility, this way of life, this way of looking at the human scene.'²⁷

But shortly before his collapse, he exhorted German philosophy to a "higher spirituality" through "the digging up of ancient philosophy, above all the pre-Socratics--the most deeply buried of all Greek temples." (MXVIII,419)

The attempt to philosophize in the spirit of ancient cosmology, is essence of Nietzsche's prerequisite for the task of philosophy wherein the thinker must battle with whatever marks him "as the child of his time."

(VI³,C:Preface)

In describing Nietzsche's idea of will to power as

a cosmological doctrine, we have mentioned pre-Socratic thought as manifesting health and spiritual greatness in opposition to the post-Socratics. We are led to ask why Nietzsche sees the ancient Greek philosophers in this way. This concern lies among similar questions like; why is Socrates a form of sickness within philosophy? Why, on the other hand, is Socrates also seen as one of the great sages of Greece? How does the infection Nietzsche finds in Socrates pervade all thinking after him? Why, as we will see, is Christianity a plant that "could only take root in [the] decayed soil," (MXVIII,438) of post-Socratic thought?

These are a few of the questions that can be legitimately raised when we consider the judgments Nietzsche passed on almost every conceivable topic. We must now prepare the ground upon which these questions can be answered. These questions often arise in light of how Nietzsche's judgments on Socrates and Christ are viciously antagonistic to those we find in the tradition of Western thought. How does Nietzsche manage to deride Socrates and Christ and the spiritual movements after them with such consistency? Was he malicious and determined to slander these two figures at all costs? These questions emerge when the *motives* for Nietzsche's attacks on the Western tradition are considered. Claims that these attacks are rooted in intellectual sloppiness or the ravings of a syphilis-ravaged mind are not hard to find. For ourselves we ask: do Nietzsche's attacks on the Western tradition have a *philosophical* motive? Our answer to this is an emphatic yes. Our response presupposes the necessity for further exploration of the will to power as the foundation for the clinical standpoint of the physician. It is to this complicated task we now turn.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE WILL TO POWER: ORGANICS

Nietzsche's negative remarks on the Western tradition after Socrates are rooted in the cosmological doctrine of will to power. We described this doctrine as a reappropriation of pre-Socratic thought wherein Heraclitus figures, as it were, as Nietzsche's philosophical grandfather. The will to power is seen "as a play of forms and waves of forces, at the same time one and many." (MXIX,1067)

In looking at man as a form of the will to power, Nietzsche stays within his understanding of the pre-Socratic tradition. Just as the latter "bring *themselves* into a system" (MXVIII,437)²⁸ and thereby put *man* into their cosmologies, so does Nietzsche place man within his conception of will to power. How does man fit into the grand scheme of the will to power? What does it mean to say man is a "form" of the will to power?

We have stated that becoming and the necessity to grow into higher forms is will to power. For Nietzsche everything is will to power wherein all things are in a state of constant transition. As Jaspers has said, "the will to power does not give rise to an eternally static realm of forms, but transmutes all forms within the flux of incessant becoming."²⁹ Man is a form of will to power since he is organic in nature *but* only "one particular line of the total living organic world," (MXIX,678) and "it is quite arbitrary to assert that everything strives to enter into this *form* of the will to power." (MXIX,692) In short, man is only one form of the will to power as manifest in the organic realm. But as such, then "'Life' would be defined as an enduring form of processes of the establishment of force, in which the different contenders grow unequally." (MXIX,642)

This inequality pervades all organic life including the man, and extends into the inorganic realm as well. What binds the organic and the inorganic together as will to

power lies "in the repelling force exercised by every atom of force." (MXIX,642) In other words, everything is a power quantum; the river and the mountain are power quanta repelling each other in so far as the river cannot wash away the mountain, and the mountain cannot bury the river. They maintain themselves in so far as they resist each other. All inorganic things are what they are in so far as they maintain themselves in the face of mutual opposition. Strictly speaking, as Nietzsche says, it is "power against power, quite crudely." (MXIX,544)

In the organic realm however, all are still power quanta but the

[i]ncrease in 'dissimulation' [is] proportionate to the rising order of rank of creatures. It seems to be lacking in the inorganic world...cunning begins in the organic world; plants are already masters of it. (MXIX,544)

In other words, every rise in the ability to dissemble, to use guile to one's advantage, marks a higher-order organic structure. Now, it seems odd to think of plants as masters of deception, but what Nietzsche means is that they are extraordinary in their ability to subjugate organic and inorganic compounds in order to *enhance themselves* as centers of power. Each *exploits* other organic life, assimilates weaker organisms as a means to its own growth. They take whatever route necessary to subdue other organisms, while "in the domain of the inorganic an atom of force is concerned only with its neighborhood: distant forces balance each other." (MXIX,637)

Living organisms are "higher" than the inorganic only in so far as they are *dynamic* manifestations of the will to power. Inorganic elements are of course power quanta, but they do not dissemble in an attempt to undermine and exploit organic or inorganic structures. There is no *seeking* out what gives resistance; this is impossible for them since they are already deadlocked against each other and lack the exploitative subtlety of the organic realm. For

Nietzsche to characterize the organic as dissembling, is to say the living organism seeks conflict *in order to subdue* and thereby gain in power. There is no such quest among inorganic things since they are always what they are through the mutual resistance of inertia, "power against power, quite crudely." (MXIX,544)

But organic forms of will to power are *living things* and hence each must be "an incarnate will to power, it will strive to grow...become predominant--not from any morality or immorality but because it is *living* and because life simply is will to power." (VI²,B,259) Every living thing is an incarnate will to power, an undeniable and necessary manifestation of "the organic process by virtue of which dominant...commanding forces continually extend the bounds of their power and...simplify within these bounds: the imperative grows." (MXIX,644) Within the organic realm, all forms abide by the cosmological law and thereby exemplify "the unexhausted procreating life-will." (VI¹,Z:II,12)³⁰

As organic it is *life*, and "life itself is essentially appropriation...overpowering of what is alien and weaker...hardness, imposition of one's own forms...and at least, at its mildest, exploitation." (VI²,B,259)

Zarathustra utters the cosmological doctrine in saying, I have followed the living creature, I have followed the greatest and smallest paths, that I might understand its nature...[and] [w]here I found a living creature, there I found will to power. (VI¹,Z:II,12)

We have had Nietzsche point out that the mildest expression of will to power is exploitation since this belongs "to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life. (VI²,B,259) This exploitative factor must be examined further.

In light of the observations above, we proceed now to another feature of the primitive organic realm which is crucial to Nietzsche's view of man as an organic form of

will to power. We will even say this one feature is fundamental to his distinction between pre and post-Socratic thought. To say his idea of will to power, as seen in primitive organic structures, is essential to the distinction between two epochs of philosophy sounds very strange. But as we will see in "The Case of Socrates," there is a consistency to Nietzsche's idea of will to power that reaches into everything he says from the standpoint of the physician.

To appreciate this important feature of organic life as will to power, activity of exploitation and assimilation characterizing the organic realm is *not* motivated by a desire for nourishment but rather for power.

Let us take the simplest case, that of primitive nourishment: the protoplasm extends its pseudopodia in search of something that resists it--not from hunger but from will to power. Thereupon it attempts to overcome, appropriate, assimilate what it encounters; what one calls 'nourishment' is merely a derivative phenomenon, an application of the original will to become *stranger*. (MXIX,702)

All living things as will to power *require resistance*; each *seeks out* what it may pit itself against and strive to overcome through assimilation.

The will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it--this the primeval tendency of the protoplasm when it extends its pseudopodia and feels about. Appropriation and assimilation are above all a desire to overwhelm, a forming, a shaping and reshaping, until at length that which has been overwhelmed has entirely gone over into the power domain of the aggressor and increased the same. (MXIX,656)

Since all organic functions are "translated back to the basic will, the will to power--and understood as offshoots," (MXIX,658) then nourishment is not *the* primal drive of living things. Rather, these are primarily a drive to power; to realize itself as enhanced strength in subduing what resists it. This is "why a living creature is 'egoistic' through and through." (MXIX,637) Consequently each "living thing reaches out as far from itself with its force as it can, and overwhelms what is weaker." (MXIX,769) But if

all life is "the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will--namely, of the will to power," (VI²,B,36) then "all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power." (VI²,B,36)

Since nourishment is not "the *primum mobile*" (MXIX,652) of life and each of its forms seeks resistance, Nietzsche says:

Life, as the form of being most familiar to us, is specifically a will to the accumulation of force; all the processes of life depend on this: nothing wants to preserve itself, everything is to be added and accumulated. (MXIX,689)

The crucial point here is that *self-preservation* is not the first motive of living organisms. Thus from the standpoint of our physician:

Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks to *discharge* its strength--life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*. In short...let us beware of *superfluous* teleological principles--one of which is the instinct of self-preservation. (VI²,B,13)

Self-preservation is a result of the primal drive for power. The *living* thing does not primarily seek preservation, this is only the result of a fundamental will to the enhancement of *itself* as a center of power.

Like hunger, self-preservation is a derivative phenomenon, hence it "is not possible to take hunger as the *primum mobile*, any more than self-preservation." (MXIX,652) The explanation for this is that "It can be shown most clearly that every living thing does what it can not to preserve itself but to become *more*." (MXIX,688)

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE WILL TO POWER: MAN

We are now in a better position to appreciate the central concern of this chapter; the clinical standpoint of the physician. Integral to this task was the necessity to see the will to power as a cosmological doctrine actually pervading and indeed constituting all living things. The

foregoing has led to at least two very important points which will emerge again and again as we proceed. First we have seen that life is will to power. The upshot of this is that man is a form of will to power as "one particular line in the total living organic world." (MXIX,678)

The second feature to be emphasized, is that "the original will to become stronger" (MXIX,702) is the fundamental motive of living things, *not* self-preservation. The importance of this second point cannot be stressed enough. It should be borne in mind since it emerges again and again throughout our entire investigation.

We now turn to those features of Nietzsche's thought that provide the *basic* elements of the clinical standpoint of the physician. From his earliest lectures on the pre-Socratics to his last major works, Nietzsche was concerned with ideas on health, sickness, the physician and physiology. He looked at Western culture from a clinical standpoint, and Camus is correct in saying that as far as nihilism is concerned, Nietzsche adopted the attitude of a clinician.³¹ Camus' remarks presuppose what we here call a "clinical standpoint" based on the physiology of the will to power.

Nietzsche put a lot of stock in his conception of physiology. In his, *Genealogy of Morals*, he said philosophy must attempt to transform "the originally...mistrustful relations between philosophy, physiology, and medicine into the most amicable and fruitful exchange." (VI²,G:I,17) This was necessary since he held his conception of physiology to provide the genuine task of philosophy. This task being an inquiry into the origin of values which requires "first a physiological investigation and interpretation, rather than a psychological one." (VI²,G:I,17) Hence the necessity to "engage the interest of physiologists and doctors in these problems" (VI²,G:I,17) because such problems need "a critique on the part of medical science." (VI²,G:I,17) Clearly

Nietzsche felt his conception of physiology, extending as it did into all facets of human life, could harvest much from medicine and specialized physiology. Ultimately however, his *philosophical* conception of physiology was such that all "the sciences have...to prepare the way for the future task of the philosophers. This task understood as...the determination of the *order of rank among values*." (VI²,G:I,17)

These words from, *The Genealogy of Morals*, are singularly important. Nietzsche says that all sciences must serve the fundamentally *philosophical* task to find a solution to "the *problem of values*." (VI²,G:I,17) What is this problem of values so central to Nietzsche's philosophy? To respond to this we must see the *history* of Western values as the means to Nietzsche's diagnosis of illness in Western man. What is the illness? Nietzsche says it is Western man's having adopted values which are *anti-life*. Why are our values antagonistic to life? He answers *morality* because of Socrates and carried on via Christianity. Why is this morality so dangerous? It is rooted, says Nietzsche, in our weakest *instincts* and has destroyed a natural order of rank determined by life as will to power.

In light of the questions above, we have a fair distance to go to understand Nietzsche's responses. Earlier we noted that Nietzsche wanted to provide a new spiritual paradigm for man, and that this is intimately related to the task of the physician. Nietzsche states that:

It is said of Schopenhauer...with justice, that after they had been neglected for so long he again took seriously the sufferings of mankind: where is he who...will again take seriously the antidotes to this suffering and put in the pillory the...quack-doctoring with which, under the most glorious names, mankind has hitherto been accustomed to treat the illnesses of its soul? (V¹,D,52)³²

Here Nietzsche wonders where the physicians are? We wonder: if there were such a physician, how would he interpret the sicknesses of man's soul? How does he begin to deal effectively with them? Nietzsche answers by saying *this physi-*

cian, like any other, must have an interpretation of the body.

The body and physiology the starting point: why?--We gain the correct idea of the nature of our subject-unity, namely as regents at the head of a communality...also of the dependence of these regents upon the ruled and of an order of rank and division of labour as the conditions that make possible the whole and its parts. In the same way, how living unities continually arise and die and how the 'subject' is not eternal; in the same way, that the struggle expresses itself in obeying and commanding, and that a fluctuating assessment of the limits of power is part of life. (MXIX, 492)

The body and physiology are the starting point because these reveal the distinctive identity of the human being as will to power. The body displays a relationship between dominating and dominated organic functions, each of which serves the totality of the body. Since this relationship shows some functions to be less vital than others, then we find a *physiological order of rank* within the body. For Nietzsche, our "subjectivity" is a very precarious "regency" (MXIX,492) at "the head of this communality." (MXIX,492) The body is an exquisite manifestation of will to power hence it must be "discussed first, methodologically." (MXIX,489) It "is the richer, clearer, more tangible phenomenon" (MXIX, 489) of will to power: *ergo, we are will to power.*

The body is a totality which is simultaneously a multiplicity. The one and the many; it exists as a chain of command among organic functions revealing a natural physiological order of rank. The "subject" is the regent or head of the unified antagonism which he is. This reveals, says Nietzsche, "[m]y hypothesis: the subject as multiplicity." (MXIX,490)

The "I," "ego" or personal "identity," are "unities," says Nietzsche, which *presuppose* the primal foundation of the organic as will to power. These unities and everything "that enters consciousness as 'unity' is already tremendously complex." (MXIX,489) Here we find an allusion

to Nietzsche's famous "Perspectivism" the nature of which we will be looking at shortly. For the time being, it is important to note that for Nietzsche, the organic process pervades the realm of consciousness. All ideas, valuations, judgments and the very pursuit of knowledge itself are rooted in the organic since in

the tremendous multiplicity of events within an organism, the part that becomes conscious to us is a mere means; and the little bit of 'virtue,' 'selflessness,' and similar fictions are refuted radically by the total balance of events. We should study our organism in all its immorality --The animal functions are, as a matter of principle, a million times more important than all our...heights of consciousness: the latter...serve as tools of those animal functions. The entire *conscious* life, the spirit along with the soul...goodness, and virtue--in whose service do they labour? In the service of the greatest possible perfection of the means...of nourishment...of enhancement...of...basic animal functions: above all, the enhancement of life. What one used to call 'body'...is of such unspeakably greater importance: the remainder is a small accessory. The task of spinning on the chain of life, and in such a way that the thread grows evermore powerful--that is the task. (MXIX,674)

This spinning on the chain of life is will to power. For Nietzsche, our body is our primal connection to the experiment of life; we are this experiment. Thus the body is the point of departure if we are to look at man from the standpoint of *life*.

* * *

Now we enter into an extremely important feature of Nietzsche's thought, that being his perception of the instincts. We said above that the illness of the West resides in how our "morality" is governed by our weakest instincts. Given this, our investigation into Nietzsche's view of the instincts is crucial. First, it should be stated for purposes of clarity that Nietzsche uses the terms "instinct," "passion," "drive," "need" and "desire" in an equivocal manner and our use these terms is the same.

We have seen our body as an organic structure of will to power. Therefore it is the "instinct for growth, for accumulation of forces, for *power*." (VI³,A,6) Man "represents a tremendous quantum of power." (MXIX,704) Why? Because he possesses a great multiplicity of instincts which lie "contained in a powerful unity before it undergoes ramifications and developments in the organic process." (VI²,B,37)

Each activity of the instincts is physiologically translated into *affects* since "all affects [are derived] from the one will to power." (MXIX,786) This means that when one drive establishes dominance over another, there is a *sensation* of power. This is what Nietzsche means above in saying that an instinct "undergoes ramifications and developments in the organic process." (VI²,B,37) In short, the interplay of the drives is *felt* throughout the body. Ultimately these "affects" are the "unities" which impinge on consciousness.

To clarify this, we must point out that Nietzsche sees the individual as an organism with a multiplicity of "wills," ie., drives or centers of force, all of which demand release. Each one *exploits* weaker drives in order to be gratified and when one overwhelms another through greater intensity, there is an *affect*, or sensation of *power* which resonates throughout the body. This sensation can be one of overall *enhanced* strength or, as we will see, perhaps one of weariness.

The affects are a multiplicity of percussions permeating the entire organism including consciousness. And what appears to consciousness has *already been interpreted* by an ever-shifting chain of command among the drives. Hence Alphonso Lingus makes the important observation that for Nietzsche, "power is measured by feeling rather than by the sovereignty of self-consciousness."³⁵ This relationship between the affects and consciousness is why Freud cited

Nietzsche as a precursor to his theory of the subconscious.³⁴ This is nicely expressed by Nietzsche himself where he says:

Is the whole of conscious life perhaps only a reflected image? And even when evaluation seems to determine the nature of man, fundamentally something quite different is happening! In short: supposing that purposiveness in the work of nature could be explained without the assumption of an ego that posits purposes: could *our* positing of purposes, our willing, etc., not perhaps only be a language of signs for something altogether different, namely something that does not will and is unconscious? Only the faintest reflection of that natural expediency in the organic but not different from it? (MXIX,676)

Nietzsche asks these questions rhetorically since that which appears to consciousness is *already* interpreted via the drives. Ultimately, our instincts interpret the world because "thinking is merely a relation of these drives." (VI²,8,36) The immediate upshot of this is that "The meaning of 'knowledge' here...is to be regarded in a strict and narrow anthropocentric and biological sense." (MXIX,480) Our interpretations of "the world" and "reality" reflect mankind as an organic form of will to power. All interpretations enable the individual and indeed our species "to maintain itself and increase its power." (MXIX,480)

Thus far we have referred to the instincts, the affects, knowledge, subjectivity and consciousness. In speaking of the instincts, all these concerns have emerged since for Nietzsche they are intimately interrelated; to speak about one is to speak about them all.

Now that we have seen the idea of interpretation identified with the activity of the instincts, we enter the arena of perspectivism mentioned above. In considering this very important element in the physiology of will to power, we shall see the above issues again. But we will fill out their wider significance for our investigation as a whole.

The instincts interpret the world. These interpretations are subject to constantly fluctuating power-rela-

tionships between the multiple drives that "affect" consciousness. But what occurs to consciousness is "based on physiological processes unknown to us." (V¹,D,119) Hence however

far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing...can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of *drives* which constitute his being. He can scarcely name even the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another. (V¹,D,119)

What are these drives? Nietzsche responds:

It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm. (MXIX,481) But if the "drives want to be viewed...as the highest courts of value in general, indeed as creative and ruling powers," (MXIX,677) then *each* is a *perspective*; *one* means to the interpretation of the world. The world is seen, felt, interpreted as thus and thus so that organic life may preserve itself in this perspective of interpretation. Man is not only a single individual but one particular line of the total living organic world. (MXIX,678)

Man is an organic complexity of demanding drives each with *its own interpretive perspective toward an affirmation* of itself. Each is a *potential avenue to more profound revelations of will to power in its form as man--and perhaps to wider horizons beyond man*. Thus Nietzsche speculates upon one or perhaps a combination of the drives providing a bridge for man to go beyond "man." Accordingly, he says

previous interpretations have been perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life, i.e., in the will to power, for the growth of power...every elevation of man brings with it the overcoming of narrower interpretations; ... every strengthening and increase of power opens up new perspectives and means believing in new horizons--this idea permeates my writings. (MXIX,616)

These new horizons have had a very ominous meaning to readers of Nietzsche. Here is the possibility of a transmutation of man as a form of the will to power. This trans-

mutation is rooted in man's countless instincts; that is, as a multiplicity of *perspectives*, each one "repeating in miniature, as it were, the tendency of the whole." (MXIX,617) What is the tendency of every drive? It is "that which all life reveals as a diminutive formula for the total tendency; hence a new definition of the concept 'life' as will to power." (MXIX,617) Thus each instinct, which is to say each *perspective*, is one possibility and *could* lead to a transformation of man *Beyond man*. This is why Nietzsche says that among "a higher kind of creatures, knowledge, too, will acquire new forms that are not yet needed." (MXIX,615)

Man, then, bears the mark of the chaos from whence he has come; he has no stable "nature," no consistent "essence," no eternal "value." He is part of that "destruction of the individual world as the overflow of a primordial delight." (III¹,BT,24) He is not protected from what he is. He is will to power and therefore subject to life, which once said to Zarathustra,

where there is perishing and falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself--for the sake of power! That I have to be struggle and becoming and goal and conflict of goals: ah, he who divines my will surely divines, too, along what *crooked* paths it has to go! Whatever I create and however much I love it--soon I have to oppose it and my love: thus will my will have it. And you too, enlightened man, are only a path and footstep of my will: truly, my will to power walks with the feet of your will to truth! (VI¹,Z:II,12)

Thus man within the cosmology of will to power, does not escape the gaze of Nietzsche's philosophical ancestor "the dark Heraclitus [who] compares the world building force to a playing child that places stones here and there and builds sand hills only to overthrow them again." (III¹,BT,24) Ultimately, Nietzsche's conception of the instincts, each with its own perspective and lust to rule enables him to say: "In the long run, it is not a question of man at all: he is to be overcome." (MXIX,676)

We see here an intimation of Nietzsche's terrifying and inspired conception of the Overman. As will to

power, man is a child on the "crooked paths" (VI¹,Z:II,12) of life, subject to chaos within and without. He may become an anomaly to us, his barbarian ancestors. Hence we ask about the role of the drives in this transformation the terrifying possibilities of which Nietzsche could not deny.³⁹ To understand this role, then further discussion of the inter-relationship of the instincts is necessary.

So far our examination of the instincts has shown them as a multiplicity of perspectives and strictly self-seeking centers of force. They are organic activities of will to power essential to preservation and accumulating strength. Finally, we have seen that the constant combat between the drives "affects" the totality of the organism. We are now in a position to look at the issues we saw earlier which are so inter-related to any exposition of the instincts. The observations thus far on the perspectivism of the instincts is almost entirely presupposed in the rest of this chapter.

In so far as man is a complex of instincts, he is like animals since in both cases "all evaluation is made from a definite perspective." (MXVIII,259) But man's situation is contrasted to that of other animals since "a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives." (MXVIII,259) Other animals are more harmonious organisms because their instincts function in "answer to quite definite tasks." (MXVIII,259)

Man on the other hand, possesses numerous drives many of which contradict each other while seeking gratification. Nietzsche says all of man's drives "demand their rights"; (MXIX,930) all of them want to be *the* perspective which evaluates the world. Each strives for domination over the other, and the more one subdues the others, the greater the affect of enhanced strength on the organism. Since the law of life is power and self-preservation is a derivative

phenomenon, then the battle for power among the drives can result in the destruction of the organism. In speaking of the affects, Nietzsche refers to this potential destruction in saying:

The affects are one and all useful, some directly, others indirectly; in regard to utility it is quite impossible to fix any scale of values--even though in economic terms the forces of nature are one and all good, i.e., useful, and also the source of so much terrible and irrevocable fatality. The most one can say is the most powerful affects are the most valuable, in as much as there are no greater sources of strength. (MXIX,931)

We will shortly see that some organisms withstand the affects of powerful drives and some do not. Given the strong affects of the drives on the physiology of the organism, we can say the instincts are tyrannical. In so far as they are all united in the organism as will to power, they are vigorous manifestations of life as such. But man is "a contradictory creature" (MXVIII,259) and "feels many pro's and con's." (MXVIII,259)

We are now at an important stage in our investigation. Let us leave our picture of man right where it is. For now he is simply an organism of battling primal drives all fighting for dominance, i.e., an outlet. We suspend our portrait here in order to fill out a few things we mentioned earlier. First, we wonder, where is the "subject" in all of this? Where is personal identity in this warfare of drives? What role does consciousness play in all this?

As we saw earlier, for Nietzsche there is no subject, or personal identity if we understand these in any static sense. Our interpretations of "self," "good," "evil," "justice," "truth," etc., are no more than the interplay of our drives--we interpret via their perspectives. These valuations are specifically characteristic of the drive-perspective or perspectives that have gained ascendancy. Hence Nietzsche says our "knowledge" of the "self" and the "world" presupposes the antagonism of the instincts because:

Before knowledge is possible, each of these instincts must first have presented its view of the thing or event; after this comes the fight of these onesided views, and occasionally this results in a mean, one grows calm, one finds three sides right, and there is a kind of justice and a contract; for by justice and a contract all these instincts...maintain their existence and assert their rights against each other. Since only the last scenes of reconciliation...at the end of this long process rise to our consciousness, we suppose that *intelligere* must be something conciliatory, just, and good--something...essentially opposed to the instincts, while it is actually nothing but a *certain behaviour of the instincts toward one another.* (V²,GS,333)

Here is the cornerstone of Nietzsche's psychology of *types*, and the Nietzschean connection to Freud's conception of the subconscious mentioned earlier. The instincts establish the strength of their perspectives according to a chain of command. This chain of command renders a cumulative "affect" which determines the character of the individual. The secondary role played by consciousness explains why Nietzsche refers to it as "superficial." (V²,GS,354)

This is a basic tenet of Nietzsche's philosophy. In seeing the instincts as manifestations of will to power in an organic structure, i.e., man, Nietzsche gives a negligible role to consciousness. This is fundamental to his attack on Western metaphysics which he sees to have placed consciousness as *primary* in the determination of "truth." We only take note of this point in passing and will pursue it in detail in "The Case of Socrates."

To return to the conflicting perspectives of the instincts, Nietzsche often talks in this context of conflicting "wills." This is to say each instinct is a self-serving center of force with its perspective evaluations in conflict with other "wills." Nietzsche denies "will" in the sense of a "subject" who posits goals and purposes out of an *a priori* or transcendental identity. This is simply another illusion of metaphysics which further promotes the myth of "free will." As far as Nietzsche is concerned there is no "will" if this is understood as being the essence of some

transcendental identity commonly called the "subject." Rather the "who" of the individual is determined by an ever-shifting alliance of drives whose "play and counterplay among one another...remain wholly unknown to him." (V¹,D, 119)

These observations enable us to proceed where we left off. We left our picture of man showing him to be pulled hither and yon by multiple drives. But our look at the subject revealed that various power relations are realized among the drives. These relations or treaties as we have called them, are always fluctuating since the drives "are constantly increasing or losing their power." (MXIX, 715) In this vein Nietzsche says "these drives either oppose or subject each other (join synthetically or alternate in dominating)." (MXIX,677)

The drives are constantly seeking to dominate and exploit each other to find an outlet, thus they may even overthrow other drives that may be dominant at the time. If interpretations of the world reflect the battle of instinctive perspectives, then potential combinations of instincts can engender multiple types of individuals. Man is a garden of the possibilities of himself as a form of will to power, the "value for *Life*," being "ultimately decisive." (MXIX, 493) In this greenhouse of possibilities we find our *physician* at work. He asks: which plants are the most healthy and which the most unhealthy? But what is "healthy" for our physician? That which *affirms* the law of life and most profoundly displays this law as will to power. What is unhealthy? That which is antagonistic to this law and displays this antagonism.

Our reference to man as a garden of plants is not accidental. If we attend to all that grows in a garden, we find a wealth of *types* of plants and it is by no means unpremeditated when Nietzsche refers to the "plant 'man'." (VI²,B,44) Man for Nietzsche can, like a plant, bloom and

grow strong or decline and perish or perhaps be on the verge of rejuvenation or destruction. He is an organism and his instincts, which will ultimately determine his "type," are the main criteria of concern to the physician. Some organisms are strong and others weak. Why?

To repeat, man is a multiplicity of drives. Indeed these are his greatest sources of strength and most exquisitely manifest the cosmological law of life. The healthy individual must have these instincts and it is essential that "one possesses them to the highest degree." (MXIX,490) But the mark of the *healthy* type is not the mere possession of powerful drives, (though this is crucial). Rather, one drive must establish its dominance and exploit the combined power of all the others in the *service of one goal*. The more intense the instincts, the greater is their battle but the "jungle growth 'man' always appears where the struggle for power has been waged the longest. *Great men*." (MXIX,959)

The strongest instinct, using the accumulated strength of all the others is the dominating passion, which...brings with it the supremest form of health; here the co-ordination of the inner systems and their operation in the service of one end is best achieved. (MXIX,778)

Here there is a harmony of all drives since there is an outlet in the direction of the *perspective of one over-powering drive*. Thus the "'great man' is great owing to the free play and scope of his desires and to the yet greater power that knows how to press these magnificent monsters into service." (MXIX,933) Nietzsche often refers to the healthy type as "great" or "noble" and we will have occasion for a more detailed look at the physiology of this type. For now we will let the above stand as a general physiological description of the healthy type.

We turn now to a slightly more complicated plant; that which is sick. The complication resides in the conditions for sickness which should be described first. It was

said that for Nietzsche men are like plants to the extent that some are strong and some weak. A proper perception of the physiology of sickness, requires our attention to weakness as an organic phenomenon.

The weak organism, like the healthy, is saddled with multiple powerful drives but is, strictly speaking, not constituted in such a way that one attains dominance. With this kind of constitution, it is *incapable of not reacting* to its drives. Here, says Nietzsche, there is an "antagonism of the passions...a multiplicity of 'souls in one breast': very unhealthy, inner ruin, disintegration...and anarchism." (MXIX,778)

The weak organism does not possess that harmony of drives so essential to its well being. Weakness is a lack of synchronicity among the drives which, in a sense, renders the organism fragmented. For "unless one passion at last becomes master," (MXIX,778) thereby subjugating the others to its "will," then it is weak. Weakness refers to a fragmented organism in the sense above; here the organism is simply not capable of accommodating all of its drives. Pulled by multiple drives, the weak organism is subject to powerful affects which will reflect inner tension and a lack of co-ordination. The healthy type is organically co-ordinated; the affects are those of enhanced strength due to an order of rank among the drives. In a weak organism the affects are those of physiological tension and devitalization due to a schism among the drives; this is weakness in the strict physiological sense of the word.

Nietzsche often differentiates between the general categories of health and weakness by using the terms "ascending" and "descending" respectively. Both are a normal phenomenon of life as will to power. Nietzsche will judge individuals from the categories of ascending or descending life depending on the ability to *accommodate* the intensity of the drives. Just as blades of grass rise and fall in the fields,

so do individuals as will to power. This *physiological fact* constitutes Nietzsche's *denial of an equal value between all individuals.*

Ascending types reveal a capacity to harness all sources of *power*, i.e., the instincts. They manifest the law of life through withstanding the battle of the drives and *exploiting* them for growth; *thriving* on powerful affects. In short, they affirm life as will to power. The weak cannot withstand the combat of the drives; they are too frail to exploit the totality of their accumulated force. But strength and weakness are revealed throughout all of nature. Everything is dominating or dominated, reflecting an order of rank throughout all species--there is no equality. Nietzsche sees the capacity to harness the drives and exploit them according to the perspective of one "dominating passion" as indicative one's rank on the scale of life. "What determines your rank is the quantum of power you are: the rest is cowardice." (MXIX,858)

Having come this far in describing the physiology of weakness, we can now enter into a discussion of sickness per se. It makes sense that when an organism is weak it can succumb to illness. What enables sickness to take root in weakness? *Exhaustion*. We noted earlier that weaker organisms have a "multitude and disgregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them." (MXVIII,46)

There is no dominating instinct which provides "precision and clarity of the direction." (MXVIII,46) Without this direction, the weaker organism is in a state of "oscillation and the lack of gravity." (MXVIII,46) Pulled in all directions by the demands of the drives and unable to resist trying to gratify them, the organism falls into a general state of exhaustion. It is incapable of not reacting to the drives and is buffeted by powerful affects. This renders a condition of "constant irritability" (V²,GS,305) which exhausts the organism as a whole. Here exhaustion can

be seen "as a consequence of every excessive excitement."
(MXVIII,231) Nietzsche speaks of the symptoms typical of exhaustion. In this condition

Sensibility [is] immensely more irritable...the abundance of disparate impressions greater than ever...the impressions erase each other; one instinctively resists taking in anything, taking anything deeply, to 'digest' anything; a weakening of the power to digest results from this...men unlearn spontaneous action, they merely react to stimuli from outside. They spend their strength partly in assimilating things, partly in defense, partly in opposition...a certain deep heaviness and weariness. (MXVIII,71)

The healthy organism provides a great contrast; with one dominant drive co-ordinating the totality of its functions there is a

refinement of the organs for the apprehension of much that is extremely small and fleeting; *divination*, the power of understanding with only the least assistance, at the slightest suggestion: 'intelligent' *sensuality*--; strength as a feeling in the muscles...and pleasure in movement, as dance, as levity and *presto*; strength as pleasure in the proof of strength, as bravado, adventure...indifference to life or death. (MXIX,800)

The exhausted organism on the other hand, tries to maintain some sort of equilibrium and self-control; a self-control which is constantly threatened. His is a state of constant irritability in the face of all natural...inclinations--as it were a kind of itching. Whatever may henceforth...attract, or impel such an irritable person from outside or inside, it will always seem to him as if his self-control were endangered. No longer may he entrust himself to any instinct or free wingbeat; he stands in a fixed position with a gesture that wards off, armed against himself...the eternal guardian of his castle, since he has turned himself into a castle. (V²,GS,305)

It is in this state of nervous exhaustion that sickness makes its debut. But it arises in the form of a fascinating feature of the physiology of will to power; *decadence*.

We have seen that exhaustion is such that an organism is always having to react to the instincts. Thus it is constantly trying to satisfy the drives while seeking some control and is, as it were, hyper-defensive. In this posture, the drive for self-preservation emerges as a reac-

tion to a general state of seige. The instinct of preservation is the key to the phenomenon of decadence. Decadence is always *reactionary*; the organism is *threatened* by the anarchy of the instincts and sets out to fight these powerful drives as a means to its preservation. But Nietzsche says that to "*have to combat one's instincts--that is the formula for *décadence*."* (VI³,7:III,11)

How is this battle among the drives any different from that found in the healthy organism? The difference is that the instinct of preservation does not try to overpower the others and exploit them toward its perspective. This is not possible since the drives as will to power are will for *more* power and *not* mere self-preservation. In short, the instinct of preservation in head to head combat with the other drives simply cannot win. How then does it fight them? First, the instinct "to exist at all" (MXIX,774) is one of the lowest forms of will to power. (MXIX,774) Decadence becomes possible when the instinct of preservation co-opts the weakest instincts; those most easily dominated. It will gain ascendancy over these or at least form power alliances wherein its perspective has influence. In this way it forms a power-base among the weakest drives. The more it gains in power, so does its perspective. This can result in an overall levelling-off of the intensity of the normally dominant drives. Decadence is the warfare of the weakest drives against the most powerful ones. The weakest rally round that of preservation and gain ascendancy through devitalizing and inhibiting the dominant drives. By undermining powerful drives, decadence allows weak and thus easily exhausted organisms to at least *maintain* themselves.

An interesting point here is that the instinct of preservation is not itself unhealthy. But if it gains in power, then this is the physiological defect Nietzsche calls *décadence*. Why is this defective? Because decadence levels-off and undermines the instincts which are the greatest

sources of strength for the organism. It is "a physiological defect" (VI³,C,7) having its own "practice and procedure" (VI³,C,7) toward devitalization of the entire organism.³⁹ The paradox here is that we see will to power in decadence since this defect gains *ascendancy* over the organism as a whole!

Here the law of life is manifest again; the power of the instinct of decadence lies in its capacity to debilitate the entire organism. This is one of life's "crooked paths" (VI¹,Z:II,12) on the way to power. Here the order of rank among the drives of healthy organisms is reversed since decadence *begins* among the *weakest* instincts in order to get control of the other drives. Strictly speaking, decadence is a *physiological revaluation* of the values of Life as will to power. A fascinating aspect of this situation is that this revaluation lies at the heart of the will to power. The will to power is the source of growth *and* destruction in its form as man. Decadence is the will to power of the weakest drives since, in gaining *power*, they simultaneously negate the organism's strength.

This physiological revaluation is *sickness*. The sick organism always "*prefers what is harmful to it.*" (VI³,A,6) In attempting to undermine the vitality of its drives, the weak organism only devitalizes itself even more. This is typical of sickness, it pursues what is harmful to it [n]ot that it grasps this: it dreams on the contrary, that it is getting back to wholeness, to unity, to strength of life: it thinks it will be in a state of redemption when the inner anarchy, the unrest between those opposing value drives, is at last put an end to. (MXVIII,351) But it is actually making itself weaker overall and hence must constantly contend with the exhaustion it set out to ameliorate.

In undermining the intensity of its drives, it undermines the conditions for the strength of the organism as a whole. Thus it never gains on the drives even when they

are diminished in their intensity, because the whole system is sinking into lower levels of vigour. This is a vicious circle until the overall affect is a desire for an end, a state where it no longer has to cope; it wants death. Decadence and sickness go hand in hand.

In seeking self-preservation the organism destroys itself. This is predictable since life as will to power does not seek self-preservation. One of the unique paths to power is the self-destruction inherent to decadence and which takes place exclusively among the weakest instincts. Thus life *weeds out* the sick and weak.

Now we raise the question: is old age decadent and thus entwined with the poisonous roots of decadence? This question lets us consider how the inevitable decline of all living things indicates their rank on the scale of life. To answer it, we must recall that the body is our point of departure. There are two general types of old age based on the physiological descriptions provided thus far. There is the weariness which has been *earned* and that which is chronic.

The former is that of an individual who has had a healthy life: one wherein the drives were harnessed and guided by a dominant one, or perhaps an oligarchy of them. This is an organism that has been suitably spent, that is, a lifetime of exploitation wherein the testing of its strength has brought on many powerful affects. In this case the organism *grows* into old age. It is not sick since it does not prefer what is harmful, nor is it decadent in that it does not fight the instincts. It affirms life, even the disintegration that is part thereof. This aging organism is essentially *healthy*, and still has its "tempo," (VI²,B,28) as Nietzsche likes to say. Here is an exhaustion that has been won and the old man has a *right* to it.

In the chronic case, the organism was always weak and therefore constantly ravished by the anarchy of the

drives and the sicknesses which feed upon this. Here old age is such that vitality is almost vanished, one gets the impression of constant weariness. It is very likely decadent in that it still fights the instincts, and sick in preferring what harms it. Most likely it will still be at odds with itself--it denies, is bitter, irritable and negative about itself and its brief life. In contrast to the demise of a healthy organism, that of the unhealthy is such that we can say it has always been "old."

Both forms of disintegration stand on higher and lower ranks and their inevitable destruction will reflect that the "value for life is ultimately decisive." (MXIX,493) However one thing must be borne in mind, the death of the organism is a physiological fact of degeneration. Whether we speak of an aged healthy organism or one of decadence, exhaustion is manifest in both. In so far as this is the case, Nietzsche says their evaluations of life are physiologically suspect. He describes this suspicion in the following way:

It is not wise to let the evening judge the day...it means ...often that weariness sits in judgment on strength, success and good will...great caution is likewise in order with regard to age and its judgment of life, especially as...age loves to dress itself in a new and enticing morality and knows how to put the day to shame through twilight and solemn...silence. The reverence we accord to the age of man, especially when he is an aged...sage, easily blinds us to the *aging of his mind*, and it is always necessary to draw forth the *signs* of...weariness out of their hiding place--draw forth, that is to say, the *physiological* phenomenon. (V¹,D,542)

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The foregoing physiology of the will to power provides the clinical standpoint of the physician. In the chapters to follow, this standpoint will be illustrated more and more. At present we have the skeleton framework of the physiology our physician will utilize. Our characterization of this physiology provides the basis for everything that is to follow. Our next chapter will expand on the points we have covered so far by introducing Nietzsche's conception of

"spirit." The physiological dynamics we are about to investigate provide the basis to Nietzsche's perception of the philosopher as a cultural physician.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER I

1. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1977), p. 227.
2. Nikos Kazantzakis, *Report To Greco*, trans. P. A. Bien (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 306.
3. Out of his vision of the decomposing foundation of the values of Western man, came Nietzsche's desire to find something the human race could once again *revere*. This desire led to his quest for another spiritual homeland for the human race. The solitude of such a quest as well as the belief in its necessity was shared by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. Rilke was Nietzsche's contemporary and the latter's texts had significant influence him. In Rilke's poetry we find similar visions of man as a kind of orphan forever in search of a "home". The loneliness of this search haunted both Rilke and Nietzsche and is echoed in the formers "Eighth Elegy" wherein we read:

Who's turned us round like this, so that we always,
do what we may, retain the attitude
of someone who's departing? Just as he,
on the last hill, that shows him all his valley
for the last time, will turn and stop and linger,
we live our lives, forever taking leave.

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, trans. J.B. Leishman and S. Spender (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1939), p. 71.
4. The translation is from Nietzsche's, *The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 165. Unless indicated otherwise, subsequent translations of *The Anti-Christ* are taken from this edition.
5. Jaspers, p. 182.
6. Hereafter referred to as "the physician."
7. Jaspers, p. 287.
8. *Ibid.*
9. The translation is from Nietzsche's, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 36. Unless indicated otherwise, subsequent translations of *Twilight of the Idols* are taken from this edition.

10. Jaspers, p. 287.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Hereafter referred to as "Recurrence."

13. Dionysus and Recurrence will be given looked at in detail in chapter five.

14. MVI, SSW, p. 103 / PT, p. 132.

15. MVI, SSW, p. 107 / PT, p. 135.

16. MVI, SSW, p. 117 / PT, p. 144.

17. In light of Nietzsche's explicit denial of man as "the measure of all things," Heidegger's assertion to the contrary is interesting. Heidegger suggests that even though he did not go in the direction of the "rationalism" of Plato but rather pursued the body as a philosophical point of departure, then Nietzsche "falls" toward "subjectivity" as the path to answering the question of Being. Heidegger is correct in seeing the body as Nietzsche's point of departure, but the latter would not say that all Being/Becoming requires man. In his, *Nietzsche*, Heidegger sees the conception of the Overman as the culmination of a "subjectivism" that goes back through Descartes to Plato and Protagoras. In our examination of Nietzsche's philosophy we hope to show that the Overman is indeed only an echo of the task Heidegger himself took up; that being, to provide a "new beginning" for the human race. We will make it clear that though Nietzsche speaks of the Overman as the creator of new values, there is at the heart of his idea of "spirit" the perception that these "values" must be "illusions" and that man including the Overman is by no means the "measure of all things." Just as man for Heidegger lives through the unfolding seasons of Being, so for Nietzsche does he live through those of Becoming. A detailed study of how Nietzsche's philosophy is echoed throughout that of Heidegger's would be fruitful not only in terms of the above, but in many other respects as well. However, our examination of Nietzsche's thought does not allow us to look at these "echoes" in detail and we will have to reserve this pursuit for the future.

18. Richard Howey, *Heidegger and Jaspers on Nietzsche: A Critical Examination Heidegger's and Jaspers' Interpretations of Nietzsche*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973). p. 35.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Ibid.

21. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 1.

22. Alphonso Lingis, "The Will to Power," in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison (New York: Delta Books, 1979), p. 38.

23. MVI, SSW, p. 102-03 / PT, p. 131.

24. Jaspers, p. 371.

25. MIV, PTA, p. 182.

The text is Nietzsche's, "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks," trans. Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1962), p. 62. Subsequent translations of "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks" are taken from Cowan's edition. Since the section numbers of the German and English editions are the same, subsequent references to PTA will include the section number in brackets after the page number. For example, the reference above would appear: MVI, PTA, p. 182, (7).

26. MIV, PTA, p. 183, (7).

27. MIV, PTA, p. 151, (Preface).

28. My italics.

29. Jaspers, p. 313.

30. The translation is from Nietzsche's, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 137. Unless indicated otherwise, subsequent translations of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are taken from this edition.

31. Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 65-66.

32. The translation is from Nietzsche's, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 34. Unless indicated otherwise, subsequent translations of *Daybreak* are taken from this edition.

33. Lingis, p. 51.

34.Sigmund Freud, *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement*, vol. XIV of *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. J. Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), p. 15-16.

35.In chapter five we will see that Nietzsche suffered in affirming the horrible consequences of his seemingly innocuous views on man's instincts as the means to go *beyond* man.

36.Nietzsche often refers to this procedural debilitation as "the instinct of decadence" and we will follow suit rather than constantly referring to an "alliance of the weakest instincts with that of self-preservation."

It is an eternal phenomenon: the insatiable will always finds a way to detain its creatures and compel them to live on, by means of an illusion spread over things.

The Birth Of Tragedy

CHAPTER II

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF SPIRIT

In the preceding chapter we looked at the basic physiological principles characteristic of the clinical standpoint of the physician. We will expand the foregoing in terms of how he determines the sickness and health of the larger organism of culture according to physiological principles. Our consideration of Nietzsche's perception of culture will proceed through an examination of an extremely important feature of Nietzsche's philosophical enterprise. We are referring here to his articulation of "spirituality."¹

If we are to grasp Nietzsche's perception of "spirit," then we must consider its relationship to man as an organic form of the will to power; the organic development of culture; and how culture is the source of that "most spiritual will to power," (VI²,B,9) philosophy. Since "spirit" is an organic function within individuals and cultures, we must expand upon the physiology found in chapter one and see it within the development of the larger cultural organism. Hence we have three essential concerns in this chapter: 1) we must understand the organic function of "spirit," 2) see this function revealed in the individual and in culture, and 3) understand how philosophy emerges as a function of "spirit" in the cultural organism.

In order to meet these three objectives, we will concentrate on Nietzsche's portrait of ancient Greek culture. This is beneficial to us in two ways; first it pro-

vides an opportunity to see Nietzsche utilize physiological principles in describing a "truly healthy culture."² And second, the stage is set for the "case of Socrates" whose philosophizing reveals "symptoms of...physiological weariness." (III¹,BT:S,4)

With regard to the concerns above, we should emphasize three points. First, the goal of this chapter is to *expand* upon the principles laid down in chapter one. Second, this chapter will only bring us to the threshold, as it were, of philosophy. That is, Nietzsche's vision of philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power," (VI²,B,9) will guide us, but what this means will be developed in our next chapter, "The Case of Socrates." In short, this chapter will prepare us for an understanding of philosophy as an organic function of "spirit." We will look at this function in greater detail in chapter three.

The final point we wish to make before proceeding, is that the following investigation into "spirituality" will reveal areas of Nietzsche's thought deserving detailed exploration in their own right. We will see possibilities for physiological interpretations of his ideas on art, *Amar Fati*, "spiritual" disorders, (MXVIII,235) the necessity of error as a condition of life and a multiplicity of other themes.

We will pursue these possibilities only to the extent that they facilitate our primary objective; to describe Nietzsche's philosophical enterprise as that of a cultural physician. To follow out these possibilities would take us beyond the scope of our enquiry. For the present, we can only indicate these interpretive possibilities and reserve them for future work.

CULTURE AS A SOCIAL ORGANISM

If philosophy is the most "spiritual will to power," (VI²,B,9) then Nietzsche's own philosophical task must be a "spiritual" one. What then is the relationship of physiology to the "really royal calling of the philosopher?" (MXIX,997) We find clues to answering this question in the botanical metaphors Nietzsche's uses when speaking of philosophy and philosophers. He says "the philosopher should be a rare plant," (MXVIII,420) and elsewhere he speaks of the pre-Socratic "systems" which let us "reconstruct the philosophic image, just as one may guess at the nature of the soil in a given place by studying a plant that grows there."³ In, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche says every philosophy reveals "the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown." (VI²,B,6)

These observations all speak of philosophy and philosophers in terms of the growth of plants and the soil within which they are rooted. Here again we are in the domain of the *physician* who, "goes among men like a natural scientist among plants." (IV²,HH:I,254)⁴ He pays heed to "the moral (or immoral) intentions" (VI²,B,6) of philosophical plants, and thereby notes signs of sickness and health since "value judgments concerning life, for or against, can in the last resort never be true...they come into consideration only as symptoms." (VI³,7:III,2) But the condition of a plant reveals that of the soil wherein it is rooted and, for Nietzsche, the philosopher is a plant rooted in the soil of his culture. If we are to understand how Socrates betrays the symptoms of cultural decline, then let us look around for the highest authority for what we may term cultural health. The Greeks, with their truly healthy culture, have once and for all *justified* philosophy simply by having engaged in it, and engaged in it more fully than any other people.⁵

How then does a healthy culture like that of the ancient Greeks emerge on the face of the earth and give rise to the "spiritual" health of pre-Socratic thought⁴ and to the "spiritual" illness symptomatic of Socrates?

To respond to this question, we must see the will to power as the law essential to the creation of the larger organism known as culture. Hence the harnessing of the drives into an *order of rank* which strives for power is also essential to the creation of the cultural organism. Again the body is the point of departure, the very "struggle between cells and tissues" (MXIX,660) reveal "[t]he aristocracy in the body" (MXIX,660) and provides a blueprint of "[t]he *Body as a Political Structure.*" (MXIX,660) In this vein Nietzsche states:

To press everything terrible into *service*, one by one, step by step...this is what the task of culture demands.... *Standard*: the greater and more terrible the passions that an age, a people, an individual can permit themselves, because they are capable of employing them as a *means*, the higher stands their culture.... (MXIX,1025)

The creation of a culture is an organic process revealing the

will to power...by virtue of which dominant, shaping, commanding forces continually extend the bounds of their power and continually simplify within these bounds: the imperative grows. (MXIX,644)

In the case of the individual a multiplicity of drives all demand satisfaction until hopefully an order of rank is established among them. This order of rank occurs when, as we saw, a dominating passion or perhaps a few of these emerge as the strongest; this is the formula for the health of the individual.

For Nietzsche it is precisely the strongest, most healthy individuals who constitute those "commanding forces [which] continually extend the bounds of their power and continually simplify within these bounds." (MXIX,644) Since life is will to power, then it is natural that the strong-

est, most healthy individuals will live accordingly. "The ego," says Nietzsche,

subdues and kills: it operates like an organic cell: it is a robber and violent. It wants to regenerate itself--pregnancy. It wants to give birth to its god and see all mankind at its feet. (MXIX,768)

Ultimately it is the strongest individuals who, by subjugating the weak, "want to imbed themselves in great communities; they want to give a single form to the multifarious and disordered; chaos stimulates them." (MXIX,964) This assimilation of the weak, one can readily imagine, is hardly gentle and is "like the beginnings of everything great on earth, soaked in blood thoroughly and for a long time." (VI²,G:II,6) This is simply a necessary fact of life as will to power since "all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master*." (VI²,G:II,12)

The individual, being the organic phenomenon he is, is subject to the law of life and follows this law by trying to subdue and enslave those weaker than himself. This is a consequence of the intrinsic Will to Power, which is precisely the Will of Life.--Granting that as a theory this is a novelty--as a reality it is a *fundamental fact* of all history: let us be so far honest with ourselves! (VI²,B,259) In light of this "fundamental fact," to speak of just or unjust in itself is quite senseless...since life operates *essentially*, that is in its basic functions, through injury, assault, exploitation, destruction and simply cannot be thought of at all without this character. (VI²,G:II,11)

For Nietzsche, this "essential character" of life is the fundamental dynamic inherent to living things. Whether we speak of individual organisms or cultures, power relationships--in short, commanding and obeying forces, indicate an order of rank and therefore *life*. The formation of a culture reveals the harshest manifestations of what remains constant--the will to power--. Here we find the "grandiose prototype: man in nature--the weakest, shrewdest creature making himself master, subjugating stupider

forces." (MXIX,856) Since this "man in nature" is *living*, then he reveals the

primeval tendency of the protoplasm when it extends its pseudopodia and feels about. Appropriation and assimilation are above all a desire to overwhelm...until at length that which has been overwhelmed has entirely gone over into the power domain of the aggressor and increased the same. (MXIX, 656)

It is important to note here that those healthiest and strongest individuals who possess an order of rank among their instincts set out to establish a similar order which they intend to dominate. In this way they realize a growth in power wherein they enslave and exploit others according to their abilities. Through these means, the power of the individual is enhanced in so far as he has unified and harnessed the strength of weaker individuals to his own ends. Here life realizes a larger unit of power since the strongest establish and unify a social organism acknowledging an order of rank determined by the most powerful.

This is why the physiology we saw in chapter one serves Nietzsche as the microcosm for the larger social organism. Just as Plato saw the individual as the microcosm for his, *Republic*, so does Nietzsche see the physiology of the individual represented in the larger organism of culture. The strongest individual reveals the order of rank "of which he is the physiological representative" (VI³,7:VII,2) and this carries over "into his relationships with other human beings." (VI³,7:VII,2) Here powerful, warlike drives are expressed in terms of a ruling caste exploiting the strength of weaker drives which represent lower castes. Our body is, says Nietzsche, "a social structure composed of many souls." (VI²,B,19) This "social structure" is the order of rank among the drives of the individual organism. The structure of any healthy culture reveals this same order of rank wherein each class manifests the *instincts* of those who compose it. In this way our physician *always* finds an order of rank among the instincts of an individual or a culture.

Every healthy culture possesses a natural order of rank, and we will see that where this order is lacking it is ripe for decadence.

The strongest individuals operated "like an organic cell...[which] is a robber and violent." (MXIX,768) They were the foundation of any culture, and lived in very dark and *cruel* ages. What was essential was powerful drives harnessed in one way or another toward power. Nietzsche asks us to

admit to ourselves, without trying to be considerate, how every higher culture on earth has so far *begun*. Human beings whose nature was still natural, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word...in possession of [a]...lust for power, hurled themselves upon weaker...more peaceful races. (VI²,B, 267)

Nietzsche goes on to say that in "the beginning, the noble caste was always the barbarian caste." (VI²,B,257) The reason for this is the will to power manifest in the instincts of the barbarian which were the means to enslaving the weak. It was originally the barbarian caste that consolidated a power base and *their* interpretation of the world became law: *justified* by the fact that they commanded. Just as the dominating drive of a healthy individual exploits the combined power of his own drives, so does this same individual unify the cultural organism by enslaving the weak. Nietzsche describes the conditions whereby the ruling caste becomes more firmly imbedded

as an arrangement, whether voluntary or involuntary, for *breeding*: human beings...who are dependent on themselves and want their species to prevail, most often because they *have* to prevail or run the...risk of being exterminated.... Manifold experience teaches them to which qualities they owe the fact that, despite gods and men, they are still there... these qualities they call virtues, these virtues alone they cultivate.... In this way a type with few but very strong traits, a species of severe, warlike...men, close-mouthed and closely linked...is fixed beyond the changing generations; the continual fight against ever constant *unfavorable* conditions is...the cause that fixes and hardens a type. (VI²,B,262)

In chapter one we saw how the will to power is manifest only when the organism is confronted with what resists it. Here in the consolidation of a warrior elite the same essential phenomenon is revealed. We will see just how important this idea of resistance is for Nietzsche as we proceed through the rest of our investigation. What is important to note here, is that this class of the strongest *needs* the *resistance* of "a constant fight with its neighbors or with the oppressed who are rebellious or threaten rebellion." (VI²,8,262) Another point to be borne in mind in regard to the consolidation of the nobility, is that this caste *inherits* the instincts necessary for command. These instincts have been honed in conditions that constantly challenge the survival of these strongest types. Since the barbarian ancestor asserts by force his right to command, then his posterity must maintain this right and know themselves as *born* to command. This conviction must be firmly imbedded beyond "the changing generations." (VI²,8,262)

For Nietzsche, the instincts of command "are acquired laboriously...through much industry, self-constraint ...through much obstinate, faithful repetition of the same labours, the same renunciations." (MXIX,995) This severe self-discipline is necessary to the *cultivation* of

men who are the heirs and masters of this slowly-acquired manifold treasure of virtue and efficiency...through fortunate and reasonable marriages, and also through fortunate accidents, the acquired and stored-up energies of generations have not been squandered...but linked together by a firm ring and will. (MXIX,995)

By these means "the noble races...have left behind them the concept 'barbarian' wherever they have gone...their highest culture betrays a consciousness of it and even a pride in it." (VI²,6:I,11) Here we see that the most powerful reveal the cosmological law of will to power which is always "spinning on the chain of life, and in such a way that the thread grows ever stronger." (MXIX,674)

In the above remarks we find Nietzsche's sympathy for Lamarck's ideas of acquired traits of character. (V²,65, 99) The idea of inheriting the character and strength of our forbearers moves throughout Nietzsche's texts. We find this idea expressed in the following way:

One cannot erase from the soul of a human being what his ancestors liked to do most and did most constantly: whether they were...modest and bourgeois in their desires...or whether they lived accustomed to commanding from dawn to dusk. ...It is simply not possible that a human being should not have the qualities and preferences of his parents and ancestors in his body, whatever appearances may suggest to the contrary. This is the problem of race. (VI²,B,264)

We will have a better opportunity to look at this "problem" in more detail as we proceed with our investigation. For the present, we should note this conception of breeding as essential to the maintenance of a type. We will see this conception emerge again in Nietzsche's perception of the lower social orders as well.

What is of physiological interest here is that the maintenance of a firm order of rank among the drives of an individual or a culture renders a capital gain of power. This "gain" is passed on to succeeding generations "through fortunate and reasonable marriages." (MXIX,995) This is in accord with "that economy in the law of life" (VI³,T:VI,6) which forbids the organism to squander its strength in a multiplicity of directions. The significance of this "economy" in the physiological fortunes of generations of nobility cannot, in Nietzsche's view, be overestimated. He says marriage in the aristocratic...sense of the word...was a question of the breeding of a race...of the maintenance of a fixed, definite type of ruling man.... It is obvious that love was not the first consideration here.... What was decisive was the interest of a family, and beyond that--the class. We would shiver...at the coldness...and calculating clarity of such a noble concept of marriage as has ruled in every healthy aristocracy...we warm-blooded animals with sensitive hearts, we 'moderns.' (MXIX,732)

Nietzsche typically spits out the word "moderns" here in reference to his contemporaries. His disgust makes it clear

that they (and presumably we), lack the "[a]dvantage of detachment from one's age" (MXIX,859) and fail to see that our "forbearers have paid the price for what one is." (MXIX,969)

The "noble" is *convinced* he is born to rule and, as the physiological heir to generations of accumulated strength, reveals a

profound reverence for age and tradition--all law rests on this double reverence--the faith and prejudice in favor of ancestors and disfavor of those yet to come are typical of the morality of the powerful. (VI²,B,260)

The "disfavor towards those yet to come" is a suspicious attitude that watches youth to see whether or not it is equal to the traditions and laws of its heritage since the noble type of man experiences itself as determining values; it does not need approval...it knows itself to be that which first accords honour to things; it is *value-creating*.... The noble human being honors himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself and respects all severity and hardness.... Such a type of man is actually proud of the fact that he is *not* made for pity, and... 'If the heart is not hard in youth it will never harden.' (VI², B,260)

Just as his own self-discipline keeps his drives in check, so the noble type keeps those not of his class at a *distance* according to rank and utility. Nietzsche says that such a type

commands and at the same time identifies himself with the executor of the order...*L'effet c'est moi*: what happens here is...the governing class identifies itself with the success of the commonwealth. In all willing it is absolutely a question of commanding and obeying on the basis, as already said, of a social structure composed of many souls. (VI²,B, 19)

From the standpoint of the physician, this only serves to emphasize that the "right of altruism cannot be derived from physiology; nor can the right to help and to an equality of lots." (MXVIII,52) There is no equality from the standpoint of life; the strong exploit the energy of the weak who derive their "value" in terms of how well they *serve*. Again, from the standpoint of the physician,

'Exploitation' does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect and primitive society; it belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life. (VI²,B,259)

The social organism as a living thing follows "the will of life" which permeates every function of its body. Hence it seeks to overwhelm weaker organisms in order to appropriate and assimilate them because it is part of the concept of the living that it must grow-- that it must extend its power and consequently incorporate alien forces...one speaks of the right of the individual to *defend* himself; in the same sense one might speak of his right to attack...it is all the same whether one has in view an individual or a living body, an aspiring 'society'...a people might just as well designate as a right its need to conquer...the right to growth perhaps. A society that definitely and instinctively gives up war and conquest is in decline. (MXIX,728)

Thus far we have seen some of the most important physiological dynamics in Nietzsche's perception of the cultural organism. But what we have covered only part of the story. We must now fill out the foregoing concerns in order to see Nietzsche's idea of "spirit" as an essential physiological function within a culture. Toward this end, we will now look at the Greek culture and a phenomenon generally called "warfare" but referred to by our physician as, "appropriation," "assimilation," or "incorporation."

THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT

In, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche makes the following observation: "Almost everything we call 'higher culture' is based upon the spiritualization of *cruelty*, on its becoming more profound: this is my proposition." (VI²,B, 229) By now it will come as no surprise that cruelty is a "fatality of life" (MXIX,728) necessary to the organic process of assimilation or "growth." Our present task is to see the essential role of cruelty in the physiological function of "spirit" as it is revealed in the "high culture" of the ancient Greeks.

It is doubtless that Nietzsche recognized among the ancient Greeks the powerful drives necessary for any high culture. Due to their capacity to harness these drives, the Greek culture brought forth the "best turned out, most beautiful, most envied type of humanity to date." (III¹,BT: S,1)

But in their remotest ages, the ancient Hellenes were not, says Nietzsche, "the cheerful sensates...[who] floated in a self-indulgent fog, reverberating with heavy breathings and deep feelings, as the unscholarly...among us like to assume."⁷ On the contrary, they were "barbarians in every terrible sense of the word." (VI²,B,257)

In this vein, Nietzsche asks:

Why did the whole Greek world exult over the combat scenes of the *Iliad*?...what do we behold when, no longer protected by the hand of Homer, we stride back into the pre-Homeric world? Only night and terror and an imagination accustomed to the horrible.... A life ruled only by the children of Night: strife, lust, deceit, old age and death...in this brooding atmosphere, combat is salvation; the cruelty of victory is the pinnacle of life's jubilation.⁸

Nietzsche points out that if we approach this barbarous age "with the flabby concept of modern 'humanity,'"⁹ then we fail to understand it "in a sufficiently 'Greek manner.'"¹⁰

We speak here of an age when "men were unwilling to refrain from *making* suffer and saw in it an enchantment of the first order, a genuine seduction to life." (VI²,G:II, 7) But how is cruelty a "seduction to life" instead of something that makes life repulsive?

Nietzsche responds to this question by saying cruelty and "*making* suffer" constituted a great pleasure. Why? Because it provided the "highest gratification of the feeling of power." (V¹,D,18) In cruelty was the pleasure of feeling one's power; torture was a celebration of *victory* over what at one time may have posed a threat but is now vanquished. By means of cruelty one could experience the

pleasant feeling of power perhaps to the point of intoxication. (MXIX,800)

"Cruelty is one of the oldest festive joys of mankind," (V¹,D,18) and reveals the will to power integral to the process of assimilation in all organic life. "The will to power," says Nietzsche, "can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it." (MXIX,656) In this way, all living things are "an application of the original will to become *stranger*." (MXIX,702) When Nietzsche applies this physiological standard to man, he says, "every great danger challenges our curiosity about the degree of our strength and courage." (MXIX,949) Hence man seeks to overpower what threatens him to assimilate it to his domain and, if possible, exploit it to his own ends. In short, "what does not kill me makes me stronger." (VI³,7:II,8)

Nietzsche sees the foundation of Greek culture to be the ability of the strongest individuals to seek victory over what posed the greatest *threats* to themselves. This "need to conquer" (MXIX,728) is the process of assimilation according to the law of life and involves not only cruelty, but also a desire for and the willingness to suffer. In short, the early Hellenes *embraced* suffering and pain as the path to power and hence were in accord with "the will of life." (VI²,B,259) They had the sharp-eyed courage...that craves the frightful as the enemy, the worthy enemy, against whom one can test one's strength From whom one can learn what it means 'to be frightened.' (III¹,BT:S,1)

The ancient Hellenes sought out the most terrifying enemies and antagonists as the means to the realization of power. The more terrifying the power of the enemy, then the greater was the temptation to do battle. In this vein Nietzsche speaks of how these ancients possessed a "craving for the ugly" (III¹,BT:S,4) and "everything underlying existence that is frightful, evil, a riddle, destructive, fa-

tal." (III¹,BT:S,4) Because they had powerful drives at their command, Nietzsche will speak of "the severe will of the older Greeks" as a "pessimism of strength." (III¹,BT:S, 1) This was their capacity to look at life itself as the great enemy and thus deserving reverence as the best threat to their path to power. Through embracing suffering and cruelty one went into battle with all the most terrifying aspects of life. And through enduring all life offered as a threat to survival, one emerged victorious and more willing to seek out life's fear inspiring faces. *This* was how suffering and cruelty seduced the ancients to life.

If we ask "where and how the 'plant' man has so far grown to a height," (VI²,B,44) then "to this end the dangerousness of his situation must grow to the point of enormity...[and] serves the enhancement of the species 'man.'" (VI²,B,44) It is "the dangerousness of his situation," which enables man's most powerful and dangerous drives to emerge as his best weapons. And as we saw, "the continual fight against ever constant *unfavorable* conditions is...the cause that fixes and hardens a type." (VI²,B,262) Hence "the 'noble Greek' of the old stamp" (MXVIII,435) was severe, suspicious, ever wary, rarely trusting and always hoping Life, the great destroyer, would challenge him again. An austere ruthlessness in maintaining discipline over themselves and those they enslaved is Nietzsche's picture of the ancient, war-like Hellenes. The hard and fast rules of a warrior caste dominating a rigorously maintained *order of rank*, enabled this elite to endure and grow in power. Their motto was "What determines your rank is the quantum of power you are: the rest is cowardice." (MXIX,858)

Nietzsche indicates the difference between ourselves and these ancients in saying that today, when suffering is always brought forward as the principle argument *against* existence, as the worst question mark, one does well to recall the ages in which the opposite opinion prevailed. (VI²,G:II,7)

In those ages pain, suffering and cruelty were an affirmation of life and the measure of a man's capacity to endure and meet the exigencies of the most dangerous contests with life. Their love of battle indicated "the agonal instinct of the Hellenes." (VI³,7:III,8) This is the instinctive love of *contest* so fundamental to Nietzsche's perception of the Greeks even into "the age of Socrates, among men of fatigued instincts." (VI²,B,212)

The Greek love of contest betrays a physiological phenomenon central to Nietzsche's thought, namely, that of "overcoming." We have seen the prodigious health Nietzsche attributed to the Greeks¹² and hence their tendency to find the greatest threats to themselves irresistible as tests of strength. But to seek out the greatest threats to existence in order to realize power means to risk destruction. This is in keeping with the cosmological law of will to power which is only manifest in the battle against what gives resistance. From the standpoint of will to power, the possibility of wholesale *destruction* is essential to the *creation* of the strongest organisms. For Nietzsche, the desire for battle among the Greeks reveals an organic form of will to power striving for *victory* over a primary fact of life itself; namely, the extermination of its weakest forms. By entering into *the contest* with *unfavorable* conditions, the Greeks *affirmed* destruction as essential to the creation of an enhanced feeling of power.

In this way all organisms are the *experiment* of life as will to power. They strive to overcome potential destruction as the path to the creation of new forms of power. All creation seeks to overcome itself and surges toward the *victory* of a transformation of power. Hence, Life says to Zarathustra:

'Behold...I am that *which must overcome itself again and again*...where there is perishing and the falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself--for the sake of power
.... Whatever I create and however much I love it--soon I

have to oppose it and my love: thus will my will have it.'
(VI¹,Z:II,12)

For Nietzsche, the profound willingness to embrace suffering, cruelty and destruction in the contest with life is the physiological key to the creation of Greek culture. The risk of destruction is the path to creation and a "Yes" to life, for "believe me: the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is--to *live dangerously!*" (V²,GS,283)

SPIRIT

What Nietzsche means by "spirit" must be seen in light of how the foregoing descriptions of the ancient Hellenes *include* its physiological function. This function is guided by the law of life and thus "where the highest resistance is constantly overcome: five steps from tyranny, close to the danger of servitude." (VI³,T:X,38) In short, the greatest nations developed their "spiritual" capacities within "unfavorable conditions" and through maintaining a firm order of rank. Nietzsche says the nations which...*became* worth something, never became so under liberal institutions: it was *great danger* which made of them something deserving reverence, danger which first teaches us to know our resources, our virtues, our shield and spear, our *spirit*--which *compels* us to be strong. (VI³,T:X,38)

The question arises as to how danger and "unfavorable conditions" provide the "shield and spear" of "spirit?" And since the "spiritualization of cruelty" (VI²,B,229) is essential to all high culture, how did this occur among the ancient Hellenes? To answer these questions, we must first understand how Nietzsche sees "spirit" as a physiological function.

An important clue to what Nietzsche means by "spirit" lies in his saying the "basic will of the spirit" is that it "unceasingly strives for the apparent and super-

ficial." (VI²,B,229) Given the portrait we have just seen of the war-like and severe Hellenes, to think of them striving for "the apparent and superficial" seems inappropriate. Indeed, they strike us as very conservative and suspicious of what does not affirm the customs of their class, let alone what is new and superficial.

In regard to "spirit," Nietzsche says its "needs and capacities are...the same as those which physiologists posit for everything that lives, grows, and multiplies." (VI²,B,230) Consequently we must expand upon certain points made in our first chapter concerning the instincts.

We saw that each drive battles the others for supremacy. We also saw that in the healthiest individuals, one sovereign drive or perhaps a few of them, emerge as strongest to "assert their rights against each other." (V²,GS,333) In this way an order of rank is established "and there is a kind of justice and contract; for by virtue of justice and a contract all these instincts can maintain their existence." (V²,GS,333) This battle for supremacy is, as we have seen, the microcosm of what happens in the origin and maintenance of the larger social organism. In both cases, basic physiological laws reveal the will to power in the creation of a natural order of rank.

In chapter one we saw that each drive is utterly self-centered and interprets the world according to its *perspective*. The compulsion to assert its rights involves therefore, what we called the *interpretive perspective* of any drive to see the world strictly in terms of itself. Through its perspective each drive embellishes or "interprets" the world according to whatever constitutes an affirmation of itself. In short, the perspective of any instinct is *selective*. Whatever is foreign to its perspective will be ignored or embellished in a manner that will suit it. And the more intensely its perspective is denied, the more is a drive's capacity for the artificial stimulated.

This is what Nietzsche means by "spirit." It is precisely this embellishing of the world by the self-centered perspective of each drive. This "spiritualizing" process is typical of any process of assimilation in that the spirit's power to appropriate the foreign stands revealed in its inclination to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the manifold, and to overlook or repulse whatever is totally contradictory--just as it involuntarily emphasizes certain features and lines in what is foreign, in every piece of the 'external world'...falsifying the whole to suit itself. Its intent in all this is...growth, in a word--or, more precisely, the *feeling* of growth, the feeling of increased power. (VI²,B,230)

This is what Nietzsche means in saying that the basic will of the "spirit" strives "for the apparent and superficial." (VI²,B,229)

These foregoing considerations of "spirit" provide the fundamental physiological clue to why Nietzsche says we must "recognize untruth as a condition of life." (VI²,B,4) This idea of falsehood, deception and error as conditions of life pervades Nietzsche's philosophy. We will look at this as we proceed in this chapter, but, as we said, strictly in terms of our overall project.

If we are to understand "spirit" in terms of the necessity of deception for life, then we must see that without its physiological function "there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances." (VI²,B,34) The questions that arise now are; what is the physiological role of the "spirit?" How is natural deception a necessary feature of "spirit" and the organic realm? And how is the striving for the superficial and artificial delineated from the clinical standpoint of the physician? In answer to these questions, Nietzsche would quickly point out that "the first instinct of spirituality, [is] *the spirit's instinct for self-preservation.*" (VI²,T: IX,2)

Self-preservation is the primary physiological law Nietzsche finds in "spirituality." Hence the desire to en-

dure the cruelty and pain characteristic of the strong, noble type must involve the function and development of "spirituality." What does this necessary capacity to falsify the world actually "preserve" man from? It preserves him from too lucid a perception of just how terrifying his situation really is. Through "spirit" man is shielded from the most horrifying faces of existence since "those who would know it completely would perish." (VI²,B,39) Ultimately, it is a question "to what degree one would require it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified." (VI²,B,39)

These observations lead us to consider "spirit" in relation to the instinct of preservation as we talked about it in chapter one. Here we shall make some provisional remarks which will be more fully appreciated as we proceed. We first took note of the instinct of preservation when we looked at its role in sickness. We saw that in conditions of weakness and exhaustion the instincts of decadence rally around that of preservation. The alliance of these reactionary drives provides for the ascendancy of that of preservation which ultimately devitalizes the most powerful drives in the organism. But if "spirituality" is a revelation of the instinct of preservation, then in the case of sickness a falsification of the world will take place which is symptomatic of sickness.¹² On the other hand, the instinct of preservation in healthy types will accordingly reveal a healthy "spirituality." That is to say, the "spirit" always reveals what if any order of rank exists among the drives. Among the healthy types whose drives reveal an order of rank, the instinct of preservation is exploited to serve and enhance the strength of the organism as a whole. Here the instinct of preservation is kept at a *distance* and in its proper place.

In chapter one we saw that "every living thing does what it can not to preserve itself but to become *more*."

(MXIX,688) "Life itself," says Nietzsche, "is *will to power*; self-preservation is one of the indirect and frequent results." (VI²,B,13) In the healthy organism the instinct of preservation is not the dominating drive. Nevertheless, it must "have its say" or influence the most powerful drives in such a way that the organism survives--which is after all, *its perspective*. But the potency of this influence depends on where it stands in the overall order of rank of the drives of the individual. In certain cases, for example, the noble type we looked at earlier, this drive for preservation can be said to have little direct influence. It is a question of degree depending on the overall physiological makeup of the individual organism. The instinct of preservation is an important drive, and its influence in individuals determines where they will stand in the social order of rank. That is, their capacity to keep the instinct of preservation in its proper place and not let it dominate them, will serve as the measure of their bravery and courage. Hence the organic process of "spiritualizing" or falsifying the world in these individuals, enables them to survive and grow in power.

Our next two chapters we will show how the ascendancy of the instinct of preservation reveals a "spiritualizing" process destructive to the organism. For the time being, we only wish to point out that "spirituality," is a manifestation of the instinct of preservation. In healthy organisms it is essential for growth and the realization of *power* and therefore self-preservation remains a consistently *derivative* phenomenon.

Before developing the above observations on "spirit," we should briefly expand upon the role of consciousness. As we have seen, for Nietzsche the animal functions are, as a matter of principle, a million times more important than all our...heights of consciousness: the latter are a surplus, except when they have to serve as tools of those animal functions. (MXIX,674)

Consciousness "is nothing but a *certain behaviour of the instincts toward one another*" (V²,GS,333) reflecting the cumulative perspective of an overall order of rank among the drives. Thus "by far the greatest portion of our life actually takes place without this mirror image." (V²,GS,354) In this sense Nietzsche says consciousness "is in the main *superfluous.*" (V²,GS,354)

In so far as each drive falsifies the world to suit an affirmation of itself, we see the affect of the instinct of preservation. Consciousness passively mirrors the cumulative perspective which emerges out of the battle of each drive striving to assert itself. Ultimately it is "only the last scenes of reconciliation and the final accounting at the end of this long process [that] rise to our consciousness." (V²,GS,333) In short, consciousness reflects a falsification of the world necessary for the preservation and growth of the organism. For this reason Nietzsche claims that "by far the greatest part of our spirit's activity remains unconscious and unfelt." (V²,GS,333)

These observations on the instinct of preservation and consciousness in relation to "spirit" are critical to the remainder of this chapter. We have only alluded to sick forms of "spirituality," and reserve them for consideration in the chapters to come. Thus far we have seen "spirit" as a falsification of the world necessary to man. This "falsification" is the influence of the instinct of preservation on the self-centered perspectives of the drives. We further saw that the order of rank of the drives determines the overall perspective of the organism, and therefore, the falsification of the world necessary for its growth. We also found that this necessary "likely story" is passively reflected by consciousness and in this way consciousness "serves...animal functions." (MXIX,674) Finally, we saw that "spirit" preserves man from too lucid a perception of the dangers and terrors that surround him. To understand this decisive func-

tion of "spirit," we return now to our discussion of Nietzsche's views on the "most envied type of humanity to date." (III¹,BT:S,1)

THE GREEK SPIRIT

What have we seen of the Greeks so far? First, Nietzsche says they were endowed with profoundly powerful drives. Second, with these drives, the strongest cultivate a warrior caste within conditions that are extremely unfavorable to them. Finally, integral to the formation of this class is a desire for battle with all of its cruelty and pain as the path to power.

In speaking of culture as a social organism, we saw that *resistance* to life was necessary to the growth of all organisms and how the process of assimilation hinges on this necessity. We then looked at Nietzsche's perception of the ancient Hellenes to demonstrate these physiological principles in a historical context. Our initial look at these ancients filled out the significance of these principles in terms of the necessity of suffering and cruelty. But since the role of "spirit" is also included in this story, then our portrait of the ancients is still too one-sided. We must now come to terms with how "the spiritualization of *cruelty*" (VI²,B,239) is essential to the physiology of the ancient Greek culture.

For the ancient Hellenes, pain and suffering were not barriers to growth, on the contrary these were essential to the contest with life. The agonal instinct¹³ was only stimulated by the challenge and threat of suffering. Suffering is the means to power, for by facing it there is the promise of victory. In regard to this, Nietzsche speaks of the

discipline of suffering, of *great suffering*--do you not know that only *this* discipline has created all the enhancements of man so far? That tension of the soul in unhappiness which

cultivates its strength...its inventiveness and courage in enduring, persevering, interpreting, and exploiting suffering, and whatever has been granted to it of profundity, secret, mask, spirit, cunning, greatness--was it not granted to it through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering? (VI²,B,225)

If the ancients did not regard pain and suffering as arguments against life, then what does Nietzsche consider the most profound adversary to the creation of the Greek culture? The answer to this question is a kind of suffering more terrible than physical pain, severe self-discipline or keeping the enslaved in line. This greatest suffering is the suspicion that a life of battle and victory with all of its terrors is *meaningless*. It is the paralyzing idea that life itself is nothing but an absurd, crude joke. If a fascination with this suspicion develops, the organism of culture risks being thoroughly poisoned, and succumbs to sickness and longing for death. The idea that life is, at bottom, "in vain" (VI²,G:III,28) engenders, says Nietzsche, a *nausea* at existence which momentarily seized the ancient Greek culture.

It seems odd that Nietzsche will say that such a healthy organism as the Greek culture was susceptible to revulsion and nausea at life. In chapter one we looked at sickness and health in an abstract manner; that is, as mutually exclusive phenomena. Since the *threat* of illness was so potent in the healthy culture of the ancient Greeks, we must look at how our physician sees their necessary *interdependence* within organic life.

The interdependence between sickness and health is best understood in terms of how the will to power is only revealed in the face of resistance to the organism. What if not sickness stands as a potent resistance to life? Sickness can destroy the organism or actually serve to make it stronger. In this sense, "what does not kill me makes me stronger" (VI³,7:II,8) is a dictum which must be taken literally.

For Nietzsche, sickness is necessary to any organism whether that of the individual or a culture. Here the overall strength it possesses is tested. Life as will to power offers us these tests in multiple ways and sickness is an important one. Such tests of strength may be an education based on stern discipline, and, if we lack such training, then sometimes

life is so merciful as to offer this hard schooling once more later: sickness for years perhaps, that demands the most extreme strength of will and self-sufficiency...that compels us to a form of activity that restores energy to the slack fibers and toughness to the will to live. (MXIX,912)

Sickness is a constant *threat* which the organism must always keep in check. In this way sickness is a built-in *resistance* to an organism's strength. By means of this resistance, the organism's strength is determined and kept at a peak. By these means life as will to power provides yet another unfavorable condition to the realization of itself as power. In fact Nietzsche will say those who possess the greatest health are liable to suffer from the most powerful illnesses. In such a situation there is the following consolation; "This parasite is feeding and growing from your great strength; if that strength were less, you would have less to suffer." (IV²,HH:I,615)

From the standpoint of the physician, "sickness is instructive, we have no doubt of that, even more instructive than health" (VI²,G:III,9) since it reveals the level of strength of the organism as a whole. Powerful sickness brings terrible suffering, but each organism reveals where it stands in an order of rank depending on how, or if, it can withstand sickness. What may destroy one serves as a stimulus to another.

In this way, life in its organic form as man reveals, as we saw in chapter one, a constant *experiment*; organisms need the threat of illness in order to realize their highest potential of power, and therefore genuine health.

For Nietzsche, life requires sickness as a means to creating a multiplicity of transmutations in the growth of power within any particular organism. Sickness feeds off and saps the strength of the organism thus *forcing* it to develop new resources of strength. In developing these new sources, it becomes susceptible to *other* forms of sickness which need just *this* newly attained strength in order to flourish.

We normally call 'healthy' an organism that never suffers illness. But from the standpoint of our physician, these organisms probably stand on a lower order of rank according to the law of life since they have not been tested by illness. With illness as a necessary unfavorable condition, the strongest 'plants' are cultivated. If the organism has not *developed* under the threat of illness and only manages to *preserve* itself, then one "has watched life badly if one has not also seen the hand that considerately-- kills." (VI²,B,69) In short, destruction and cruelty are essential to the growth of all living things. If they do not develop in power they will be weeded out.

We see then, that health is conditional upon sickness and *vice versa*. In light of this, Nietzsche says "everything unconditional belongs to pathology." (VI²,B,154) Consequently there are innumerable healths of the body; and the more we allow the unique and the incomparable to raise its head again, and the more we abjure the dogma of the 'equality of men,' the more must the concept of a *normal* health, along with a normal diet and the normal course of an illness, be abandoned by medical men. (V²,GS,120)

Hence an interplay between health and sickness is the "normal" phenomenon, but this interplay is not the same for every individual. It boils down to questions of strength manifest at various levels of health and sickness.

Every level of health requires just its particular form of sickness as its unique adversary threatening the well being of the organism as a whole. In this way, an organism develops its powers of resistance and endurance while

exploiting new avenues of strength. Through this means, the organism grows stronger in proportion and in harmony with its level of strength. Here life provides the unfavorable conditions which threaten to destroy the organism. It is tested with the threat of destruction, and thereby forced to *overcome* previous levels of sickness and health or be "considerately killed." In so far as levels of sickness and health are the standards of power in an order of rank, then life requires both. Consequently;

Health and sickness are not essentially different, as the ancient practitioners and some practitioners even today suppose.... In fact, there are only differences in degree between these two kinds of existence: the exaggeration, the disproportion, the nonharmony of the normal phenomena constitute the pathological state. (MXIX,47)

In chapter one we talked about sickness and health in an abstract manner, that is in their separateness. We see now that *in praxis* they are interdependent. We now continue our examination of Nietzsche's view of ancient Greek culture. In so doing, we will expand upon the dynamics of exhaustion and decadence we saw in chapter one in terms of the interdependence of sickness and health. These expansions are extremely important in light of our concerns with the organic function of "spirit," and those of the chapters to come.

We have seen "spirit" as a necessary falsification of the world which is essentially connected to the instinct of preservation. It was also said that the most terrible suffering the ancient Greeks had to endure was the suspicion that a life of suffering, combat and victory is at bottom, meaningless and absurd. This suspicion causes a momentary nausea throughout the body of the culture. But if this nausea could emerge, the conditions for its emergence must have already been in place.

In chapter one we saw that exhaustion and a rallying of the weakest instincts are the conditions for sickness. For Nietzsche, it is natural that upon release of a certain amount of power by an organism, exhaustion quickly

follows. (MXIX,864) Here the *threat* of sickness keeps pace with the strength of the organism, but the "standard remains the efflorescence of the body...[of] how much of the sickly it can take and overcome--how much it can make healthy."

(MXIX,1013) Self-discipline is the means to establish and accumulate reservoirs of strength. If it is not maintained, a great release of strength, i.e., in war or in celebration of victory, can bring on exhaustion. And exhaustion is the condition for decadence and sickness in the social organism. This condition enables the instincts of decadence to rally around that of preservation, and the devitalizing process begins.

In the body of the ancient Greek culture, great strength was expended in the formation and maintenance of a social order of rank. The suspicion that existence is absurd betrays a momentary exhaustion quickly exploited by the instincts of decadence. But in so far as the nausea at life rears up so quickly, this powerful *threat*, proportionate as it was to the health of the organism, betrays precisely its great health.

The ancient Greek culture however, *overcame* this dangerous physiological situation and *exploited* the momentary threat of illness that shuddered through it. For this reason Nietzsche will see it as having been at the highest rank of health so far in human history. To understand this victory, we must see that in the midst of a wave of exhaustion, the order of rank among forces in the social organism did not collapse into anarchy. Indeed, the culture actually exploited the threat of meaninglessness in a way that affirmed existence and life even more than hitherto.

How did the Greek culture manage to "hold the line" as it were and put down the rebellion of the dangerous instincts of decadence? The answer to this question is "*spirit*"; that necessary capacity to falsify the world in terms of the most powerful instincts of life. For Nietzsche,

this attests to the powerful health of the Greeks; even when exhausted they still had enough reserved strength to falsify and embellish the world to *suit themselves*.

This process of "spiritualizing" went throughout the history of the ancient Greek culture. Which is to say that whenever they were about to collapse into an irretrievable negation of life, their "spirit" always came through for them. Hence in regard to the Greeks, Nietzsche says: "You will guess where the big question concerning the value of existence has thus been raised." (III¹,BT:S,1) Through the organic function of "spirit," the ancient Greeks maintained their posture of strength and were always "ready with yet another answer to the question, 'What is a life of struggle and victory for?' and gave that answer through the whole breadth of Greek history."¹⁴

With their vitality these ancients looked at the most hideous monster in the abyss of becoming, that of nausea at existence, and conquered it. This was accomplished through "spiritualizing" what is most overwhelming and paralyzing into something to be *loved* as a thing of beauty. In short, "spirit" as the process of falsification, preserved the ancient Hellenes through an *artistic* perception of this world and all life. Here was the path to *victory* over horror at existence, and life as will to power, realized one of its most sublime manifestations in its form as man.

In Nietzsche's earliest published work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, the *organic* phenomenon of art is articulated in terms of what destroyed Greek art: Socrates. Here Nietzsche speaks of the origin of tragedy in terms which echo our observations on the organic function of "spirit." Though he does not speak of Greek tragedy as the "spirituality" described above, the role of the instincts is fundamental to its creation since "in all productive men it is instinct that is the creative-affirmative force." (III¹,BT,13) Socrates, the "monstrosity *per defectum*," (III¹,BT,13) re-

veals the "instinct-disintegrating influence" (III¹,BT,13) which destroyed tragedy as an art form. It is only later that "spirit" as we have described it is taken up in Nietzsche's philosophy.

Fourteen years later, when Nietzsche wrote his, "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," as a preface to, *The Birth of Tragedy*, the standpoint of the cultural physician is clear. He now identifies the age of Socrates and the destruction of Greek art with "symptoms of a decline of strength, of impending old age, and of physiological weariness." (III¹,BT:SC,4) In light of these observations, we maintain that "the birth of tragedy" was for Nietzsche an essentially physiological phenomenon.

✓ Through tragedy the ancient Hellenes embraced the terrible truth that existence requires suffering, cruelty and destruction since this is the law of all life as becoming. But this glance into the abyss did not reduce them to repulsion and negation toward life. Thus Nietzsche says in regard to, *The Birth of Tragedy*,

Hellenism and Pessimism' would have been a less ambiguous title--suggesting the first instruction about how the Greeks got over their pessimism, how they *overcame* it. Precisely their tragedies prove that the Greeks were not pessimists. (VI²,E:BT,1)

The Hellene stared into the vortex of destruction that permeates all becoming and saw "everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence." (III¹,BT,7) But his great strength is revealed for Nietzsche, by "spiritualizing" his horror and suffering by turning it into art. As Nietzsche says:

Here, when the danger to his will is greatest, *art* approaches as a saving sorceress, expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn those nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live: these are the *sublime* as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the *comic* as the artistic discharge of the nausea of absurdity. (III¹,BT,7)

This is the "spiritualizing" process that masked the ancient Greek's experience of the horror and absurdity of existence, and preserved them from decadence. Here the greatest threat to the Greek culture was made superficial and apparent. They "spiritualized" their perception of existence as horrible and absurd and thus found a means to profound self-glorification as tragic figures, *fated* to follow the path of all life. Through tragedy these ancients *affirmed* their own destruction and thereby realized their unity with all living things. The horror at existence was given an outlet and expressed in such a way that they could see themselves as sublime in this very perception of life. In short, they saw their beauty revealed within inevitable destruction.

The organic function of "spirit" as seen in the formation of Greek art, is the germ of Nietzsche's idea of *Amor fati*. This is best expressed in, *The Gay Science*, where he says:

I...shall say what it is that I wish from myself today--what thought shall be for me the reason...and sweetness of my life henceforth. I want to...see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly.... *Looking away* shall be my only negation. And all in all...some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer. (V²,GS,276)

"Spirit" is a kind of "looking away," a negation of what seems too necessary, too ugly. But a negation which enables a healthy organism to flourish through thinning down the ugly for assimilation and thus as a means to strength. Hence Nietzsche will say:

✓ As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us...art furnishes us with eyes and hands and above all the good conscience to be *able* to turn ourselves into such a phenomenon. (V²,GS,107)

Philosophy is also a "spiritual" phenomenon. Thus we can not *reduce* the manifestations of "spirit" to those of art. We will look at philosophy as "the most spiritual will

to power" (VI²,B,9) in our next chapter. Here we only want to stress that art is one of the ways in which "spirit" enables man to endure and grow in power. For Nietzsche, the ancient Hellenes provide the best example of love of fate and not through art but, as we shall see, through philosophy as well.

Earlier we emphasized that cruelty is necessary to all growth and thus to the formation of an order of rank among the forces in the social organism. We also saw that the process of a "spiritualization" of cruelty is essential to the creation of culture, in that "everything we call 'higher culture' is based on the spiritualization of cruelty, on its becoming more profound." (VI²,B,229) This "spiritualizing" process operated throughout the development of Greek culture as the means to seeing life's inherent cruelty and destruction as a thing of beauty. For Nietzsche, this "spiritualization of cruelty" functioned throughout the transition from barbarism to the formation of an aristocracy.

The severity of the ancient warrior type toward themselves and the enslaved reveals no easy-going optimism as to what life required. Life was neither gentle nor kind, it was the destroyer that "considerately--kills" (VI²,B,69) the weak, the lame and the sick. Hence the old nobility, like their ancestors, affirmed life by means of the sword and an unconscious "spiritualizing" process that kept pace according to a proper function of the instinct of preservation. They looked at the most terrifying faces of life and *identified* their own beauty with the terror life inspired. Here was a terrible beauty determined by powerful drives which falsified life just to the extent that the nobility adorned *themselves* with the terror-inspiring characteristics of life itself. The more they saw themselves as fearless, destructive and frightening, the more beautiful and awe-inspiring they saw themselves to be.

Their power of "spiritualization" reflected powerful drives and the *perspective* of the accumulated strength of these drives. In this way the values of the strongest, their conviction that they were born to *rule*, was expressed in images of strength, courage and heroic combat. Through a multiplicity of artistic expressions of death and destruction in the midst of battle, the "virtues" of the nobility were reflected throughout the body of the social organism. Hence the "members" of this body were preserved in an order of rank whereby the organism flourished through affirming the cruelty and destruction of life. This affirmation was not one of sullen resignation, but one of enthusiasm for the great beauty of life's most terrible faces.

Thus, simple brutality and the search for the most dangerous enemies is, as we noted earlier, just one side of the story. The "spiritualization" of cruelty is essential to the creation of any high culture since it provides the falsifications and deceptions necessary to coping with life's cruel faces. This is why "the whole Greek world exult[ed] over the combat scenes of the *Iliad*"¹⁵ and why Nietzsche refers to Homer's "artistic deception"¹⁶ in the latter's descriptions of the horrors of battle. It is the physiological function of "spirit" that leads the Greek sculptor to give form again and again to war and combat in innumerable repetitions: distended human bodies, their sinews tense with hatred or with the arrogance of triumph; writhing bodies, wounded, dying bodies, expiring.¹⁷

The "spiritualization" of cruelty is revealed in the games of tests of strength famous among the Greeks, as well as the creations of the tragic and comic poets. This essential organic function seduced the Greeks, again and again, to life. In this way life as will to power cultivates the best specimens and it is through this "spiritualization" that

the profound Hellene, uniquely susceptible to the deepest suffering, comforts himself, having looked boldly right into the terrible destructiveness of so-called world history as

well as the cruelty of nature, and being in danger of a longing for a Buddhistic negation of the will...Art saves him, and through art--life. (III¹,87,7)^{1e}

Here we are tempted to look at how Nietzsche saw the roles of Dionysus and Apollo in the creation of art. The first represents the Greek "will to the terrible, multifarious, uncertain, frightful," (MXIX,1050) and the latter, a will "to all that simplifies, distinguishes, makes strong, clear, unambiguous." (MXIX,1050) However, a proper examination of "why precisely Greek Apollonianism had to grow out of a Dionysian subsoil," (MXIX,1050) would take us too far afield. For now we can only say that the organic nature of art points to the real significance of a chapter Nietzsche planned in his never written book, *The Will to Power*, entitled, "Toward a Physiology of Art." (VI³,C,7) A detailed look at, *The Case of Wagner*, reveals the character of such a physiology in so far as this "case" discloses art as "an expression of physiological degeneration." (VI³,C,7) Unfortunately, we will have to reserve this arena of Nietzsche's philosophy for future study.

The "spiritualization" of cruelty whereby the Greeks affirmed life, shows Nietzsche an interesting characteristic of the organism man. He saw that the selective falsification and necessary deceptions inherent to the function of "spirit" are interpretations man imposes on the world and himself. These interpretations enable him to preserve himself, grow in power and thereby feel more at home in the world. ✓

We also said that the function of "spirit" is manifest not only in art but in philosophy as well. Indeed, "spirit," guided as it is by the instinct of preservation, is the seat of multiple deceptions that enable us to preserve ourselves and grow in power. Through our interpretations of the world and ourselves we see the play of the "spirit" in its selection of whatever affirms man's most powerful drives. In short, through "spirit" we "impose upon

chaos as much regularity and form as our practical needs require." (MXIX,595) This enables man to feel he is master and commands the world as his own.

Since "spirit" reflects the self-centered perspectives of the dominating drives, self-centered interpretations of the world emerge. Whatever interpretations enable man to live and grow become his "truths." Predictably, "we find here...the *hyperbolic naiveté* of man: positing himself as the meaning and measure of the value of things." (MXVIII, 12) Thus Nietzsche will speak of error and deception as the necessary conditions of life. (VI²,B,4) Through the natural deception of "spirit," man carves out a sense of stability within the wilderness of becoming "through perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life, i.e., in the will to power, for the growth of power." (MXIX,616) We flourish and grow in accordance with the posture of various errors in relation to one another. Perhaps one is older, more profound than another, even ineradicable, in so far as an organic entity of our species could not live without it. (MXIX,535)

In light of the above, our judgments of value, truth, beauty, etc., indicate that the "organic process constantly presupposes interpretations." (MXIX,643) "Spirit" is the seat of these interpretations which, as natural deceptions, are essential to life. Thus interpretation is organic by virtue of which dominant, shaping forces continually extend the bounds of their power and continually simplify within these bounds: the imperative grows. 'Spirit' is only a means and a tool in the service of higher life, of the enhancement of life. (MXIX,644)

Ultimately, "[t]he will to power interprets." (MXIX,643)

These remarks will take on great significance in our next chapter where we will see philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power." (VI²,B,9) For now it is important to emphasize that in light of how "spirit" is an organic function of life, then the

world with which we are concerned is false, i.e., is not a fact but a fable...on the basis of a meager sum of observa-

tions; it is 'in flux,' as something in a state of becoming, as a falsehood always changing but never getting near to truth: for--there is no 'truth.' (MXIX,616)

"Spirit" is the means whereby man imposes form and structure on chaos thus providing the essential "fable" of stability.

For Nietzsche all high culture requires powerful drives and, by the same token, a powerful capacity for deception. Thus deception serves as the foundation for all man's 'truths.' Thus 'truth' presupposes this necessary deception which preserves us from the unbearable vision of 'the world' as chaos. Ultimately "spirit" seeks to "impose upon becoming the character of being--that is the supreme will to power." (MXIX,617) This supremacy lies in the fact that life as becoming is the greatest *resistance* to man as one of its organic forms. Culture is the *overcoming* of life as such and a growing in power within the storm of chaos. "Spirit" *assimilates* the resistance of becoming through interpretation. This interpretation is the *fable* of "being" imposed on chaos in order "to preserve a world of that which is, which abides" (MXIX,617) and "duration is a first-rate value on earth." (V²,GS,356)

Since Nietzsche sees the will to power as "the *primordial fact* of all history," (VI²,B,259) then the Greek culture, as the healthiest ever seen on earth, possessed a "spirit" enabling it to bloom as it did. Their "spiritual" capacity not only preserved them, but also opened up wider interpretations for the growth of *life*. This is no accident, rather, we "stand before a problem of economics." (MXIX,864) Earlier we saw that discipline provides a kind of capital of energy that is stored up, accumulated and passed on to succeeding generations. The same may be said for the larger social organism.

Generations of a firmly maintained order of rank enable the culture as a whole to store up vast reserves of accumulated energy and from "the pressure of plenitude, from the tension of forces that continually increase...there

arises a condition like that preceding a storm." (MXIX,1022) Here this strength has "been compressed and dammed to the point of torment" (MXIX,1022) until "the accumulated forces are shown a way a whither, so they explode into lightning flashes and deeds." (MXIX,1022)

Nietzsche sees something extraordinarily unique about the Greeks since they realized a culture in the genuine sense of the word. Their great accumulated strength exploded into a "splendid fire-works of the spirit" (VI²,B, 257) bringing forth a multiplicity of "spiritual" types.

THE HARVEST

The function of "spirit" enabled the Greeks to feel they were the masters of the world. It provided that deception which bestows the conviction of the right to rule the earth and that

commanding...which...wants to be master in...its own house and wants to feel that it is master; it has the will from multiplicity to simplicity, a will that ties up, tames, and is domineering and truly masterful. (VI²,B,230)

With the stored-up strength of generations possessed by the Greek culture, there was a feeling of vitality overall and the realization of the

affirmative affects: pride, joy, health, love of the sexes, enmity and war...the discipline of high spirituality, will to power, gratitude toward earth and life--the whole force of *transfiguring* virtues, everything that declares good and affirms in word and deed. (MXIX,1033)

As we saw in chapter one, the affects are a sensation of power or its loss which reverberate throughout the body and are derived "from the one will to power." (MXIX,786) The affirmative affects above are now felt throughout the social body and betray a genuine sense of confidence which again and again says yes to life. Here even the darkest faces of life are revered and seen as good and majestic. This is the bloom of a people in its greatest health; generations of

stored-up strength can no longer be contained and it explodes into a celebration of itself and all life.

Integral to this celebration is the disclosure of what, for Nietzsche, is an essential characteristic of life as will to power--experiment. He says that only when a culture has an excess of powers at its disposal can it also constitute a hothouse for the luxury cultivation of the exception, the experiment, of danger, of the nuance:-- this is the tendency of every aristocratic culture. (MXIX, 933)

This experimenting reveals a certitude of strength and, as it were, a willingness to play with fire. The organism always seeks resistance but now in terms of experiment and fascination with what threatens and contradicts it. It wants to cultivate and become familiar with what is foreign and stands as an exception and denial of its "truths." But this appreciation for exceptions and interest in other manifestations of "spirit," i.e., interpretations of the world other than its own, serves to stimulate its will to power. That is, the organism wants to assimilate these contradictions and exceptions and unify them within itself.

This is the sign of the healthiest and most "spiritual" cultures and individuals. Whatever opposes them is irresistible and, in the realm of "spirit," alternate interpretations of the world stimulate the desire to incorporate them. Here the organism's "spiritual" power is challenged and it seeks to absorb a multiplicity of contradictions within its interpretation of the world. It will take what it needs from opposing interpretations in order to affirm itself. Thus contradictory and foreign manifestations of "spirit" are cultivated and experimented with so that the selective process of falsification can proceed.

In absorbing these contradictions, the "spiritual" strength of the organism is demonstrated by exploiting them as a means to self-affirmation. Nietzsche describes the exploitative power of "spirit" as a "giving style"

to one's character--a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and...fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weakness delights the eye.... Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and exploited for distant views; it is meant to beckon toward the far and immeasurable. In the end...it becomes evident [that] a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste! (V²,GS,290)

A race of high culture possesses the "spiritual" ability to select everything in terms of itself since we must understand "culture in the sense of a unity of style which characterizes all its life."¹⁹ Thus it makes little difference whether one speaks of an individual or a people because a "man makes the best discoveries about culture within himself" (IV²,HH:I,276) since "a cultural edifice in the single individual will have the greatest similarity to the cultural architecture of whole eras." (IV²,HH:I,276)

Nietzsche, saw the Greek culture as "the highest peak of the spirit" so far and thus "the highest world-affirmation and transfiguration of existence that has yet been attained on earth." (MXIX,1051) Hence, the Greeks were a kind of model for Nietzsche's idea of a master race, that is,

a race with its own sphere of life, with an excess of strength for beauty, bravery, culture, manners to the highest peak of the spirit; an affirming race that may grant itself every great luxury...beyond good and evil; a hothouse for strange and choice plants. (MXIX,898)

What reveals the finest example of a delight in experiment within the Greek culture? Clearly, it would be the *sanction* to cultivate what, in earlier times, would have posed too great a threat, but now is allowed to grow. Such a "strange and choice plant" is the philosopher.

Why is the philosopher a threat to culture in its earlier stages? Because precisely this independent and cri-

tical species attacks the traditions and authority inherent to the order of rank. But, confident in its ability to withstand this threat, the culture exploits philosophy as a source of alternative interpretations of the world and hence new possibilities for the realization of power. The question immediately arises however as to why this healthy and strong organism should require the philosopher as a pioneer for new possibilities of growth. Why should it need "new avenues to growth" when it is doing quite well? And why is the philosopher necessary to every high culture? For Nietzsche, the philosopher's necessity is rooted in how his "spirit" provides the possibility for growth beyond the *destruction* of the culture. His vision carries the seeds for the possibility of life into the future because a "society is not free to remain young." (MXVIII,40)

Earlier we saw that sickness is essential to health and serves as an important resistance to the organism because it is a question of "how much of the sickly it can take and overcome--how much it can make healthy." (MXIX, 1013) We also found that sickness requires decadence as a condition. Decadence is when the weakest drives are constantly conspiring to undermine the order of rank among the drives. In this way the possibility of degeneration always remains with the organism. This means the instincts of decadence gain in strength as the strength of the organism as a whole is enhanced. This creates the necessary foundation for illness appropriate to the health of the organism as a resistance that must be overcome. In short, the instincts of decadence play a parasitical role and gain from the strength of the organism. Nietzsche will therefore point out that decay, elimination need not be condemned: they are necessary consequences of life, of the growth of life. The phenomenon of decadence is as necessary as any increase and advance of life: one is in no position to abolish it. Reason demands on the contrary that we do justice to it.... A society is not free to remain young...even at the height of its strength it has to form refuse and waste materials. The more energeti-

cally it advances, the richer it will be in...deformities, the closer to decline. (M.XVIII,40)

Thus a culture is subject to the fate of all living things, in the very creation of itself it is simultaneously advancing toward its destruction. No matter how it "spiritualizes" and spins the fables necessary to its growth, the cosmic law of becoming will not be denied. Every organism because it is *living* "seeks to discharge its strength." (VI²,8,13)

The Greek culture had accumulated vast resources of strength which, as it grew older, could no longer be contained. Upon the discharge of this power reserve, exhaustion emerged and was manifest in the breakdown of the order of rank. It could not, as it had in former times, keep the instincts of decadence in check and a state of corruption came forth.

This is quite natural; through its development an order of rank was maintained and a rigorous discipline. This provided that reservoir of strength which could no longer be contained and quite naturally was released. But upon this discharge of strength, which constitutes the bloom of the culture, the signs of advancing age are also more noticeable. There are more aberrations around "[l]unatics [and] criminals...are increasing: sign of a growing culture rushing on precipitately--i.e., the refuse, the waste, gain importance--the decline keeps pace." (MXIX,864) The discharge of strength is exploited by all the forces in the organism.

Those rich in strength squander the resources of the organism in lavish experiments, cultivating hybrids of all kinds. The "old ways" are no longer interesting and the lowest forces in the cultural organism take advantage of this. These are the high points of culture, but in squandering its strength the old capacity to maintain its rigorous

order of rank is weakened. And with this lapse in discipline we find the beginning of the end.

In, *The Gay Science*, we find a description of such an age. It is quoted here at length since it gives a detailed account of Nietzsche's perception of cultural "corruption." It further shows "corruption" to be essential to culture as will to power since decay reveals the purpose of culture; the creation of great human beings. Nietzsche says: a society in which corruption spreads is accused of exhaustion; and it is obvious that the...pleasure[s] in war diminish, while the comforts of life are...desired just as ardently as warlike games...were formerly. But what is generally overlooked is that the national energy...that became gloriously visible in war...have now been transmuted into ...private passions and...become less visible. Indeed in times of 'corruption' the power and force of the national energies...expended are probably greater than ever and the individual squanders them as lavishly as he could not have formerly when he was simply not rich enough. Thus it is...in times of 'exhaustion' that tragedy runs through houses and streets...great love and hatred are born, and...the flame of knowledge flares up to the sky...cruelty now becomes more refined...its older forms now offend the new taste...it is only now that *malice* and the delight in *malice* are born... when 'morals decay' those men emerge whom one calls tyrants: they are the precursors and...harbingers of *individuals*. Only a little while later this fruit hangs...from the tree of a people--and the tree existed only for the sake of these fruits.... I mean the individuals, for they carry the seeds of the future and are the authors of the spiritual colonization and origin of new states and communities. Corruption is merely a nasty word for the autumn of a people. (V²,GS,23)

The times of corruption are a state of anarchy within individuals and cultures. Here stored-up strength is squandered, the old order starts to come apart. Drives, long suppressed, now make their bid for power; jealousy, envy, and vendettas are the order of the day. In such situations, unless some other order of rank is quickly established, the energy of the organism will be lost on petty squabbles and in-fighting. Just as one dominating drive, or a handful of them must emerge to establish an order of rank in the organism, so it is with a culture. Some power must consolidate

the others in order to regain stability and put an end to anarchy.

But in times of corruption, the organism is falling apart. It will attempt to regain stability, but no force seems capable of bringing the others to heel. With the great discharge of strength which constitutes the bloom of the culture, it is also depleting its strength and will not regain it again. In short, its prime is over and disintegration is on the horizon. It has gone through its cycle of growth, but in expending its strength, the culture also brings forth its finest fruit, those who "carry the seeds of the future and are the authors of the spiritual colonization and origin of new states and communities." (V²,GS,23)

Nietzsche sees the philosophers as "spiritual" colonizers who provide another interpretation, another possibility for life in the soil of decay. The great waste of strength which enables a few great "spiritual" types to grow "from the tree of a people" (V²,GS,23) is typical of nature. Nature is a terrible economist of power says Nietzsche, it is just as extravagant in the domain of culture as it is in that of a planting and sowing. It achieves its aims in a broad and ponderous manner...in doing so it sacrifices much too much energy. (III¹,U:S,7)²⁰

Culture is guided by nature as will to power. All life as will to power seeks higher forms, and the most "spiritual" individuals are the seeds and promise of greater transfigurations of life as such. But they are only a promise; anything can happen in the garden of life and these seeds may sprout or die. It is strictly chance that rules here: "Nature propels the philosopher into mankind like an arrow; it takes no aim but hopes the arrow will stick somewhere." (III¹,U:S,7)

The philosopher is the off-spring of culture, he bears the seeds of the future and, for Nietzsche, is the finest fruit ever born of the Greek culture. The long grow-

ing season of culture through generations reveals the path of all life to realize higher forms of power. It is thus comparable to those sun-seeking vines of Java...that so long...enclasp an oak tree with their tendrils until eventually, high above it but supported by it, they...unfold their crowns in the open light and display their happiness. (VI²,B,258)

The philosopher only emerges from the soil of a genuine culture such as that possessed by the Greeks. Hence in reference to the philosopher Nietzsche will say that among the Greeks alone, he is not an accident.... The philosopher's task when he lives in a genuine culture...cannot be properly derived from our own circumstances...for we have no genuine culture. Only a culture such as the Greeks possessed...can demonstrate why and how the philosopher is *not* a...random wanderer.... There is a steely necessity which binds a philosopher to a genuine culture...if such a culture does not exist...[t]hen the philosopher is a comet [and] incalculable.... When all is well, he shines like a stellar object ...in the solar system of culture. That is why the Greeks justify philosophers. Only among them, they are not comets.²¹

What then is the specific role of the philosopher in so far as he stands in a necessary relationship to his culture? We have seen the philosophical type emerge in ages of corruption which are "the expression of a threatening anarchy among the instincts." (VI²,B,258) But how does life as will to power exploit the philosopher as the means to higher forms of growth in power?

As regards the ancient Greek philosophers, Nietzsche describes their task by saying:

The activity of the older philosophers...(though they were quite unaware of it) tended toward healing and purification of the whole. It is the mighty flow of Greek culture that shall not be impeded; the terrible dangers in its path shall be cleared away: thus did the philosopher protect and defend his native land.²²

Hence, in the blooming of the Greek culture, philosophy, the "most spiritual will to power," (VI²,B,9) emerges at the point when this culture is on the verge of going into decline. The old mores or "spiritual" expressions no longer bind the culture together. But Life as will to power pro-

vided the philosopher as a "spiritual tyrant" (IV²,HH:I,261) to create a new "spiritual" paradigm. The Greek philosophers, including Socrates²³, are seen by Nietzsche as "*Tyrants of the spirit*" (IV²,HH:I,261) bearing the seeds of the future.

With the above remarks we come to the conclusion of this chapter. We have come a long way in setting up the foundations for the rest of our examination of Nietzsche's philosophy. We are now in a position to see why philosophy is "the most spiritual will to power," (VI²,B,9) and why Nietzsche considered ancient Greek philosophy the best example of philosophy to date.

In our next chapter, we will begin with a brief look at the "spirit" of Greek philosophy as embodied by the pre-Socratics. This will provide a very good contrast to Nietzsche's perception of the philosophical importance of Socrates as the first great model of the philosopher as a cultural physician.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER II

1. We will place this term in quotation marks to indicate that it is meant in the specifically Nietzschean sense of its *organic* foundation.
2. MIV, PTA, p. 154, (1).
3. MIV, PTA, p. 151, (Preface).
4. The translation is from Nietzsche's, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 155. Unless indicated otherwise, subsequent translations of *Human, All Too Human* are taken from this edition.
5. MIV, PTA, p. 154, (1).
6. Why the pre-Socratics represent a healthy Greek culture and therefore great philosophical health will be explained in greater detail in, "The Case of Socrates."
7. MIV, PTA, p. 154, (1).
8. WKG, III², HC, p. 278-79 / PN. p. 33-34.
9. WKG, III², HC, p. 277 / PN. p. 33.
10. WKG, III², HC, p. 278 / PN. p. 33.
11. Again, "health" is understood here as the capacity to harness the accumulated strength of powerful drives.
12. We will get our first look at symptoms of a sick "spirituality" in our next chapter.
13. See p. 66 above.
14. WKG, III², HC, p. 279 / PN. p. 35.
15. WKG, III², HC, p. 278 / PN. p. 33.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. In light of these remarks we can see that the interconnection of Nietzsche's conceptions of *Amor Fati* and the "spiritualization" of cruelty are in marked contrast to the "Buddhistic negation of the will" (III¹, BT, 7) with which he

characterized Schopenhauer's pessimism.

19.MIV, PTA, p. 161, (2).

20.The translation is from Nietzsche's, *Untimely Meditations*, "Schopenhauer as Educator", trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 177. Unless indicated otherwise, subsequent translations of *Untimely Meditations* are taken from this edition.

21.MIV, PTA, p. 158-59, (2).

22.MIV, PTA, p. 160, (2).

23.Nietzsche's perception of the distinctions and similarities between Socrates and the pre-Socratics will be looked at in greater detail in the next chapter.

*Then Socrates resumed the discourse;
now you have all, said he, declared
your opinions as to what you value
yourselves most upon; it remains
that you prove it.¹*

Xenophon

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHY AS WILL TO POWER: SOCRATES

Nietzsche's statements concerning Socrates vary between those which are highly commending and those of merciless attack. This contrast has led to confusion and multiple, differing opinions concerning Nietzsche's perception of Socrates. We will briefly consider what others have said about the philosophical relationship between Nietzsche and Socrates as we proceed through this chapter. However, we will first have to give serious consideration to precisely what Nietzsche means in referring to philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power." (VI²,B,9) In order to understand philosophy as such, we must again take up and expand upon the physiology of "spirit." That is to say, give a brief account of the role of consciousness in relation to "spirit." This is crucial if we are to appreciate Nietzsche's critique of Greek philosophy, particularly his attack on Socrates.

Nietzsche rails at the role of "consciousness" and "reason" in the philosophizing of Socrates since these are seen by the former to point to "*décadence* in Socrates." (VI³,T:III,4) Consequently, we must come to terms with how Nietzsche sees consciousness in relation to "spirit." Our investigation into this matter will prepare the *physiological* foundation for understanding a) philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power"; (VI²,B,9) b) the philosopher as "spiritual tyrant"; (IV²,HH:I,261) c) why Socrates, unlike the pre-Socratics, does *not* belong to a "higher order of

spirits"; (V²,GS,340) and d) how the instincts of decadence find a philosophical voice "in the case of Socrates." (VI², 7:III,7)

CONSCIOUSNESS

When we looked at consciousness in the preceding chapter, we saw that Nietzsche regards it as "superfluous." (MXIX,523)² It only reflects "the last scenes of reconciliation" (V²,GS,333) after the battle among the drives to establish power relations between themselves. Only "the end of this long process rise[s] to our consciousness." (V²,GS,333) We see here that consciousness plays a passive role in relation to the drives and hence:

That which we call our 'consciousness' is innocent of any of the essential processes of our preservation and our growth; and no head is so subtle that it could construe more than a machine--to which every organic process is far superior. (MXIX,646)

As with many of the topics Nietzsche concerned himself with, his discussion of their origin is always a helpful clue to understanding his observations. What he says on the origin of consciousness is of assistance to us and, predictably, leads us back into the region of physiology. He says the

problem of consciousness (more precisely, of becoming conscious of something) confronts us only when we begin to comprehend how we could dispense with it; and now physiology and the history of animals place us at the beginning of such a comprehension. (V²,GS,354)

One could possibly make the argument that Nietzsche would have liked to dispense with consciousness. Presumably, "the problem of race" (VI²,B,264) and the "means of selection and breeding" (MXVIII,462) would figure in such an argument. But we are getting ahead of ourselves here and only mention the above because "the problem of consciousness" (V²,GS,354) in Nietzsche's philosophy is a study in itself especially since it opens up a multiplicity of complicated themes.

To return to the origin of consciousness and thus to "physiology and the history of animals," (V²,GS,354) we have seen that consciousness is intimately related to the organic as will to power. But Nietzsche points out that consciousness

is the last...development of the organic and hence what is also most unfinished and unstrong. Consciousness gives rise to countless errors that lead an animal or man to perish sooner than necessary, 'exceeding destiny' as Homer puts it. If the conserving association of the instincts were not so very much more powerful...humanity would have to perish of its misjudgments...in short, of its consciousness...without the former, humanity would have long disappeared. (V²,GS,11)

Thus the conserving economy of the drives we spoke of in chapter two³ as a means to generations of stored-up strength, enabled our species to preserve itself and grow in power--in spite of the development of consciousness.

But if "consciousness is merely an *accidens* of experience and *not* its necessary and essential attribute," (V²,GS,357) then "[f]or what purpose...any consciousness at all when it is in the main *superfluous*?" (V²,GS,354)

Nietzsche answers,

the subtlety and strength of consciousness always were proportionate to a man's (or animal's) *capacity for communication*, and...this capacity in turn...proportionate to the *need for communication*. (V²,GS,354)

It is only in so far as man *had* to communicate that consciousness developed, and did so in proportion to this necessity. In short, consciousness emerged strictly as a *means* to man's articulation of himself. Nietzsche puts it this way:

consciousness has developed only under the pressure of the need for communication...from the start it was needful and useful only between human beings (particularly between those who commanded and those who obeyed); and...developed only in proportion to the degree of this utility. (V²,GS,354)

✓ Man developed consciousness according to the exigencies of the necessary law of life, that is, according to the necessity of growth and survival. This is the case says Nietzsche "when we consider whole races and generations:

where need and distress have forced men for a long time to communicate and understand each other quickly and subtly." (V²,GS,354)

Again, as we saw earlier a "*species comes to be, a type becomes fixed and strong, through the long fight with essentially constant unfavorable conditions.*" (VI²,B,262) Unfavorable conditions and thus *threats* to existence saw the development of consciousness in man since as the most endangered animal, he *needed* help and protection, he needed his peers, he had to learn to express his distress and make himself understood; and for all this he needed 'consciousness' first of all, he needed to 'know' himself what distressed him, he needed to 'know' how he felt, he needed to 'know' what he thought. (V²,GS,354)

There is great significance here in Nietzsche's saying that man "needed to 'know' what he thought." (V²,GS, 354) The distinction between "knowing" and "thinking" is indicated here and points to the fact that for Nietzsche man,

like any living being, thinks continually without knowing it; the thinking that rises to *consciousness* is only the smallest part of all this--the most superficial and worst part--for only this conscious thinking *takes the form of words, which is to say signs of communication*, and this fact uncovers the origin of consciousness. (V²,GS,354)

But if "the thinking that rises to *consciousness* is only the smallest part" (V²,GS,354) of that which goes on continually, what is this unconscious thought Nietzsche claims takes place in us?

We have already answered this question in our first chapter when we talked about "the affects." At that point⁴ we talked about the combat that goes on among the drives. Each drive has its own self-centered interpretation and when one dominates another, then a sensation of power is felt throughout the body. It is precisely these affects which "rise to consciousness" but due only to the necessity to communicate since "only this conscious thinking *takes the form of words.*" (V²,GS,354) As we have seen, it "is our

needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against." (MXIX,481)

Thus our *body* has as it were its own "rationality" in that it is *living* and hence reveals will to power. The body has its own intelligence and paths to the enhancement of power. "The body," says Zarathustra, "is a great intelligence, a multiplicity with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a herdsman.... There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom." (VI¹,Z:I,4)

We are by no means finished with what Nietzsche has to say about language in relation to consciousness. But to facilitate an understanding of this, we must return to earlier observations on the physiology of "spirit" and expand upon the role of consciousness therein.

"Spirit," guided as it is by the instinct of preservation, functions in providing the necessary deception of stability. This deception, we saw, was necessary so that the individual or social organism may preserve itself and flourish in a world of becoming. On the other hand, Nietzsche says consciousness developed as a means to language and at the same time only reflects the affects of the drives. This means language only articulates the power-sensations of the drives which constantly "paint" everything in terms of their own will to power. Hence the deception of "spirit" integral to an order of rank among the drives is passively reflected by consciousness. In short, whatever we articulate, i.e., consciously "think," is already determined by the natural deception of "spirit." In this regard Nietzsche says:

Knowledge works as a tool of power. Hence it is plain that it increases with every increase of power--The meaning of 'knowledge': here...is to be regarded in a strict and narrow anthropocentric and biological sense. In order for a particular species to maintain itself and increase its power, its conception of reality must comprehend enough of the calculable and constant for it to base a scheme of behavior on it. (MXIX,480)

We have seen that man as will to power constantly strives to feel an increase in power. In an order of rank among the drives, the most powerful ones will have the dominating "affect" on consciousness. On the other hand, we have also seen that "the first instinct of spirituality...[is] *the spirit's instinct for self-preservation.*" (VI³,T:IX,2) The instinct of preservation cannot possibly bring about an increase in the power of an organism since its function is mere preservation. Thus, unlike the more powerful drives, its "affect" on consciousness will not be as influential. But if "conscious thinking" or "knowledge" already hinges on the natural deception of "spirit," then preservation as the first instinct of "spirit" must play an decisive role here. The question is; what is this role?

In chapter two we saw the profound importance of "spirit" in that it enables "the plant 'man'" (VI²,B,44) to put down roots and flourish. In other words, "spirit" is that natural deception through which man perceives a world that is "calculable and constant" (MXIX,480) and enables him "to base a scheme of behaviour on it." (MXIX,480) In short, "spirit" provides the natural and necessary deception of stability; a world that endures and remains constant. In a world of constant becoming, the deception of stability is essential to the preservation of our species. In this vein Nietzsche says the

utility of preservation...stands as the motive behind the development of the organs of knowledge--they develop in such a way that their observations suffice for our preservation. In other words: the measure of the desire for knowledge depends upon the measure to which the will to power grows in a species: a species grasps a certain amount of reality in order to become master of it, in order to press it into service. (MXIX,480)

Self-preservation is the foundation upon which man as will to power can "know" the world, i.e., assimilate and exploit it to his own ends. But, says Nietzsche: "Knowledge and becoming exclude each other." (MXIX,517) This means man

exploits the world and increases in power in so far as his "knowledge" rests not on a perception of chaos, but rather on the *fiction* of a stable world. This fiction is the influence of the instinct of preservation on the cumulative "affect" of the drives that rises to consciousness.

Nietzsche sees this fiction as the belief in "being," since, if "everything is becoming, then knowledge is possible only on the basis of belief in being." (MXIX, 518) With this belief we

have projected the conditions of *our* preservation as predicates of being in general. Because we have to be stable in our beliefs if we are to prosper, we have made the 'real' world a world not of change and becoming, but one of being. (MXIX, 507)

This essential falsification of the world is a function of "spirit." Through it our species derives "its conception of reality" (MXIX, 480) and comprehends "enough of the calculable and constant for it to base a scheme of behaviour." (MXIX, 480)

Thus it is precisely in the physiological "sense of the first instinct of spirituality...*self-preservation*" (VI², 7:IX, 2) that we must understand Nietzsche's idea of "untruth as a condition of life." (VI², B, 4) As far as he is concerned, "conscious thinking" is determined by the drives. Their calculated falsification of the world is a constant activity and "primeval mechanism...[which] runs its course ...quickly and is...well concealed." (V², GS, 111) This "primeval mechanism" is what Freud would later call the "sub-conscious." As the first instinct of "spirituality," preservation is that affect on consciousness which provides the all important fiction of being, i.e., a fixed and static world. We have multiple perspectives on the world according to the deceptions of the other drives which are also "inspiring spirits," (VI², B, 6) but all of these require a static world of "being."

Karl Jaspers said that Nietzsche's philosophy is a "transformation of Kant's critical philosophy."⁹ The role of the instinct of preservation is perhaps a case in point since without it we would never "know" being, i.e., an enduring and static world. On the contrary, we would be confronted with the constant flux and becoming of phenomena. In such a situation our species would have been wiped-out since it could not function in such a world. In Kant's philosophy, the transcendental unity of apperception plays essentially this same vital role. A central difference between Nietzsche and Kant is the latter's reduction of our interpretations of the world to the limits of "reason." Nietzsche, on the other hand, saw unlimited possibilities of interpretations depending on the conditions of life, i.e., the preservation and growth of man as will to power. "Reason" is strictly in the service of life as power, it is simply a utility in that it enables us to simplify our world.

Here again we find the organic process of assimilation and "the spirit's power to appropriate." (VI²,B,230) For Nietzsche reason and logic are attempts "to simplify the manifold, and to overlook or repulse whatever is totally contradictory." (VI²,B,23) Through reason and logic we create a "real world," a "true world"; that is, one in which we can survive and grow. The instinct of preservation is manifest in our rational ability to make things equal as static beings. And it is upon this system of fictions that man "knows reality" or, to say the same thing, can flourish as an organic form of will to power.

Where this process will go or the possible paths it may take is a completely open horizon. For Nietzsche, today's perception of reason and logic could radically change or perhaps disappear altogether. With the possible transmutations of man as will to power, our species may require falsifications of the world that would render our

logic primitive and obsolete. As Nietzsche puts it: "Among a higher kind of creatures, knowledge, too, will acquire new forms that are not yet needed." (MXIX,615) Consequently, "in the long run, it is not a question of man at all: he is to be overcome." (MXIX,676)

For Kant life had to be brought before the bar of reason, for Nietzsche, reason is under the spell of "the serpent vita." (MXIX,577) Man is that upon which the law of life is constantly experimenting and thus knowledge is a means through which the body desires to perfect itself. Or rather: hundreds of thousands of experiments are made to change the nourishment, the mode of living and of dwelling of the body; consciousness and evaluations in the body, all kinds of pleasure and displeasure, are signs of these changes and experiments. (MXIX,676)

Reason is a manifestation of the drive of preservation in the "spiritualization" of the world as a one of "being"; a world made "equal" in that everything therein is a static and fixed unity. Man's rational capacity is the means to

a making firm...and durable, an abolition of the false character of things, a reinterpretation of it into beings. 'Truth' is therefore not something there, that might be... discovered--but something that must be created and that gives a name to...a will to overcome that has in itself no end.... It is a word for the 'will to power.' Life is founded on the premise of a belief in enduring and regularly recurring things; the more powerful life is, the wider must be the knowable world to which we, as it were, attribute being. Logicizing, rationalizing, systematizing...[are] expedients of life. (MXIX,552)

These are expedient to life because in

the formation of reason, logic, the categories, it was *need* that was authoritative: the need, not to 'know,' but to... schematize, for the purpose of intelligibility and calculation.... The development of reason is...invention, with the aim of making similar, equal.... No pre-existing 'idea' was here at work, but the utilitarian fact that only when we see things coarsely and made equal do they become calculable and usable to us. (MXIX,515)

The most expedient fictions

are the most indispensable...without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring against the purely invented

world of the unconditional and self-identical...man could not live. (VI²,B,4)

In light of these observations it is understandable why Nietzsche said

'Truth': this, according to my way of thinking, does not necessarily denote the antithesis of error, but in the most fundamental cases only the posture of various errors in relation to one another. Perhaps one is older, more profound than another, even ineradicable, in so far as an organic entity of our species could not without it. (MXIX,535)

In the end, 'truth' is simply "the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live. The value for life is ultimately decisive." (MXIX,493)

✓ To return now to the question of language in relation to consciousness, we must bear in mind that only "conscious thinking takes the form of words." (V²,GS,354) We saw that "*consciousness...developed only under the pressure of the need to communicate.*" (V²,GS,354) Furthermore, we saw that in "the formation of reason, logic, the categories, it was need that was authoritative." (MXIX,515) Reason is an activity of the "spirit" wherein the deception of "being," or "fixed unities," emerges in physiological accord with the instinct of preservation. This means man's "rational" capacity is a function of "spirit" and therefore an activity of the drives. Consequently, the fictions of "being" and "fixed unities" is essentially grounded in that thinking he calls *unconscious*.

The up-shot of this is that prior to "conscious thinking" or *articulating* the world as "rational," we have already constituted the world as such. In this vein ✓ Nietzsche makes the important observation that "the development of language and the development of consciousness (not of reason but merely the way reason enters consciousness) go hand in hand." (V²,GS,354) In short, the way reason enters consciousness is through language. The question is, how?

We have seen "reason" as a manifestation of "spirit" whereby the deception of being emerges as a falsifica-

tion of becoming since "an organic entity of our species could not live without it." (MXIX,535) Furthermore, we have seen that consciousness developed due to the necessity to communicate "particularly between those who commanded and those who obeyed." (V²,GS,354) Because we *had* to communicate, we find the "spiritual" activity of levelling-off a "thousandfold complexity [to] a unity." (MXIX,523) This levelling process is the reduction of becoming to "the deception of beings," (MXIX,517) and this is the way "reason enters consciousness." (V²,GS,354) It is in consciousness that the *deception* of "unity" is reflected. But as we have seen, "[e]verything that enters consciousness as a 'unity' is already tremendously complex: we always have only the semblance of a unity." (MXVIII,440)

For Nietzsche, the "unities" and fictions of reason had to be reflected in consciousness because of the *necessity to utilize words*, or as Nietzsche calls them, "acoustical signs." (VI²,B,268) If whatever enters conscious thinking is "only the semblance of a unity," (MXIX,489) then these fictions are articulated by means of "acoustical signs" (VI²,B,268) or "something that is a unity only as a word." (VI²,B,19) Since "only this conscious thinking takes the form of words, which is to say signs of communication," (V²,GS,354), and thus articulates the necessary fiction of "being," then Nietzsche says "we have incorporated only our errors and...all our consciousness relates to errors." (V²,GS,11)

"All our consciousness relates to errors" in that the necessary deceptions of "spirit" are articulated through "something that is a unit only as a word." (VI²,B,19) These deceptions are reflected in consciousness due to the necessity of having to communicate. Presumably if we never *had* to communicate, we could have gotten along quite well without consciousness. The deception of "spirit" is an activity of the drives, and thus "something quite invisible to us." (V¹,

D,129) In this vein Nietzsche says "that a higher court rules over these things cannot be doubted--a kind of directing committee on which the various chief desires make their votes and power felt." (MXIX,524) This unconscious activity is translated into linguistic unities through which we come to believe in a 'real' and 'true' world not of becoming, but a static one of "being."

In its primitive origins, consciousness and language were "at first at the furthest distance from the biological center of the individual." (MXIX,504) But as essential to growth and preservation, the process of their development "deepens...itself, and continually draws nearer to that center." (MXIX,504) After untold thousands of years of evolution we are in a situation where "the 'same apparent world' always reappears and has thus acquired the semblance of reality." (MXIX,521) In this vein Nietzsche observes:

Our subjective compulsion to believe in logic only reveals that, long before logic itself entered our consciousness, we did nothing but introduce its postulates into events: now we discover them in events--we can no longer do otherwise--and imagine that this compulsion guarantees something connected with 'truth.' It is we who created the 'thing,' the 'identical thing,' subject...object, substance, form, after we had long pursued the process of making identical, coarse and simple. The world seems logical to us because we have made it logical. (MXIX,521)

Ultimately, "*Rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme that we can not throw off.*" (MXIX,522)

"Rational thought" is a system of signs expressing as "reality" what "spirit," i.e., the instinct of preservation, has levelled off as "being" and "unified" according to the necessities of preservation and growth. Thus the principle of identity has behind it the 'apparent fact' of things that are the same. A world in a state of becoming could not, in a strict sense, be 'comprehended' or 'known'...intellect encounters a coarse, already-created world, fabricated out of mere appearances but become firm to the extent that this kind of appearance has preserved life--only to this extent is there anything like 'knowledge'; i.e., a measuring of earlier and later errors by one another. (MXIX,520)

As far as the law of contradiction is concerned, it is says Nietzsche, "a biological compulsion: the instinct for the utility of inferring as we do infer is part of us, we almost are this instinct." (MXIX,515) This law it is "not the expression of a 'necessity' but only of an inability." (MXIX,516) This means that the 'truths' of logic are possible "only after a fundamental *falsification* of all events is assumed." (MXIX,512) Logic works "in the service of our needs, namely of our need for security, for quick understanding on the basis of signs and sounds." (MXIX,513) Thus it follows that a drive rules here that is capable of employing both means, firstly falsification, then the implementation of its own point of view: logic does *not* spring from will to truth. (MXIX,512)

Logic is *conscious* thought and hence a system "of signs and sounds"; (MXIX,513) in short, it is a language. Consequently the principles of formal ontology are the rules of grammar, or, as Nietzsche calls them, "the metaphysics of the people." (V²,GS,354)

Having come this far in our look at consciousness in relation to "spirit," we should give an overview of the central points we have seen so far. First, it is the activity of the "spirit," i.e., the deception peculiar to the instinct of preservation, that renders a world of "being" and of "fixed unities." Second, these fictions rise to conscious thought only in so far as we must communicate, and thus we *articulate* a world of being by means of signs and sounds; by means of words. Third, "reason," "knowledge" and "logic" presuppose a system of signs and sounds; in short, a language to articulate a world of being. Finally, the upshot of our third point is that formal ontology is not a system of "objective truths" but rather one of necessary fictions for the preservation of life.

As we will see, it is with Socrates that the fictions of conscious thought are held to be the genuine path to "truth." This conviction on the part of Socrates is symp-

omatic, according to Nietzsche, of metaphysics and the decline of Greek philosophy. Among the pre-Socratics, philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power" (VI²,B,9) reveals the most powerful Greek instincts; but "with Socrates something changes." (MXVIII,437)

This change hinges on how in the case of Socrates the instincts of decadence find a philosophical voice. Before we look at these matters in more detail, there is a final aspect to Nietzsche's view of consciousness we should consider since it is significant to his perception of Socrates. This final point is his association of consciousness with what he calls "the herd instinct."

Earlier we said that presumably if communication had not been *necessary* to us, then consciousness may never have developed and we would have lived without it.

Nietzsche is definitely of this opinion;

Consciousness is really only a net of communication between human beings; it is only as such that it had to develop; a solitary human being who lived like a beast of prey would not have needed it. (V²,GS,354)

Left to ourselves and guided strictly by our drives, consciousness would not have emerged and hence Nietzsche says:

My idea is...that consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature; that, as follows from this, it has developed subtly only insofar as this is required by social or herd utility. (V²,GS,354)

If we ask; "What is this 'herd nature' or 'herd utility?'," he says:

Whether I contemplate men with benevolence or with an evil eye, I always find them concerned with a single task...to do what is good for the preservation of the human race. Not from any feeling of love for the race, but merely because nothing in them is older...more inexorable and unconquerable than this instinct--because this instinct constitutes *the essence* of our species, our herd. (V²,GS,1)

This statement indicates that when Nietzsche speaks of the herd instinct there is an evident connection to that of self-preservation. This connection resides in how

the herd instinct is the drive of preservation in the individual who sees his own preservation as *dependent* on that of the community. Again the need for stability and security is revealed here. For Nietzsche, it is only in so far as self-preservation "constitutes the *essence* of our species, our herd," (V²,GS,1) that we naturally *conform* to the requirements necessary to the preservation of the community. However, we saw that a warrior caste contains *individuals* who were not concerned with self-preservation and who would look down on this concern as cowardice. For Nietzsche they are right in this judgement, yet he says that the instinct for the preservation of the species is in everyone. (V²,GS,1) Clearly the deceptions of "spirit," guided by the instinct of preservation, have their role in these strongest individuals because even they could not function in a world of chaos. But how do these strongest most dangerous types *contribute* to the preservation of the species? Nietzsche responds in the following way;

the most harmful man may...be the most useful when it comes to the preservation of the species; for he nurtures...instincts without which humanity would have long become feeble.... Hatred...delight in the misfortunes of others, the lust to...dominate, and whatever...is called evil belongs to the...amazing economy of the preservation of the species. To be sure, this economy is not afraid of high prices, of squandering, and it is on the whole extremely foolish. Still it is *proven* that it has preserved our race so far. (V²,GS, 1)

Here again we find the economy of the drives whereby their power is stored-up over generations so that the order of rank is maintained and does not become "feeble or rotten." (V²,GS,1) We saw that it is precisely the strong individuals who enslave the weak and thereby provide the foundation for the social organism. It is within this social organism, its natural order of rank, that the value of the weak individuals is determined and through this order the species is preserved. In this way that man as a form of will to power has the stronger, more dangerous types emerge as

essential to the preservation of the species. Whether one is enslaved and preserves himself in the service of the strong, or one dominates those who serve one's interests, one is "still in some way a promoter and benefactor of humanity." (V²,GS,1)

We are now in a better position to see the connection Nietzsche makes between the herd instinct and consciousness. Human beings drew together because they were enslaved or sought protection from slavery. Hence "*fear of the neighbor*" (VI²,B,201) was (and for Nietzsche still is) the motive for people gathering together. The strong seek security from destruction by enslaving others and using them for the possibility of destroying or enslaving others. The weak seek security by being of service to the strong. Humans were *dependent* on each other out of mutual fear and mistrust and, in the interest of self-preservation, *conformed* to a natural order of rank. It is precisely in these conditions, those of the greatest *threats* to his existence, that man as the most endangered animal...*needed* help and protection, he needed his peers, he had to learn to express his distress and..make himself understood; and for all of this he needed 'consciousness' first of all. (V²,GS,354)

And of course the

✓ greater the danger...the greater...the need to reach agreement quickly and easily about what must be done; not misunderstanding one another in times of danger is what human beings simply cannot do without in their relations. (VI²,B,268)

✓ As we saw earlier, it is due to this necessity that "the development of language and the development of consciousness...go hand in hand." (V²,GS,354) Language only articulates conscious thought; the deception of a world already levelled-off into one of static "being." It is the means through which we have our experience of a fixed and static world "*in common*." (VI²,B,268) Language lets us articulate the most complicated phenomena by reducing them to everyday signs that are functional for the preservation of

the species. In short, we "set up a word at the point at which our ignorance begins, at which we can see no further." (MXIX,482)

Language and thus the "course of logical ideas and inferences in our brain today corresponds to a process and a struggle among impulses." (V²,GS,111) Because of this "primeval mechanism," (V²,GS,111)

all our actions are altogether incomparably personal...and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be.* (V²,GS,354)

"They no longer seem to be" because when these drives are translated into conscious thought they take "*the form of words,*" (V²,GS,354) i.e., are common to everyone. "Consequently," says Nietzsche,

given the best will in the world to understand ourselves as individually as possible, 'to know ourselves,' each of us will...succeed in becoming conscious only of what is not individual but 'average.' Our thoughts...are continually governed by...consciousness--by the 'genius of the species' that commands it--and translated back into the perspective of the herd. (V²,GS,354)

Thus consciousness and language are integral to the herd instinct, or as we have seen all along, the instinct of preservation. The development of consciousness and language is *simultaneous* with the creation of a natural order of rank, or what we have called, the social organism. In this vein that Nietzsche says the

importance of language for the development of culture lies in the fact that, in language, man juxtaposed to the one world another world of his own, a place which he thought so sturdy that...he could...make himself lord over it. To the extent that he believed over long periods of time in the concepts and names of things as if they were *aeternae veritates*...he imagined...he was expressing the highest knowledge of things with words...only now...is it dawning on men that in their belief in language they have propagated a monstrous error. (IV²,HH:I,11)

Language is a system of abbreviations for the "primeval mechanism" (V²,GS,111) of conflicting drives which are in constant flux and thus beyond "knowledge," i.e., our

conscious thought. "Language depends on the most naive prejudices." (MXIX,522) Nevertheless, in the case of language, like all that is connected to the organic, its "value for *life* is ultimately decisive." (MXIX,493) Hence the conditions of growth and the preservation of life as power determines the utility of language. As Zarathustra says, it is the "great intelligence" (VI¹,Z:I,4) of the *body* which determines the "truths" of conscious thought. *This*, says Nietzsche, is precisely

the essence of phenomenalism and perspectivism as I understand them: Owing to the nature of *animal consciousness*, the world of which we become conscious is only a surface-and-sign-world, a world...made common and meaner; whatever becomes conscious *becomes*...shallow...relatively stupid... sign, herd signal; all becoming conscious involves a... thorough corruption...reduction to superficialities, and generalization. (V²,GS,354)

This brings to close our initial remarks on consciousness in relation to "spirit." Clearly there is more that could be said, but again we shall stay on the course we have charted. The foregoing allows us to pursue the concerns of this chapter, namely, Nietzsche's critique of Greek philosophy in relation to Socrates. By remaining on the course we have taken, we will have the opportunity to expand some of the points we have seen so far. However, a detailed look at the physiology of "the problem of consciousness" (V²,GS,354) would require a more lengthy study than that found here.

TYRANTS OF THE SPIRIT

At the end of chapter two we came, as it were, to the threshold of Greek philosophy. When the first signs of decline appear in the great ages of corruption, (V²,GS,23) the philosopher falls ripe from the tree of culture which exists "only for the sake of these fruits." (V²,GS,23) In the case of Greek culture these "ripe apples" (V²,GS,23) are

the pre-Socratics. For Nietzsche, it was they who, "though they were quite unconscious of it...tended toward the healing and the purification of the whole."⁶ That is to say a healing and purification of the whole cultural organism.

The old order of rank is breaking down within the social organism and hence its manifestations of "spirit," namely its customs and traditions, are losing authority. Now every manner of curiosities, exotic and deformed creatures of the lowest social echalons become "interesting." Generations of stored-up strength can no longer be contained, discipline and *distance* between ruler and ruled becomes lax "great love and great hatred are born and...the flame of knowledge flares up to the sky." (V²,GS,23) People are fed-up with "the old ways" and the "old, used-up 'fatherland,' which has been touted to death." (V²,GS,23)

Nietzsche sees this volatile situation as that wherein the philosophical type emerges. Since the old "spirituality" is no longer respected, life as will to power provides the possibility for new "spiritual" frontiers in the midst of the destruction of the old. The philosopher is a tool of will to power in the social organism. He has his vision, his *deception* which, if it can dominate, exploits the demise of the old order and harnesses the power of the organism toward its deception. In short, he will give the culture a new interpretation of itself; a new goal.

The pre-Socratics are for Nietzsche the best examples of the philosophical type who carries "the seeds of the future and are the authors of the spiritual colonization and origin of new states and communities." (V²,GS,23) Why are the pre-Socratics the best manifestation of the philosophical type to date? Nietzsche's reference to the philosopher as a "power-hungry hermit" (VI²,G:III,10) is a clue to answering this question. He says the earliest forms of the philosophical type took on the roles of "priest, sorcerer,

soothsayer, and in any case a religious type--in order to be able to exist at all." (VI²,G:III,10)

Just as cruelty and suffering were natural to the cultivation of the warrior type, so it was for that of the philosopher. The "earliest race of contemplative men" (VI²,G:III,10) were either feared or "they were despised." (VI²,G:III,10) Despised for their "inactive, brooding, unwarlike...instincts," (VI²,G:III,10) these individuals had "to arouse a decided *fear* of oneself." (VI²,G:III,10) They created fear and therefore respect for themselves by indulging in "cruelty towards themselves." (VI²,G:III,10)

This "was the principal means these power-hungry ...innovators of ideas required to overcome the gods and tradition, so as to believe in their own innovations." (VI²,G:III,10) Hence these early contemplative types fascinated and terrified the warlike members of the community. They accomplished this through their ability to endure self-inflicted torture and thus "did contemplation first appear on earth, at once weak and fearsome, secretly despised and publicly loaded with superstitious reverence." (V¹,D,42)

In this way the early ancestors of the philosophical type managed to survive:

Later on, all...whose lives were melancholy and poor in deeds, came to be called poets or thinkers or priests or medicine-men--because they were so inactive one would have liked to...despise...and eject...them from the community; but there was danger attached to that--they were versed in superstition...on the scent of divine forces, one never doubted that they commanded unknown sources of power. (V¹,D, 42)

The contemplative type commanded respect and was feared since he had access to secret reservoirs of power. The philosopher emerged when this strange plant could, in relative safety, stand by his *own* "innovations," i.e., his vision of the world, against the religious-mythical ones held by his countrymen. Therefore Nietzsche makes the fol-

lowing observation on the pre-Socratics and the mythological heritage of Greek culture:

The life of the Greeks shines...only when the ray of myth falls on it; otherwise it is gloomy...the Greek philosophers rob themselves of...this mythology...as if they wanted to move out of the sunlight.... But no plant wants to avoid light: actually, those philosophers were only seeking a *brighter* sun; mythology was not... shining enough for them. They found the light they sought in their knowledge, in what each of them called his 'truth.' (IV²,HH:I,261)

We have seen the "spiritualizing" role of the instinct of preservation. In the case of the philosophical type this drive certainly functions but it is exploited by an instinct which dominates all the others. This most powerful drive exploits the power of the others toward its deception, i.e., its interpretation of the world. Self-preservation does not dominate the pure philosophical type. For Nietzsche, the philosopher wants more than mere survival or the preservation of his culture; he wants power and will exploit all possibilities to get it. "With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer." (VI²,B, 211)

What is the most powerful drive in the philosophical type which harnesses the power of all the others towards its perspective? Nietzsche sees this drive as a lust for insight and knowledge. But this drive for knowledge is not one directed to knowledge for knowledge's sake. This understanding of knowledge, as we will see, reveals exhausted and decadent instincts. The drive for knowledge, like all drives, is will to power, and thus its "value for life is ultimately decisive." (MXIX,493) This drive "ruthlessly disposes of all other stores and accumulations of energy, of animal vigour...the greater energy then *uses up* the lesser." (VI²,G:III,8)

Again, the dominant drive establishes an order of rank among those of philosopher exploiting them toward its

goal and hence its "demands prevail...against those of all the other instincts." (VI²,G:III,8) How does the goal of knowledge reveal the law of life? The answer to this question gives us the essential reason for Nietzsche's admiration of the pre-Socratics. To seek knowledge was in their case the attempt to be *victorious* over life itself. To solve the riddle and thereby understand the "why" of all that is, is to conquer the world. This is the will to power in the drive for knowledge.

For Nietzsche, the pre-Socratics reveal this absolutely unique will to power. They were challenged by Life as the great mystery that had to be solved; this was *their* path to power. They wanted to

solve everything...with a single word...to settle all questions with a *single* answer. 'There is a *riddle* to be solved': thus did the goal of life appear to...the philosopher.... The boundless ambition...of being the 'unriddler of the world' constituted the thinker's dreams: nothing seemed worth-while if it was not the means of bringing everything to a conclusion *for him*. Philosophy was thus a kind of supreme struggle to possess the tyrannical rule of the spirit --that some...fortunate...and mighty man was in reserve... was doubted by none, and several...fancied themselves to be that one. (V¹,D,547)

The pre-Socratics revealed a "supreme struggle to possess the tyrannical rule of the spirit." (V¹,D,547) This means they wanted to *solve* the riddle of the universe and render all former interpretations *subject* to their own. Due to this "boundless ambition" (V¹,D,547) Nietzsche refers to the pre-Socratics as "*Tyrants of the spirit*." (IV²,HH:I,261) They wanted to establish their supremacy as rulers of all "spiritual" expressions, i.e., all interpretations of the universe.

The pre-Socratics could hope "to reach the midpoint of all being with a single bound, and from there solve the riddle of the world." (IV²,HH:I,261) Thus Nietzsche sees them as the embodiment of the pure philosophical type because philosophy "is this tyrannical drive...the most spiri-

tual will to power, to the 'creation of the world,' to the *causa prima*." (VI²,B,9)

This "most spiritual will to power...to the *causa prima*" is cosmology. Hence when Nietzsche asks, "do you want a name for this world? A solution for all its riddles"? (MXIX,1067) and responds with "*will to power--and nothing besides!* And you...are...will to power--and nothing besides," (MXIX,1067) he is deliberately speaking out of the cosmological tradition of pre-Socratic thought. He asks the question about the *arché*, and his answer is, "the *arché* is will to power."⁷ This is why Nietzsche believed the future of philosophy, lay in "the digging up of ancient philosophy, above all of the pre-Socratics--the most deeply buried of all Greek temples." (MXVIII,419) Here one would find the means to

again getting close to all those fundamental forms of world interpretation devised by the Greek spirit through Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Democritus, and Anaxagoras. (MXVIII,419)

These individuals revealed a great vitality among the Greek instincts, and thus cosmology is symptomatic of this vitality; the desire to rule the world. Simultaneous with the decline of the Greek instincts is that of philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power"; (VI²,B,9) and the symptom of this decline is manifest in "metaphysics."

That there existed individuals *convinced* that they held the key to understanding the entire cosmos had a profound significance for Nietzsche. To him this conviction expressed an extraordinary sense of victory and self-affirmation in perfect accord with the law of life. Hence "it is important to find out from such people that they once existed."⁸ The pre-Socratic had the "calm conviction that he is the only rewarded wooer of truth."⁹ Such conviction carries with it a great pride

and when a philosopher exhibits pride, it is a great pride indeed. His activities never direct...him toward any 'public,' toward...applause from the masses.... Never...

could one imagine such pride as that of Heraclitus.... Such men live inside their own solar system; only there can we look for them. A Pythagoras, an Empedocles too, treated himself...almost with religious reverence.¹⁰

The pre-Socratics reveal the Greek love of combat and contest and thus the "agonal instinct of the Hellenes" (VI², T:III,8) since they were "exclusive and...hostile toward others with similar gifts."¹¹ Nietzsche points out in this vein that

each of them was a combative and violent tyrant...believing oneself in possession of the truth was never greater in the world, but neither was the harshness, tyranny, and evil of such a belief. (IV², HH:I,261)

With the pride of having insight into the heart of the cosmos, the pre-Socratics felt justified in *passing judgement* on life and "arrive at a just verdict on the whole fate of man...on the highest fate that can befall individual men or entire nations." (III¹, U:S,3) In short, "it has been the proper task of all great thinkers to be lawgivers as to the measure, stamp and weight of things." (III¹, U:S,3) Hence, "[t]heir 'knowing' is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is--*will to power*." (VI², B, 211) The pre-Socratics

were tyrants.... Perhaps only Solon is an exception...he tells how he despised personal tyranny...out of love for... his lawgiving; and to be a lawgiver is a sublimated form of tyranny. Parmenides, too, gave laws, probably Pythagoras and Empedocles as well; Anaximander founded a city. (IV², HH:I, 261)

The philosopher emerges at the apex and bloom of a healthy culture. This blooming marks the beginning of the decline of the culture in that its stored-up strength is now unleashed and squandered in multiple directions. Former expressions of "spirit," the old traditions and customs, are the butt of jokes and irreverence is in vogue. The old order of rank, the very backbone of the culture, is breaking down and in "these ages bribery and treason reach their peak." (V², GS,23)

In this situation the strength of the cultural organism is being wasted. Unless some new "spiritual" frontier, some new *deception*, can emerge as dominant, then the power of the culture will be dissipated. The physiological significance of the philosopher lies in his vision of the "truth," his "spiritual" will to power. His vision is the new deception and possibility of reunification and growth for the culture into the future. In this way the philosopher serves as a tool of life as will to power within the cultural organism. He combats whatever is parasitical on the strength of the culture, and exploits whatever remains healthy toward his own ends.

In *this* sense Nietzsche states that in relation to their culture the pre-Socratics

(though they were quite unconscious of it) tended toward the healing and purification of the whole...the...dangers in its path shall be cleared away: thus did the philosopher protect and defend his native land.¹²

They were unconscious of this function since they were "power-hungry hermits," (VI²,G:III,10) seeking, like all living organisms, more power. But as a physiological function within the cultural organism, they were essential to its preservation and growth. Out of the self-centered conviction that he possessed the "truth," the pre-Socratic served life as will to power. His function of cultural "healing and purification,"¹³ lay in *passing judgement* on his culture according to his "truth." In so doing, he decided what in his culture had merit and what did not. In short, he decided what deserved to live and what deserved to perish. This says Nietzsche is the "really royal calling of the philosopher...*prava corrigere, et recta corroborare, et sancta sublimare.*" (MXIX,977) "*Sancta*" understood here to be *Life as will to power.*

The pre-Socratics stand in an intimate connection to life, as the tools of the will to power cultivating new expressions and organic forms of itself as "man." For this

reason Nietzsche says there "is a steely necessity which binds a philosopher to a genuine culture."¹⁴ The pre-Socratics first reveal the philosopher as a cultural physician because when

the least organ in an organism fails, however slightly, to enforce with complete assurance its self-preservation, its 'egoism,' restitution of its energies--the whole degenerates. The physiologist demands *excision* of the degenerating part; he denies all solidarity with what degenerates; he is worlds removed from pity for it. (VI³,E:D,2)

Having the conviction of their "truth," the pre-Socratics judged life. What was not in accord with their "truth" had to be weeded out; hence life as will to power "considerately--kills." (VI²,B,69) The pre-Socratics are the first cultural physicians in being the first to pass judgment on what in their culture deserved to live and die. Hence, Nietzsche says:

I conceive of them as the *forerunners of a reformation of the Greeks*, but not as forerunners of Socrates....their reformation never occurred; it remained sectarian with Pythagoras.... *Empedocles* is the *unsuccessful reformer*; when he failed, all that remained was Socrates.¹⁵

Since their "reformation never occurred,"¹⁶ the "excision of the degenerating part" (VI³,E:D,2) of the Greek culture never eventuated. Thus Nietzsche says the "sixth and fifth centuries...seem to promise...more...than they produced; but it remained at promises and declarations." (IV²,HH:I,261) The pre-Socratics never did bring off a reformation "all they managed to found were sects." (V²,GS,149)

Why did the "*forerunners of a Greek reformation*"¹⁷ only manage to found sects? Nietzsche finds this a curious phenomenon and saying:

The tenet that tyrants are usually murdered and that their descendants live briefly is also generally true of the tyrants of the spirit. Their history is short, violent; their influence breaks off suddenly.... That is the turbulent and uncanny thing about Greek history. (IV²,HH:I,261)

The short and violent history of the pre-Socratics reflects the blooming of Greek culture; a time of

junglelike growth...a kind of tropical tempo in the competition to grow...savage egoisms...wrestle 'for sun and light' and...no longer derive any...restraint...from their previous morality. It was this morality...that dammed up...enormous strength...now it is 'outlived'.... All sorts of new what-fors and wherewithals; no shared formulas any longer; misunderstanding allied with disrespect; decay...and the highest desires gruesomely entangled; the genius of the race overflowing...a calamitous simultaneity of spring and fall... that characterize young...unexhausted...unwearied corruption. (VI²,B,262)

In such "turning points in history," (VI²,B,262)
"rich in marvels and monstrosities" (VI²,B,262)

each great thinker, believing he possessed absolute truth, became a tyrant, so that Greek intellectual history has... the violent, rash, and dangerous character evident in its political history. (IV²,HH:I,261)

None of these violent and combative tyrants seems to have actually vanquished his "spiritual" adversaries. Perhaps there were too many options, perhaps nobody could have harnessed the power of such a prodigious "junglelike growth." (VI²,B,262) Nietzsche says

there is a gap here, a break in development; some great misfortune must have occurred, and the sole statue in which we might have recognized the...sense of that great creative and preparatory exercise must have broken or been unsuccessful. What actually happened has remained a secret of the workshop. (IV²,HH:I,261)

One thing is clear, the pre-Socratics did not manage to forge a new "spiritual" frontier for the Greek culture. This led to a further depletion of the organism's strength and thus "the decline keeps pace." (MXIX,864)

Nietzsche never tired of trying to find "the secret of the workshop" (IV²,HH:I,261) as to why "there is a gap here, a break in development." (IV²,HH:I,261) The more he tried to understand "what actually happened," (IV²,HH:I,261) the more Socrates' "instinct-disintegrating influence" (III¹,BT,13) came to the fore as a decisive factor.

Nietzsche understood the pre-Socratics to be "well on the way toward assessing correctly the irrationality and suffering of human existence."¹⁰ In this, says Nietzsche,

"[e]arly Hellenism revealed its strengths in its succession of philosophers."¹⁹ But "thanks to Socrates, they never reached the goal"²⁰ and the reformation with which Nietzsche characterised pre-Socratic thought "never occurred."²¹ In, *Human, All Too Human*, he says that with the Greeks, things go forward swiftly, but also as swiftly downwards; the movement of the whole mechanism is so intensified that a single stone, thrown into its wheels, make it burst. Such a stone was Socrates, for example; in one night, the development of philosophical science, until then so wonderfully regular but, of course, all too swift, was destroyed. (IV²,HH:I,261)

Why is Socrates such a decisive factor in the destruction of philosophy as embodied in pre-Socratic thought? Why does Nietzsche hold him largely responsible for the failure "of discovering a type of man still higher than any previous type?"²² In response to these questions we have merely pointed out Nietzsche's references to Socrates' "instinct-disintegrating influence" (III¹,BT,13) and "as a dangerous force that undermines life." (VI³,E:BT,1) But why is Socrates seen in this light? To answer this question we come to a fascinating element in Nietzsche's philosophy, one he referred to as: "The Problem of Socrates." (VI³,T:III)

THE CASE OF SOCRATES

Much has been made of the philosophical relationship between Nietzsche and Socrates, and opinions on this matter differ between various commentators. Some are deceived by Nietzsche's polemical tone toward Socrates and this led to the opinion that Nietzsche hated him.²³ Walter Kaufmann has successfully shown however that such an opinion is without foundation.²⁴ On the other hand, Kaufmann's attempt to destroy the idea that Nietzsche found Socrates an execrable character is *too* successful. He was quite correct in speaking of "Nietzsche's admiration for Socrates,"²⁵ but he remains noticeably silent about Nietzsche's antagonism

toward him. As Werner Dannhauser puts it, Kaufmann oversimplifies Nietzsche's attitude toward Socrates "by making him [Nietzsche] seem at once less ambiguous and less interesting than he really is."²⁶

We agree that Kaufmann makes Nietzsche's relationship to Socrates "less interesting" than it is, but do not follow Dannhauser's claim that this relationship is one of ambiguity.²⁷ Marianne Cowan also suggests an ambiguity in Nietzsche's attitude toward Socrates saying, the latter "remained an insuperable obstacle to him throughout his life."²⁸ Karl Jaspers seems to touch all bases in regard to the matter at hand. First he says Nietzsche recognized Socrates as a great man but, at the same time is "highly ambiguous."²⁹ He goes on to say that Nietzsche is "forever attacking"³⁰ Socrates "but again Nietzsche appears to feel close to this same Socrates."³¹ On the other hand, Nietzsche's remark that Socrates is "a *buffa* with the instincts of Voltaire" (MXVIII,432) is, says Jaspers, a rejection that "sounds decisive."³² In the end, one wonders who is more ambiguous, Nietzsche or Jaspers.

The impression that Nietzsche is ambiguous toward Socrates is understandable since he himself seems to cause it. He says for example "I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said--and did not say." (V², GS,340) On the other hand, Socrates is "a dangerous force that undermines life." (VI³,E:BT,1) Our task is to show why Nietzsche both admired and at the same time attacked Socrates. But we must see this "problem in its proper place --that is, in the context of the other problems that *belong with it.*"³³ In doing this, two points become clear: a) Nietzsche is not ambiguous toward Socrates, and b) from the clinical standpoint of the physician, the question as to whether or not Nietzsche "admired" Socrates is superficial.

Nietzsche's appreciated Socrates because he is

among those who invented "the archetypes of philosophical thought."³⁴ In this light Nietzsche says:

All other cultures are put to shame by the...philosophical company represented by the ancient Greek masters Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Democritus, and Socrates. These men are monolithic.³⁵

Socrates always remained a great philosopher in Nietzsche's estimation because "with him the line of original and typical 'sophai' is exhausted."³⁶ And since Nietzsche recognized "the pre-Platonic philosophers as...one homogeneous company,"³⁷ then Socrates remained one of the great "ancient Greek masters."³⁸

The attack on Socrates is founded on a point already raised in describing the reason for Nietzsche's "admiration" of him. Certainly Socrates is among the original *sophai* of ancient Greece and hence Nietzsche's sees him as a great philosopher; but with Socrates this line "is exhausted." The failure of the pre-Socratics to provide a new "spiritual" paradigm led to the continual depletion of strength within the cultural organism and in this way "the decline keeps pace." (MXIX,864) Socrates flourished in an age betraying the "symptoms of a decline of strength, of impending old age, and of physiological weariness." (III¹, BT:5,4) Nietzsche's attack on Socrates hinges on how the latter's philosophizing betrays cultural exhaustion. With Socrates, philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power" (VI²,B,9) goes into decline since the "spirituality" embodied in his philosophizing has "all the instincts of the older Hellenes against it." (VI³,7:III,4)

Nietzsche acknowledges the greatness of Socrates because he provides one of the "archetypes of philosophical thought."³⁹ But Nietzsche attacks him because through the latter the archetype of philosophical decadence finds expression. Socrates was among "the line of original and typical 'sophoi'" of Greek antiquity, but as "a monstrosity *per defectum*." (III¹,BT,13) We should always bear in mind that

when the reformation identified by Nietzsche with the pre-Socratics "never occurred"⁴⁰ then "all that remained was Socrates."⁴¹ Nietzsche always saw Socrates' greatness, but since the "value for life is ultimately decisive," (MXIX, 493) Socrates remained, in comparison to the pre-Socratics, at the lowest order of rank.

The attempts to figure out whether or not Nietzsche "admired," "rejected," or "hated" Socrates are understandable. After all, Nietzsche puzzles us with an attack on one of the most revered figures of Western philosophy while at the same time expressing his admiration for him. However, this approach leads to multiple "ambiguities" and remains superficial in that the *physiological* foundations for Nietzsche's remarks on Socrates are, if not obscured, then ignored. We turn now to look at how Socrates embodies the physiological degeneration of his age.

We have seen that a powerful aristocracy is essential to a healthy culture since it serves as the dominating drive within the social organism. It harnesses the other drives in the social organism toward the goal of power. But by the time of Socrates, Nietzsche sees the old nobility to have faded in strength. During such times the lower echalons, those elements that have been repressed and exploited by the aristocracy, start to move around more freely. This is possible because the discipline of a firm order of rank is no longer strictly adhered to and "degeneration was everywhere silently preparing itself: the old Athens was coming to an end." (VI³, T:III, 9)

It is precisely in the lowest orders of the social organism that Nietzsche places Socrates, saying he "belonged, in his origins, to the lowest orders: Socrates was rabble." (VI³, T:III, 3) Yet the importance of Socrates' origins does not lie so much in the fact that he was of "the lowest orders," (VI³, T:III, 3) but rather in how a person of such low rank "got himself taken seriously." (VI³, T:III, 5) In so

far as Socrates was taken seriously, this is, for Nietzsche, symptomatic of general breakdown and decline. In short, the distance with which the old nobility held itself from the "rabble" was clearly fading. That Socrates should have access to "the leading circles of Athens," (VI³,7:III,8) is symptomatic of decline because "it is one of life's processes to exclude the forms of decline and decay." (MXVIII,339) Clearly, the physiological function of eliminating or controlling dangerous elements in the social organism was breaking down.

To emphasize that Socrates was of degenerate origins, Nietzsche mentions "how ugly he was." (VI³,7:III,3) Since Nietzsche says Socrates was not a beauty to behold, we are tempted to say of Nietzsche what he said of George Sand; that *he* writes "with the manners of ill-bred boys". (VI³,7:X,6) The polemical tone in regard to Socrates' ugliness is undeniable. But this is not mere irreverence and an argument *ad hominum*, since Nietzsche quickly points out the physiological significance of Socrates' ugliness saying it "is frequently...the sign of...a development *retarded* by interbreeding. Otherwise it appears as a development in *decline*." (VI³,7:III,3) To push the point of Socrates' dubious origins and how there is something "reserved, hidden, subterranean" (VI³,7:III,4) about him, Nietzsche connects him to the darker, sordid side of any society in saying;

Anthropologists among criminologists tell us the typical criminal is ugly: *monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo*. But the criminal is a *decadent*. Was Socrates a typical criminal?--At least that famous physiognomist's opinion...would not contradict this idea. A foreigner passing through Athens who knew how to read faces told Socrates... that he was a *monstrum*--that he contained within him every kind of foul vice and lust. And Socrates answered merely: 'You know me, sir!' (VI³,7:III,3)⁴²

We will see that Nietzsche took the encounter between Socrates and Zopyrus⁴³ very seriously. For now we must ask, what exactly does Nietzsche see in Socrates which is specifically "*decadent*," aberrational, criminal and si-

nister? Nietzsche says that "ugliness, an objection in itself, is among the Greeks almost a refutation." (VI³,7:III,3) But aside from Socrates' ugliness, what other physiological interpretations does he provide to explain Socrates as "a monstrosity *per defectum*?" (III¹,BT,13)

We find the answer to our question at least as early as 1872 in, *The Birth of Tragedy*, and again in 1888, the last year of Nietzsche's philosophical life in, *Twilight of the Idols*. In the former, Nietzsche talks about Socrates' astonishment that his contemporaries

were without a proper and sure insight, even with regard to their professions, and that they practiced them only by instinct. 'Only by instinct': with this phrase we touch upon the heart and core of the socratic tendency. (III¹,BT,13)

This "socratic tendency" is referred to in, *The Birth of Tragedy*, as a "hypertrophy [of] the logical nature." (III¹,BT,13) In, *Twilight of the Idols*, this tendency is called a "superfetation of the logical." (VI³,7:III,4) In the notes for, *The Will to Power* the symptoms of decadence in Socrates are "the superfetation of logic and the clarity of reason included. Both are abnormalities, both belong together." (MXVIII,433)

Why, we ask, is Socrates' enormous intellect symptomatic of decadence? To properly respond to this question, we must recall that in the phenomenon of decadence the instincts run riot without a dominating instinct to harness them. Nietzsche recognizes this physiological condition in both the Greek culture of Socrates' day and within Socrates himself. He says:

When that physiognomist had revealed to Socrates what he was, a cave of every evil lust, the great ironist uttered a phrase that provides the key to him. 'That is true,' he said, 'but I have become master of them all.' *How did Socrates become master of himself?*--His case was after all only the extreme case, only the most obvious instance of what had at that time begun to be the universal exigency: that no one was any longer master of himself, that the instincts were becoming mutually *antagonistic*. (VI³,7:III,9)

As we have seen, an organism within which the drives are "mutually antagonistic" is in a situation ripe for exhaustion. Nietzsche sees Socrates flourishing "among men of fatigued instincts" (VI²,B,212) and "physiological weariness." (III¹,B7:5,4) Thus the exhaustion typical of a prolonged antagonism among the drives had set into "the age of Socrates." (VI²,B,212) When all the drives are antagonistic and "all seek satisfaction, a man of profound mediocrity must result." (MXIX,677)

But Socrates was by no means "mediocre." Yet in light of "the admitted...anarchy of his instincts which indicates *décadence* in Socrates," (VI³,T:III,4) how "did Socrates become master of *himself*?" (VI³,T:III,9) The means by which he gained self-mastery is, says Nietzsche, the "superfetation of logic and...[the] clarity of reason included." (MXVIII,433) But we have seen that "in the case of Socrates" (VI³,T:III,7) these are "abnormalities" which "belong together." (MXVIII,433) Hence, through those characteristics indicating "*décadence* in Socrates" (VI³,T:III,4) he gained self-mastery.

To unravel this puzzle, we must recall an extremely important point made in chapter one concerning decadence as a physiological phenomenon. There we noted that *having* "to combat one's instincts...is the formula for *décadence*." (VI³,T:III,11) Nietzsche applies this "formula" to Socrates who, by means "of logic and clarity of reason," (MXVIII,433) fought against the "anarchy of his instincts." (VI³,T:III,4) As Nietzsche puts it:

Rationality was at that time divined as a saviour; neither Socrates nor his 'invalids' were free to be rational or not, as they wished--it was *de rigueur*, it was their last expedient. (VI³,T:III,10)

Socrates, countered "the dark desires by producing a permanent *daylight*--the daylight of reason" (VI³,T:III,10) and his contemporaries saw him as "a *physician*, a saviour."⁴⁴ (VI³,T:III,11) We must now look at how Socrates

"understood that all the world had need of...his expedient, his cure" (VI³,7:III,9) and why, as a cultural physician, he was in fact an agent "of decay." (VI³,7:III,2)

Again we are tempted to explore Nietzsche's perception of Socrates in great detail, but this would take us too far afield. We must remain within the parameters of our study and look only at the essential physiological factors underlying this perception.

"In the age of Socrates, among men of fatigued instincts," (VI²,B,212) Nietzsche sees the degeneration of the Greek culture to have been well underway. The new "spiritual" frontier Nietzsche identified with the pre-Socratics "remained at promises and declarations." (IV²,HH:I,261) That is, they failed to provide a new "spirituality," a new *deception* for cultural growth and "all that remained was Socrates."⁴⁹ When we looked at decadence in the individual or cultural organism we saw that a condition of exhaustion must characterize the organism. In this state, a dominant drive is lacking to harness the power of the other drives toward its perspective of power. All the drives demand satisfaction and the strength of the organism is dissipated and this is the condition within which decadence emerges. That is, the organism attempts to gain some control of itself and the instinct of preservation emerges as a *reaction* to a state of siege. For Nietzsche, Socrates' decadence only reflects that of his age since he was "the most obvious instance of what had at that time begun to be the universal exigency...no one was any longer master of himself." (VI³,7:III,9)

To understand who the philosopher is, we must consider in "what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other." (VI²,B,6) According to Nietzsche, Socrates agreed that he was "a cave of every evil lust" (VI³,7:III,9) and to "the anarchy of his instincts." (VI³,7:III,4) But in Socrates' statement, "I have

become master of them all," (VI³,7:III,9) we find the "phrase that provides the key to him." (VI³,7:III,9) This phrase is a physiological clue; Socrates became "master of *himself*" (VI³,7:III,9) through the instinct of self-preservation. Anyone who considers, says Nietzsche,

the basic drives of man...will find that...every single one...would like only too well to represent just *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and...*master* of all the other drives. For every drive wants to be *master*--and it attempts to philosophize in *that spirit*. (VI²,8,6)

In the case of Socrates it is the deception peculiar to the instinct of preservation that finds a philosophical voice.

We saw that in conditions of exhaustion the instinct of preservation will tend to consolidate its own power by dominating the weakest drives of the organism.⁴⁶ In this way its perspective gains in influence over the more powerful drives which, in their fatigued state, are more easily defeated. As the instinct of preservation gains in ascendancy, the intensity of the most powerful ones are levelled-off and devitalized to the extent that the organism gains *stability*.

We have also seen that self-preservation is the first instinct of "spirit." In healthy organisms, the deception of stability characteristic of this drive is vitally important in rendering a stable and fixed world of "being." Upon this deception the more powerful drives manipulate the world according to whatever affirms their perspective. But in the case of decadence, the perspective of preservation has no rivals. It does not strive for *growth*, but rather reveals its will to power in the demand for a fixed and static world of "being." Like any drive, that of preservation wants "to represent...*itself* as the...purpose of existence and...*master* of...the other drives." (VI²,8,6) In the case of decadence the instinct of preservation dominates. It evaluates everything in terms of its perspective, i.e., stability, and is antagonistic to all that threatens it.

The instinct of preservation can only gain in strength within conditions of physiological exhaustion. We have seen that to "have to combat one's instincts...is the formula for *décadence*." (VI³,7:III,11) This means that the instinct of preservation must fight the others, and in so doing reveals this formula. But this sounds strange since we have seen that the instincts are always ready to go to war to establish their supremacy over each other. The mode of combat in the case of *décadence* is, however, quite different from that typical of the healthy organism.

In healthy organisms, the drives battle it out until one, or a few of them, emerge as strongest. Then comes the exploitation of the defeated toward the goal of power particular to the perspective of the victor or victors. In decadent organisms, the most powerful drives battle for supremacy and thereby deplete the strength of the organism. It is precisely these most powerful drives that the instinct of preservation must combat. But in a state of exhaustion the instinct of preservation is still not strong enough to defeat the most powerful drives. Thus it must, as we said, either dominate or form alliances with the very weakest instincts in the organism. In this way it gains ascendancy over the more powerful drives that are split-off into their own factions. The effect of the instinct of preservation is a devitalization of the most powerful drives and a *suspension* of their constant feuding.

Once this stability is realized, the instinct of preservation cannot exploit the most powerful ones. The repression of the most powerful drives is essential to the preservation of the organism. There is no possibility of the instinct of preservation harnessing the more powerful ones since the control of the former presupposes the paralysis of the latter. Thus with the ascendancy of the instinct of preservation the goal of Life as power is suspended. This occurs since the instinct of preservation cannot exploit

those essential to growth which are by that fact necessarily stronger than that of preservation.

In the healthy organism, the *combined* power of its drives is utilized toward life as power. In the decadent organism, not only is its combined power not realized, but its very survival *depends* on not growing in strength. This "is the formula for *décadence*," (VI³,T:III,11) it is the necessity "to have to combat one's instincts." (VI³,T:III, 11) In the case of decadence, the instinct of preservation dominates the others but not by virtue of strength and the ability to exploit them toward power. On the contrary, it dominates by virtue of weakness and the desire for stability and rest.

In the case of Socrates, the instinct of preservation enabled him to "become master of *himself*." (VI³,T:III, 9) Earlier in this chapter, we talked about the instinct of preservation as the first instinct of "spirit." In considering this point, we saw the role of this drive within consciousness, reason, language and the herd instinct. Since the instinct of preservation dominates Socrates, we will now look at Nietzsche's perception of these factors as symptomatic of "*décadence* in Socrates." (VI³,T:III,4)

As the first instinct of "spirit," self-preservation provides as we saw, the all important deception of "being." Nietzsche identifies this deception with our capacity to rationalize the world, i.e., negate the character of becoming and see a fixed and stable world of being. In this way, our species derives "its conception of reality" (MXIX, 480) and comprehends "enough of the calculable and constant for it to base a scheme of behaviour." (MXIX,480) In short, we project "the conditions of *our* preservation as...the 'real' world a world not of change and becoming, but one of being." (MXIX,507)

In the case of Socrates, the first instinct of "spirit" is not exploited by more powerful drives within an

order of rank but rather, is itself the dominating drive. Here *growth* in power is not possible since the organism seeks merely to preserve itself and, as we saw, the will to exist is one of the lowest forms of will to power. (MXIX, 774) In Socrates' rational capacity we find the dominant *perspective* of the instinct of preservation demanding a stable world of being as "rationality at any cost." (VI³, 7: III, 11) This "rationality at any cost" is most exquisitely manifest in Socrates as *conscious* thought. That is, thought not unconsciously guided by powerful drives, but on the contrary is levelled off in *language*. With Socrates, the man who is supremely rational and articulates that rationality is truly wise. ✓

As we saw, the development of consciousness and language "go hand in hand." (V², GS, 354) Through their simultaneous development, we learned to articulate a fixed and static world. This was necessary because as "the most endangered animal" (V², GS, 354) we had to "communicate and to understand each other quickly and subtly." (V², GS, 354) The dominating drive of preservation is manifest in Socrates who of *necessity* lives according to conscious thought. And conscious thought is "the last and latest development of the organic and hence...is most unfinished and unstrong." (V², GS, 11)

For Nietzsche, Socrates' rationality, the deception of a stable world of "being," lies *exclusively* in "the absolute...neutrality of...consciousness." (MXVIII, 434) And since "the way reason enters consciousness" (V², GS, 354) is via language, then for Socrates the wise man is he who *articulates* a rational world. The wise man is the rational man, who resorts to "clarity, severity and logicality as weapons against the ferocity of the drives." (MXVIII, 433) Whatever is not in accord with reason and incapable of being articulated by means of "acoustical signs," (VI², B, 268) is false. And the individual who cannot *justify* himself according to

conscious thought is a fool. Socrates is eminently able to articulate a rational world, since after all, he is the dialectician *par excellence*. Thus Nietzsche will say:

With Socrates Greek taste undergoes a change in favour of dialectics: what is really happening when that happens? It is above all the defeat of a *nobler* taste; with dialectics the rabble gets on top. Before Socrates, the dialectical manner was repudiated in good society...one was compromised by it...such presentation of one's reasons was regarded with mistrust. Honest things, like honest men, do not carry their reasons exposed in this fashion.... Wherever authority is still part of accepted usage...one does not 'give reasons' but commands. (VI³,7:III,5)

Prior to the age of Socrates the noble type did not justify himself according to reason: "Why this display of reasons? Why should one demonstrate? Against others one possessed authority. One commanded: that sufficed.... One simply had no place for dialectic." (MXVIII,431) When a flourishing aristocracy controls a severe order of rank "the dialectician is a kind of buffoon: he is laughed at." (VI³,7:III,5) But Socrates as a decadent flourishing in an age of degeneration is, says Nietzsche "the buffoon who *got himself taken seriously*." (VI³,7:III,5) He represents a physiological revaluation of the values of Greek antiquity. No longer does the Greek culture seek the enhancement of power, nor does a life of victory and conquest the mark of the noble man. Rather with Socrates the "rational" man, the "dialectician" is the most noble type and we find the profound *illusion* that first saw the...world in the person of Socrates: the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of logic, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and...is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it. (III¹,BT,15)

Wherever Socrates does not see reason, he recognizes falsehood. For Nietzsche, everything is will to power and reason is merely a system of errors necessary to the preservation of life. Given this state of affairs, the cosmos cannot in itself be said to be rational.

With Socrates, the instinct of preservation insists on its interpretation to the extent that life as the chaos of will to power is not as it "ought" to be. In this way Socrates "infers the essential perversity and reprehensibility of what exists." (III¹,BT,13) Socrates judges this world as immoral in that it is not rational. In this, he "negated all the presuppositions of the 'noble Greek' of the old stamp." (MXVIII,435) The morality of the old nobility was founded on life as will to power, but with Socrates moral judgments are torn from...their Greek...ground and soil.... The great concepts 'good' and 'just' are severed from the presuppositions to which they belong and, as liberated 'ideas,' become objects of dialectic.... And then one had...to invent the abstractly perfect man as well:--good, just, wise, a dialectician...a plant removed from all soil; a humanity without any...regulating instincts; a virtue that 'proves' itself with reasons.... In short, the consequence of the denaturalization of moral values was the creation of a degenerate type of man--'the good man,' 'the happy man,' 'the wise man.'--Socrates represents a moment of the profoundest perversity in the history of values. (MXVIII,430)

Nietzsche sees Socrates identifying reason with virtue and happiness, as if, the more rational a man is, he by that fact, is more virtuous and happy. Thus Nietzsche says:

I seek to understand out of what idiosyncrasy that Socratic equation reason = virtue = happiness derives: that bizarrest of equations...which has in particular all the instincts of the older Hellenes against it. (VI³,7:III,4)

The noble Greeks "of the old stamp" (MXVIII,435) lived in unity with the law of life which demands "victory, opponents overcome, the feeling of power across wider domains than hitherto." (MXIX,703) The drive to power was their virtue and victory was their happiness. With Socrates the virtuous man is the reasonable man: he does not "live dangerously." (V²,65,283).

The rational man takes no risks since this involves putting one's life in jeopardy; the 'good' man does not seek the greatest *resistance* nor does he embrace suffering, pain and death for the sake of victory. No, he is a

"virtuous" fellow because a rational man cannot do harm to himself or anyone else. He does not seek situations wherein his life is on the line since this flies in the face of the stable world he cherishes. His instinct of preservation denies the necessity of life as "essentially appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker." (VI²,B, 259) He is lured by the deception of "stability" appropriate to self-preservation and judges the law of life as "unreasonable" and therefore "bad." He holds that nobody 'wants to do harm to himself, therefore all that is bad is done involuntarily. For the bad do harm to themselves: this they would not do if they knew that the bad is bad. Hence the bad are bad only because of an error; if one removes the error, one necessarily makes them--good.' (VI²,B,190)

This kind of thinking is the mark, says Nietzsche, of a "profoundly average creature." (MXIX,873) He seeks to preserve himself and, from the standpoint of the old warrior elite, he is a coward. When Socrates flourished, no one had the courage to conceive virtue as a consequence of immorality (of a will to power) in the service of the species (or of the race or *polis*), for the will to power was considered immorality. (MXVIII,428)

The "'noble Greek' of the old stamp" (MXVIII,435) sought power in accord with the law of life. However, in "the age of Socrates, among men of fatigued instincts," (VI²,B,212) we see the "fanaticism of its interest in 'happiness.'" (MXVIII,433) Nietzsche says that "as long as life is ascending, happiness and instinct are one." (VI²,7:III, 11) This echoes something we have already seen, that is: "Life is only a *means* to something; it is the expression of forms of the growth of power." (MXIX,706) All living things strive for power and "all...growth means striving against something that resists.... For what do the trees in a jungle fight each other? For 'happiness'?--*For power!*" (MXIX,704) Only success in overpowering what gives resistance "*brings happiness*"; (MXIX,1022) it is the "triumphant consciousness of power and victory." (MXIX,1023)

Human beings, like all living things, are will to power and in the enhancement of ourselves as *such* the unity with life is realized. We "seek ourselves" in the pursuit of power. Hence Nietzsche's statement: "'You shall become what you are.'" (V²,GS,270)⁴⁷

But the reasonable man requires precisely the opposite. He wants a stable world without conflict or threat. A world of conflict and the battle for supremacy is irrational and hence immoral. He strives for "happiness," that is, a stable world wherein he may preserve himself. The voice of reason "corrects" the error of conflict and becoming and affirms a stable world as the good. In seeing the "good," the rational man is necessarily virtuous because he knows "that the bad is the bad." (VI²,B,190) With Socrates happiness necessarily follows from virtue:

Why virtue?—Because it is supremely rational and because rationality makes it impossible to err in the choice of means: it is as *reason* that virtue is the way to happiness. (MXVIII,434)

The voice of reason always corrects the world; to follow this voice is to avoid what is wrong, i.e., a world of struggle and the battle for *power*. To avoid what is wrong is to be a virtuous man who sees a "true" world of being and stability as the genuine "good." This insight, in perfect accord with the conditions necessary for his preservation, cannot fail to bring 'happiness' to this "average creature." (MXIX,873)

We see why Nietzsche says the "Socratic equation reason = virtue = happiness" (VI³,7:III,4) has "all the instincts of the older Hellenes against it." (VI³,7:III,4) This equation is symptomatic of decadence since, in its very heart lies a negative judgement on life as will to power. In Socrates the instinct of preservation rules his perspective to such an extent that he will see reason as morally superior to everything irrational. And since on the contrary life as will to power is irrational, Socrates "infers the essen-

tial perversity and reprehensibility of what exists." (III¹, BT,13)

The "older Hellenes," (VI²,7:III,4) guided by the most powerful drives, lived in unity with life as power; their virtue, their justice, their right and wrong, expressed the values of a natural order of rank. They were "a sovereignly developed type...in which everything has become instinct" (MXVIII,423) and possessed a "real morality, i.e., instinctive certainty in actions." (MXVIII,423) This type does "not reflect on their rights, on the principles on which they act"; (MXVIII,423) "One commanded: that sufficed." (MXVIII,431) With Socrates we find "the *instincts of decadence* translated into formulas of morality." (MXVIII, 423) That is, the weakest instincts emerge to *negate* those of powerful and life-affirming drives.

This negation is essential in the case of decadence since the most powerful drives are the greatest threat to the preservation of the organism. It can only *affirm itself via the negation* of the very foundations of life, i.e., the most powerful drives.

We have seen that the exhausted, decadent organism is seemingly ever on the verge of losing control of himself.⁴⁶ He is always in a state of tension and constant irritability in the face of all natural stirrings and inclinations...as if his self-control were endangered. No longer may he entrust himself to any instinct or any free wing-beat; he stands in a fixed position...armed against himself.... (V²,GS,305)

Anything that manifests spontaneous, healthy life cannot but threaten the decadent type. He *resents* those who feel no need to justify themselves dialectically and reveal a "proof of strength" (MXIX,800) in a love for "bravado...fearlessness, indifference to life or death." (MXIX,800)⁴⁷ In short, he despises the strength of the noble which has the instinctive and therefore *unconscious conviction* of his own worth. Confronted with the noble man, the rational man as

symptomatic of decadence, reacts by negating the value of the former. In this way the decadent takes *revenge* on life itself.

In this context Nietzsche refers to dialectics as "a form of *revenge* in the case of Socrates" (VI³,7:III,7) who laughed

at the awkward incapacity of noble Athenians who, like all noble men, were men of instinct and could never give sufficient information about the reasons for their actions. (VI², B,191)

The "malicious Socrates" (VI²,6:III,7) is revealed in his irony. He plays the humble man who knows nothing and is supremely ignorant; he wants to know the nature of justice, the good and the beautiful but "made mock when morality did not know how to justify itself logically." (MXVIII,430)

Socrates

leaves it to his opponent to demonstrate he is not an idiot: he enrages, he at the same time makes helpless. The dialectician *devitalizes* his opponent's intellect. (VI³,7:III,7)

The "intellect" Nietzsche is referring to here is that unconscious "primeval mechanism" (V²,GS,111) of the body. With Socrates, one must be able to "give reasons" and "prove" one's value as a human being according to the dictates of reason. That is, one must be able to demonstrate one's worth according to conscious thought, i.e., dialectically. The noble man only fails in this enterprise and when he does, he becomes confused and loses the instinctive certitude of himself and his value. This is the devitalization carried out by Socrates and why Nietzsche sees him "as an instrument of Greek disintegration, as a typical decadent." (VI³,E:BT,1)

When Socrates can instill the doubt as to one's value in so far as one cannot justify oneself dialectically, he takes his revenge. The noble cannot win against Socrates who is always "a superior dialectician" (VI²,B,191) Socrates "makes others furious and helpless, while...[remaining]... the embodiment of cool, triumphant reasonableness." (MXVIII,

431) With dialectics one "has a merciless weapon' in one's hands," (MXVIII,431) and with this weapon Socrates renders the noble man impotent. Here the instinct of preservation reveals its will to power.

Decadence is that condition wherein the lowest instincts in the organism are exploited by that of preservation toward devitalizing the most powerful drives. The situation is the same for decadence in the cultural organism. Hence Nietzsche's references to Socrates as "the roturier," (MXVIII,431) "*canaille au fond*" (MXVIII,432) and "rabble" (VI³,7:III,3) must be seen in this physiological context.

Socrates, as a sublime manifestation of the instinct of preservation is the advocate of all the weakest instincts in the cultural organism. That is, the instincts of the weak and underprivileged...of the exceptions, the solitaries, the abandoned, of the *abortus* in what is lofty and petty...of those habituated to suffering, who need a noble interpretation of their condition. (MXVIII, 423)

Socrates provides the "noble interpretation" for the weak to justify their weakness in that he represents the rabble, the herd's instinct of preservation. The deception peculiar to preservation is reason which, as we saw, enters conscious thought via language. For Nietzsche, dialectics is the most exquisite example of this state of affairs. Socrates, as the dialectician *par excellence*, can always "prove" that the man who follows reason is superior in "virtue" and "happiness." The old nobility on the other hand, could "prove" neither its superiority nor therefore its right to lead and determine the values of the culture.

Through the example of Socrates, the dialectician becomes "popular." It is, after all, fascinating to see the noble actually lose in combat to Socrates "the wisest chatterer of all time," (V²,GS,340) who "belonged, in his origins, to the lowest orders." (VI³,7:III,3) The dialectician becomes the new hero; he is more "conscious" of himself, the

one who "knows himself" *and can prove it*. He is the voice of reason, i.e., the deception of the instinct of preservation, and articulates a stable world where everyone --even the aristocrat--can be "happy."

Thus with Socrates the master dialectician, the "rabble," long enslaved, makes its play for power. Dialectic is a means to undermining the authority of the old nobility, its customs and traditions. It is the perfect vehicle for the values of the herd because it reveals its *essential* instinct; self-preservation. With dialectic the values of the herd, unlike those of their old masters, can be "demonstrated." In this sense Socrates is seen by Nietzsche as essential to the revaluation of the values of Greek antiquity.

Unable to "prove" its right to rule through reason, the old nobility continued to lose its authority. Hence "the mob achieved victory with dialectics" (MXVIII,431) as "a form of mob revenge: the ferocity of the oppressed finds an outlet in the cold knife-thrust of the syllogism." (MXVIII,431) For Nietzsche it is thanks to Socrates that "the rabble gets on top" (VI³,7:III,5) because [p]ositing proofs as the presupposition of personal excellence in virtue signified nothing less than the disintegration of the Greek instincts. They are themselves types of disintegration, all these great 'virtuous men' and word-spinners. (MXVIII,430)

The foregoing may give the impression that the demise of the old aristocracy occurred when the market rabble took up dialectics and simply out-talked those in power. This, of course, is absurd. For Nietzsche, it is more accurate to say the aristocracy talked itself out of its right to rule. With Socrates "Greek taste undergoes a change in favour of dialectics." (VI³,7:III,5) "Greek taste" was not determined by the lowest social orders but by "the aristocratic circles of Athens." (VI³,7:III,8)

Prior to Socrates "the dialectical manner was repudiated in good society," (VI³,7:III,5) consequently some change had occurred among the ruling class of Socrates' day. Wherever authority is still part of accepted usage and one does not 'give reasons' but commands, the dialectician is a kind of buffoon...he is not taken seriously. Socrates was the buffoon who got *himself taken seriously*. (VI³,7:III,5) "This reversal of taste in favour of dialectics is," says Nietzsche, "a great question mark." (MXVIII,431) And he asks "what was really happening when that happened?" (VI³,7:III,5) He answers by saying that authority was no longer "part of accepted usage" (VI³,7:III,5) among the ruling class.

The strength of the culture as a whole was being squandered, the old traditions and customs, i.e., the old deceptions of "spirit," no longer commanded respect. The pre-Socratics failed in providing a new "spirituality" and hence the means to concentrate cultural strength on new transformations of growth in power. This led to a general state of exhaustion wherein the weakest instincts rally around that of preservation and make their bid for power. The old order of rank is breaking down in the cultural as well as the individual organism; which is to say, the aristocracy and the aristocrats themselves. Thus "the conservatives of ancient Athens" (VI²,8,212) who originally coined the values of the culture according to strength, let themselves go--'toward happiness,' as they said; toward pleasure, as they acted--and...all the while still mouthed the ancient pompous words to which their lives no longer gave them any right. (VI²,8,212)

Socrates was, says Nietzsche, a decadent, but as we saw earlier on, his

case was after all only the extreme case, only the most obvious instance of what had at that time begun to be the universal exigency: that no one was any longer master of himself, that the instincts were becoming mutually *antagonistic*. (VI³,7:III,9)

In degenerate ages "the refuse, the waste, gain importance" (MXIX,864) and the "sick and weak have fascination on their

side." (MXIX,864) Socrates is an "abnormality" (MXVIII,433) from "the lowest orders.... One knows, one sees for oneself, how ugly he was." (VI³,7:III,3) His ugliness intimates "the way in which Socrates could repel" (VI³,7:III,8) consequently "it is...necessary to explain the fact that he exercised fascination." (VI³,7:III,8)

In degenerate types there is always a morbid fascination with the repulsive and deformed. Socrates, as a case in decadence, "exercised fascination as this extreme case--his fear-inspiring ugliness expressed it for every eye to see." (VI³,7:III,9) But unlike the "aristocratic Athenians," (VI³,7:III,9) he had "become master of *himself*." (VI³,7:III,9) For this very reason "it goes without saying," (VI³,7:III,9) that "he fascinated even more...as the answer, as the solution, as the apparent *cure* for this case." (VI³,7:III,9)

Since "the *monstrum in animo* was the universal danger," (VI³,7:III,9) Socrates, as the voice of reason, embodied an "apparent *cure*" (VI³,7:III,9) for decadence. His ugliness was only the "most obvious instance" (VI³,7:III,9) of a general degeneration indicated in "the antagonism of the passions; two, three, a multiplicity of 'souls in one breast.'" (MXIX,778) Such a condition always leads to "inner ruin, disintegration...inner conflict and anarchism--unless one passion at last becomes master." (MXIX,778)

One passion *did* become master in the case of Socrates, self-preservation, and with its attendant deception of "reason," he went into combat with his most powerful drives. This was "his expedient, his *cure*, his personal art of self-preservation." (VI³,7:III,9) With this "*cure*" we find the most significant key to the aristocratic fascination with Socrates. It is the most important "way in which Socrates exercised fascination: he seemed to be a physician, a saviour." (VI³,7:III,11)

It is in this role as *physician* that Nietzsche identifies Socrates' function as a philosopher. Just as the pre-Socratics "(though they were quite unconscious of it) tended toward the healing and purification of the whole" culture, so does Socrates. But he lacked the "pure, naive conscience" (IV², HH, 261) of the pre-Socratics as regards his role as a philosopher. He

divined even more. He saw behind his aristocratic Athenians; he grasped that *his case*, the idiosyncrasy of his case was no longer exceptional. The same kind of degeneration was everywhere silently preparing itself: the old Athens was coming to an end.--And Socrates understood that all the world had need of him--his expedient, his cure, his personal art of self-preservation.... Everywhere the instincts were in anarchy; everywhere people were but five steps from excess: the *monstrum in anima* was the universal danger. (VI³, T:III, 9)

Hence Nietzsche claims that the following prescription occurred to Socrates: "'The instincts want to play the tyrant; we must devise a *counter-tyrant* who is stronger.'" (VI³, T:III, 9) This "counter-tyrant" is the "harshest daylight, rationality at any cost, life bright, cold, circumspect, conscious, without instinct, in opposition to the instincts." (VI³, T:III, 11) The cure is to make men rational, through it they can *combat* the anarchy of their drives and *ipso facto* be "virtuous" and "happy." Everyone can be master of himself and Socrates' road to self-mastery was not via harnessing the most powerful drives toward power but in fighting them.

The formula for *his* brand of self-mastery was "his equalization of reason = virtue = happiness. It was with this absurdity of a doctrine of identity that he fascinated." (MXVIII, 432) Socrates' own drives were in anarchy (VI³, T:III, 4) and he saw that "*his case*" (VI³, T:III, 9) was "no longer exceptional.... Everywhere the instincts were in anarchy." (VI³, T:III, 9) But through the fiction of reason, he battled his own powerful drives and attained a state of equilibrium, consequently:

Rationality was at that time divined as a saviour; neither Socrates nor his 'invalids' were free to be rational or not ...it was *de rigueur*, it was their last expedient. The fanaticism with which the whole of Greek thought throws itself at rationality betrays a state of emergency: one was in peril, one had only one choice: either to perish or--be *absurdly rational*. (VI³,T:III,10)

Seeing decadence all around him, and *convinced* that "reason = virtue = happiness," (VI³,T:III,4) we find, says

Nietzsche,

that Socratic sarcastic assurance of the old physician and plebian who cut ruthlessly into his own flesh, as he did into the flesh of the 'noble,' with a look that said clearly enough: 'Don't dissemble in front of me! Here--we are equal.' (VI²,B,212)

Another characteristic of the pre-Socratic philosophers noticeable in Socrates is that like the former he also set out to "protect and defend his native land."²¹ In going into battle against decadence Socrates wanted to save his culture from destruction. On the other hand, we saw that for Nietzsche the pre-Socratics were "violent and combative" (IV²,HH,261) "tyrants of the spirit." (IV²,HH,261) Socrates was himself a tyrant of the "spirit"; he devised "a counter-tyrant," (VI³,T:III,9) the "tyrant of *reason*." (VI³,T:III, 10)

Like the pre-Socratics, he was convinced that with reason he could "solve the riddle of the world" (IV²,HH,261) and "penetrate the deepest abysses of being." (III¹,BT,15) Unlike the pre-Socratics however, Socrates not only saw reason as "capable of knowing being but even of *correcting* it." (III¹,BT,15) Once again we find that pride typical of "the ancient Greek masters."²² Just like his predecessors Socrates had the "regal self-esteem that he is the only rewarded wooer of truth."²³ Convinced by "rationality at any cost," (VI³,T:III,11) Socrates "conceives it to be his duty to correct existence: all alone, with an expression of irreverence and superiority." (III¹,BT,13)

We noted the agonal instinct, the Greek love of combat, certainly flourished among the pre-Socratics, and again, Socrates has this in common with his predecessors. He has that "boundless ambition" (V¹,D,547) to bring his culture to heel under the sway of his "truth." Socrates' lust for "insight alone"⁵⁴ is that implacable drive for knowledge characteristic of the pre-Socratics who wanted to have "the tremendous hieroglyphics of existence" (III¹,U:S,5) at their command. The agonal instinct is manifest in the pre-Socratics in their combat for "spiritual" supremacy. But this battle presupposes that each felt himself to have been victorious over life itself. Each felt himself to have understood the mysteries of the cosmos and in this conviction, each felt he had conquered life. In this way was the drive for knowledge a lust to dominate and command the world as will to power. For this reason Nietzsche saw the pre-Socratics to have been in accord and affirmed the law of life.

Socrates also goes into battle with life and like his predecessors even affirms life as power. But in "his case" (VI³,7:III,9) this "affirmation" presupposes the negation of the foundation essential to the health of man as will to power. In short, Socrates as a decadent *had to deny* the most powerful instincts of life because "armed against himself," (V²,GS,305) "he feels them to be a fatality." (VI³,7:X,45) This is Socrates' "physiological self-contradiction." (VI³,7:X,41) Since he and his culture are threatened by the instincts of life, this contradiction is expressed in the weapon Socrates used to fight the law of life; namely, "reason = virtue = happiness." (VI³,7:III,10)

The *body* "infected with every error of logic there is" (VI³,7:IV,1) is the source of our perception of a world of becoming and chaos. Reason enables us to *correct* this error and in so doing we are thereby "virtuous" and "happy." The pre-Socratics affirmed the law of life by harnessing this power in themselves toward a victory over the cosmos.

Socrates' "victory" lies in denying this law as "irrational" and "immoral." Thus in his case, the agonal instinct is revealed in the battle to *undermine* the foundations of life; it was exactly the opposite with the pre-Socratics.

Decadence is as we saw, a physiological revaluation of values within the organism, since the weakest drives gain power and determine its perspective. The alliance of the weakest drives with that of preservation reveals will to power since these determine the perspective of the organism. But in this condition the greatest sources of power are kept in check or suspended by the weakest drives. In its attempt to preserve itself, the organism is actually divided against itself doing all it can to negate the foundation of its strength. Thus as Nietzsche says, decadence is "a physiological defect [that] makes move upon move and takes step upon step as practice and procedure, as innovation in principles". (VI³,C,7)

Through this defect the weakness of the organism is actually enhanced as it sinks to lower levels of vitality:

Not that it grasps this: it dreams on the contrary, that it is getting back to wholeness, to unity, to strength of life: it thinks it will be in a state of redemption when the inner anarchy, the unrest between those opposing value drives, is at last put an end to. (MXVIII,351)

We saw that decadence and sickness go hand in hand and, since in sickness the organism "*prefers* what is harmful to it," (VI³,A,6) the pathological nature of decadence is revealed. We also saw the necessary opposition between the forces of "sickness" and "health" and how man as a form of will to power requires both for the cultivation of higher levels of power. The organism needs the *threat* of sickness as something to be overcome, this is its path to power. For every level of health there is a level of sickness and thus: Health and sickness are not essentially different, as the ancient practitioners and some practitioners even today suppose...there are only differences in degree between these

two kinds of existence: the exaggeration, the disproportion, the nonharmony of the normal phenomena constitute the pathological state. (MXVIII,47)

Decadence is this "pathological state" in the organism since it does not gain in power but rather, under the command of its weakest instincts, it wants mere self-preservation. But as we have seen, this is *not* the goal of life. In seeking to preserve itself the organism is inadvertantly bent on its own destruction.

Socrates, as a case in decadence, negates the foundation of life within an already exhausted and decadent culture. In him wisdom appears "as a raven which is inspired by the smell of carrion." (VI³,7:III,1) Socrates' "reason = virtue = happiness" (VI³,7:III,4) is, for Nietzsche "no more than a form of sickness." (VI³,7:III,11) He is the philosophical physician who represents, as Werner Dannhauser says, "a necessarily dubious case of the sick ministering to the sick."²²

Philosophy is always to be regarded from the standpoint of its "value for life" (MXIX,493), and hence its value is a "biological question." (MXVIII,41) Thus Socrates as an agent "of the dissolution of Greece, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek" (VI³,7:III,2) promotes a "physiological contradictoriness" (MXVIII,435) into his culture. Philosophy as "the most spiritual will to power" (VI²,B,9) originally sought a new deception, a new "spiritual" frontier for the growth of life. The philosopher "simply cannot keep from transposing his states...into the most spiritual form and distance: this art of transfiguration is philosophy." (V²,GS:Preface,3) Socrates expresses his "state" in the "spiritual form" of philosophy, but *not* toward a paradigm which will cultivate the growth of Greek culture. On the contrary, his "spiritual" paradigm is guided by the instinct of preservation and thus its fiction of rationality. This is why in "the case of Socrates" (VI³,E:I,1) Nietzsche sees philosophy go into decline.

Pre-Socratic philosophy, guided by the most powerful instincts, expressed a "triumphant gratitude that...has to inscribe itself in cosmic letters." (V²,GS:Preface,2) With Socrates, these powerful drives are denied as irrational and immoral. Nevertheless, Socrates, like his predecessors, set out to heal and purify his culture.⁵⁶ Like them, he wanted to "protect and defend his native land"⁵⁷ and bring about a reformation.

In this he exhibited the pride and conviction of possessing the "truth" and reveals his *greatness*. Like the pre-Socratics, he exhibits a profound pride in seeing himself able to pass "a just verdict on the whole fate of man ...on the highest fate that can befall individual men or entire nations." (III¹,U:5,3) In this way the great philosophical type feels the *power* to judge what ought to be preserved and what deserves to perish. For these reasons Nietzsche always saw Socrates in the "philosophical company represented by the ancient Greek masters,"⁵⁸ the pre-Socratics, and thereby "sure of our astonished veneration." (III¹,BT,13)

But in deciding what should be preserved and what should perish, Socrates betrays a symptom of decadence; that being how one knows "as little as possible about physiology." (MXVIII,423) Socrates commits an error "*in physiologicis...perilous to life.*" (MXVIII,454) In *having* to combat his own drives as a remedy against decadence, Socrates undermines the foundations of life within himself; this is his "physiological self-contradiction." (VI³,7:X,41) This contradiction is Socrates' philosophy as "reason = virtue = happiness." (VI³,7:III,10) This is "his expedient, his cure, his personal art of self-preservation." (VI³,7:III,9) Since "Socrates understood that all the world had need of him," (VI³,7:III,9) he prescribes this "apparent cure" (VI³,7:III,9) to his own culture, undermining the foundation of its strength as well.

Threatened by the most powerful drives, Socrates sees "rationality at all costs" as a "counter-tyrant" (VI³, 7:III,9) to fight them. But in fighting them "this shrewdest of all self-deceivers" (VI³,7:III,12) sees the body and the passions as the great enemy and therefore as immoral. The only way to "wisdom" and "virtue" is through the *negation* of the body and the drives and the "rejection of instinct leads ...to spiritual degeneration."⁵⁹ Socrates looked at his own degenerate culture and blamed this condition on the body and its implacable drives. Thus

everything genuinely Hellenic is made responsible for the state of decay.... The decline of Greece is understood as an objection to the foundations of Hellenic culture.... Conclusion: the Greek world perishes. Cause: Homer, myth, the ancient morality, etc. (MXVIII,427)

Socrates' philosophizing, rooted in the instinct of preservation's fiction of reason, "negated all the presuppositions of the 'noble Greek' of the old stamp" (MXVIII,435) which were founded on vital, life-affirming drives. Socrates is the one who "dares to spill this magic potion into the dust." (III¹,BT,13) Thus Nietzsche's lament:

What demigod is this to whom the noblest spirits of mankind must call out:

*Alas!
You have shattered
The beautiful world
With brazen fist;
It falls, it is scattered. (III¹,BT,13)*

In Socrates' "self-examination" as the means to improving oneself through "reason," he only promotes his own "physiological self-contradiction." (VI³,7:X,41)⁶⁰ This contradiction is Socrates' negation of the drives essential to health and "spiritual" strength. In light of these observations, it is hardly surprising that in spite of "Nietzsche's admiration for Socrates,"⁶¹ he says:

Unfortunately, one was not lucky enough to find the cup of hemlock with which one could simply dispose of such a character; for all the poison that envy, calumny, and rancour created did not suffice to destroy that self-sufficient splendour. (III¹,BT,15)

To his own degenerate age, Socrates "seemed to be a physician, a saviour," (VI³,7:III,11) but in fact he is one of "the most powerful promoters of decadence." (MXVIII, 435) With dialectics he introduced "the disease of moralizing" (MXVIII,443) and who ever could justify himself with reasons and prove his "virtue" was necessarily the better man.

In this way "he touched on the agonal instinct of the Hellenes--he introduced a variation into the wrestling-matches among the youths and young men." (VI³,7:III,8) The love of combat which "the older Greeks...evaluated and determined as good," (V¹,D,38) is now revealed in the decline "of good taste in spiritual matters." (MXVIII,427) That is, the agonal instinct is revealed in petty bickering over "justice," "virtue" and the "good." Here we find the measly fact that the agonal instinct in all these born dialecticians compelled them to glorify their personal ability as the highest quality and to represent all other good things as conditioned by it. (MXVIII,442)

With dialectics Socrates "discovered a new kind of agon...he was the first fencing-master in it for the aristocratic circles of Athens." (VI³,7:III,8) Consequently, this "mocking and enamored monster and pied piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob," (V²,GS,340), was really "the corrupter of youth after all." (VI²,B:Preface)

It is only in this degenerate age that Socrates "got himself taken seriously" (VI³,7:III,5) since "the fanaticism with which Greek thought throws itself at rationality betrays a state of emergency." (VI³,7:III,10) Everywhere "degeneration was...silently preparing itself" (VI³,7:III,9) and dialectics was only "a last-ditch weapon in the hands of those who have no other weapon left." (VI³,7:III,6) Ultimately,

Reason = virtue = happiness means merely: one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark desires by producing a permanent *daylight*--the daylight of reason. One must be pru-

dent, clear, bright at any cost: every yielding to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downwards*. (VI³,7:III,10) But the weapon resorted to by Socrates and "his 'invalids'" (VI³,7:III,10) is *itself* a symptom of decadence and hence Nietzsche asks:

Is it necessary to...point out the error which lay in his faith in 'rationality at any cost?' It is self-deception on the part of philosophers and moralists to imagine that by making war on *décadence* they therewith elude *décadence* themselves. This is beyond their powers: what they select as an expedient...is itself only another expression of *décadence*--they alter its expression, they do not abolish the thing itself. Socrates was a misunderstanding: *the entire morality of improvement...has been a misunderstanding....* The harshest daylight, rationality at any cost...conscious...in opposition to the instincts, has itself been no more than a form of sickness, another form of sickness--and by no means a way back to 'virtue,' to 'health,' to happiness. (VI³,7: III,11)

Nietzsche sees Socrates reveal the genuine task of the philosopher to be that of a cultural physician. But this great model of the philosopher for succeeding millennia necessarily promoted the sickness he understood himself to be fighting. With his "reason = virtue = happiness...he fascinated: the philosophers of antiquity never again freed themselves from this fascination." (MXVIII,432) After Socrates, Nietzsche sees philosophy promote decadence and its life-negating symptoms. Socrates is the gate-way through which all the instinct-disintegrating symptoms of decadence and sickness find philosophical expression. In short: "We ought finally to understand that what was then destroyed was *higher* than what became master." (MXVIII,438)

Gone was that brand of philosophy which, rooted in the most powerful instincts, affirmed life as will to power; the days of the great cosmologists were over. With Socrates *metaphysics* emerges, "the will to power was considered immoral," (MXVIII,428) and "no one had the courage to conceive virtue as a consequence of...will to power." (MXVIII,428) The virtues of the ancient cosmologists, were unified with and affirmed the law of life. Among them we find that tyran-

nical drive to rule the universe. Beginning with Socrates, this tyranny degenerated into *justifications* of existence according to the moral dictate of reason, i.e., conscious thought.

The physiological contradiction embodied in the philosophy of Socrates is the new "spiritual" paradigm. This is why Nietzsche sees the metaphysicians step into the light of day "good, just, wise, a dialectician--in short, the scarecrow of the ancient philosopher: a plant removed from all soil." (MXVIII,430) Hence metaphysics is nothing but the further promotion of decadence and sickness. In so far as metaphysics embraces everything antagonistic to life, the seeds are planted for what Nietzsche would call "nihilism"; that phenomenon wherein "*the highest values devalue themselves.*" (MXVIII,2)

But there is much to consider before this strange plant, "nihilism," is physiologically clear to us. With these observations on Greek philosophy, we see that in trying to *preserve* itself, the Greek culture only hastened its own degeneration and sickness. As Nietzsche emphasizes, self-preservation is not the goal of life. But as an instinct it reveals will to power at least in so far as it only affirms its perspective. When this drive is not exploited by more powerful "regulating instincts" (MXVIII,430) and dominates the organism then mere preservation is the goal and not growth in power. This dominance is founded on devitalizing the most powerful drives and this is the "physiological self-contradiction" (VI³,7:X,41) of decadence. In seeking to undermine its own strength, the organism becomes ill and thus "*prefers what is harmful to it.*" (VI³,A,6)

As the organism continually fights to keep its own powerful drives in check it is simultaneously promoting its own destruction. A weariness sets in and the cumulative affect is a longing for a condition where there is no resistance to it, where it no longer has to cope with the poten-

tial anarchy of its drives. In short, it wants a state of finality; it wants to die.⁴² In this way life as will to power weeds out the sick and weak.

Nietzsche notes this death-wish in Socrates who "before his subtle conscience" (VI²,B,191) saw that there is no rational-moral justification for existence. "This was the real *falsehood* of that great ironic, so rich in secrets...at bottom, he had seen through the irrational element in moral judgments." (VI²,B,191) Socrates saw that reason as morality was an expedient means to keep himself under control since he would self-destruct if he gave in to the "anarchy of his instincts." (VI³,7:III,4)

However, in trying to avoid self-destruction Socrates "privately and secretly...laughed at himself." (VI²,B,191) He saw that his rationality and its inherent "good" justified neither this world nor his own existence.

And so "that famous old serpent" (VI²,B,202)

who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone...had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his life long his ultimate judgement, his inmost feeling. Socrates, Socrates *suffered life!* (V²,GS,340)

In the end, even "Socrates had enough of it": (VI³,7:III,1) that he was sentenced to death, not exile, Socrates himself seems to have brought about with perfect awareness and without any natural awe of death.... *The dying Socrates* became the new ideal...of noble Greek youths: above all, the typical Hellenic youth, Plato, prostrated himself before this image with all the ardent devotion of his enthusiastic soul. (III¹,B7,13)

Ultimately Nietzsche finds Socrates' death-wish revealed in his "ridiculous and terrible 'last word'" (V²,GS,340) because he "said as he died: 'To live--that means to be a long time sick: I owe a cock to the saviour Asclepius.'" (VI³,7:III,1) In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche offers what, coming from him, is a more detailed explanation for Socrates' reference to the god of healing. He says: I wish he had remained taciturn...at the last moment of his life; in that case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or

malice--something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: 'O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster.' This ridiculous and terrible 'last word' means for those who have ears: 'O Crito, *life is a disease.*' (V²,GS,340)

With his reference Asclepius Socrates betrays himself, and, says Nietzsche, "revenged himself--with this veiled, gruesome, pious, and, blasphemous saying." (V²,GS,340) Socrates opted for suicide and in so doing, he betrays his "ultimate judgement" (V²,GS,340) on life. Death is preferable to life, it is the cure:

Socrates *wanted* to die--it was not Athens, it [was] he who handed himself the poison cup... 'Socrates is no physician,' he said softly to himself: 'death alone is a physician here ...Socrates himself has only been a long time sick....' (VI³,7:III,12)

In committing suicide, Socrates betrays that his "reason = virtue = happiness" (VI³,7:III,10) is "by no means a way back to 'virtue,' to 'health,' to happiness." (VI³,7:III,11) In Socrates' negation of "the pre-condition of life" (MXVIII,461) in himself, he negated life *in toto*. This is why Nietzsche says his philosophizing is only an "apparent cure" (VI³,7:III,9) for the sick and decadent. Whatever they choose as a cure is symptomatic of their condition. Inevitably they choose their own destruction. In light of this we see a weird irony in Socrates' statement that "those who tackle philosophy aright are simply and solely practicing dying, practicing death, all the time, but nobody sees it."⁶³

Socrates' philosophizing is symptomatic of decadence and sickness in that since this condition inevitably reveals the desire for *self-destruction*, *Here we find* life as will to power showing "the hand that considerately--kills." (VI²,B,69) Nietzsche holds that in Socrates' act of suicide he reveals his genuine wisdom in disposing of himself. Thus Nietzsche refers to "the *wisdom* of his courage for death." (VI³,7:III,12) As Dannhauser explains it: "For a

degenerate to wish to die is wise because there is no other way out of his degeneration."⁶⁴

Zarathustra says: "The man consummating his life dies triumphantly, surrounded by men filled with hope and making solemn vows. (VI¹,Z:I,21) This would be an apt description of the death of Socrates, but Zarathustra goes on to request that one's death "not be a blasphemy against man and the earth." (VI¹,Z:I,21) When Socrates blasphemed in saying "*life is a disease*," (V²,GS,340) he betrays how "a poison-worm eats at his heart." (VI¹,Z:I,21) And though Socrates showed "*wisdom*" in killing himself, in so far as at least *here* he was in accord with life, the damage was already done.

The "poison-worm" (VI·Z:I,21) he carried was an error "*in physiologicis*" (MXVIII,454) lying at the core of the new "spiritual" paradigm and infesting all philosophy after him. This, as we said earlier, is the beginning of what Nietzsche called metaphysics; a brand of philosophy which from its inception "is a secret raging against the pre-conditions of life, against the value feelings of life, against partisanship in favor of life." (MXVIII,461) Thus the instinct-disintegrating influence of Socrates, down to the present moment and even into all future time, has spread over posterity like a shadow that keeps growing in the evening sun. (III¹,B7,15)

This concludes our analysis of Socrates as a case study in decadence. But this "old serpent" (VI²,B,202) will emerge again as we proceed. In our final chapter we shall see the influence of Socrates on Nietzsche in the latter's identification of his philosophical task with that of a cultural physician. We now turn to another case in decadence; one concerning an individual who also had a unique influence on Nietzsche's perception of his philosophical task, Jesus Christ.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER III

1. Xenophon, *Socratic Discourses: Plato & Xenophon*, trans. Rev. J. S. Watson and Rev. R. J. Hughes, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1944), p. 173.

2. See chapter two, p. 72.

3. See chapter two, p. 60.

4. See chapter one, p. 31.

5. Jaspers, p. 287.

6. MIV, PTA, p. 160, (2).

7. In Heidegger's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, we read: "A beginning can never directly preserve its full momentum; the only possible way to preserve its force is to repeat, to draw once again <wieder-holen> more deeply than ever from its source. And it is only by repetitive thinking <denkende Wieder-holung> that we can deal appropriately with the beginning and the breakdown of the truth." Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 191.

In Nietzsche's call to return to the source of Western philosophy in pre-Socratic thought, one may say he is practicing what Heidegger would later call "denkende Wieder-holung." On the other hand, given Heidegger's sustained effort to retrieve the thinking of Being from the pre-Socratics, Nietzsche served Heidegger as an example and a teacher of the necessity for this retrieval. This is expressed by Heidegger himself when he says that the task of understanding Being "consists first of all, if we are to gain a true grasp of Nietzsche, in bringing his accomplishment to a full unfolding." *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 36. Heidegger certainly does not follow Nietzsche's interpretation of pre-Socratic cosmology, but like Nietzsche, he turns to it as a means to creating a new beginning for Western Philosophy.

8. MIV, PTA, p. 186, (8).

9. MIV, PTA, p. 187, (8).

10. MIV, PTA, p. 186-87, (8).

11. MIV, PTA, p. 186, (8).

12. MIV, PTA, p. 160, (2).

13. *Ibid.*

14. *MIV*, PTA, p. 159, (1).

15. *MVI*, SSW, p. 106 / *PT*, p. 134.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *MVI*, SSW, p. 108 / *PT*, p. 136.

19. *MVI*, SSW, p. 105 / *PT*, p. 133.

20. *MVI*, SSW, p. 108 / *PT*, p. 136.

21. *MVI*, SSW, p. 106 / *PT*, p. 134.

22. *Ibid.*

23. The idea that Nietzsche hated Socrates is found in the works of the following:

T. Ziegler, "Nietzsche gegen Socrates", Suddeutsche Monatshefte, X (1913), 277-89.

E. Bertram, *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie*, (Berlin: Bondi, 1918), p. 309.

A.H.J. Knight, *Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche, and particularly of his connection with Greek Literature and Thought*, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 55n.

24. See chapter 13 of Kaufmann's, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, AntiChrist*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 391.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Werner Dannhauser, *Nietzsche's View of Socrates*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 32.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Marianne Cowan, in her "Introduction" to, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1962), p. 13.

29. Jaspers, p. 35.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Ibid.

33. This quote is taken from Erich F. Podach's, *Friedrich Nietzsches Werke Des Zusammenbruchs*, (Heidelberg: Wolfgang Rothe, 1961), p. 252. It is from a discarded draft for section three of *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Write Such Good Books." The translation is W. Kaufmann's found in the "Appendix" of his translation of *E.* p. 340.

34. MIV, PTA, p. 156, (1).

35. MIV, PTA, p. 156-57, (1).

36. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gesammelte Werke, Musarionausgabe*, Vol. IV, (München: Musarion, 1920-29), p. 364. This reference is taken from an unpublished lecture probably written in 1876. It is found in the *Musarionausgabe* under the title "Die vorplatonischen Philosophen." The translation is Walter Kaufmann's in his, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 397.

37. MIV, PTA, p. 159, (2).

38. MIV, PTA, p. 156, (1).

39. MIV, PTA, p. 155, (1).

40. MVI, SSW, p. 108 / PT, p. 136.

41. MVI, SSW, p. 106 / PT, p. 134.

42. Nietzsche takes this conversation from Cicero who tells the story of the "'physiognomist' Zopyrus." (*De Fato*, v. 10) Zopyrus, who

claimed to discern every man's nature from his appearance, charged Socrates in company with a number of vices which he enumerated, and when he was ridiculed by the rest who said they failed to recognize such vices in Socrates, Socrates himself came to his [Zopyrus'] rescue by saying that he was naturally inclined to the vices named, but had cast them out of him by the help of reason. *Tusculan Disputations*, Loeb ed. trans. J.E. King (London: William Heinemann, MCMXXVII), IV. xxxvii. 80.

Nietzsche does not mention Cicero's other version of this encounter which goes like this:

Again, do we not read how Socrates was stigmatized by the 'physiognomist' Zopyrus, who professed to discover men's entire characters and natures from their body, eyes, face and brow? He said that Socrates was stupid and thick-wit-

ed because he had got hollows in the neck above the collar-bone--he used to say that these portions of his anatomy were blocked and stopped up; he also added that he was addicted to women--at which Alcibiades is said to have given a loud guffaw! *De Fato*, Loeb ed. trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, MCMXLII), v. 10.

43. See note 44 above.

44. My italics.

45. *MVI*, *SSW*, p. 106 / *PT*, p. 134.

46. See chapter one, p. 42-43.

47. This maxim is often repeated throughout Nietzsche's works and is derived from Pindar's *Pythian Odes*, II, 73. As far as Nietzsche is concerned, Socrates' conception of "self-examination" is in direct opposition to this maxim since the conscious thought of the latter is dominated by the need for stability. Nietzsche sees reason as the necessary influence of the instinct of preservation providing the deception of stability. He would not deny its being essential since this deception is exploited by the more powerful life-affirming drives toward power. Thus within the framework of Nietzsche's thought, reason is unified with all the drives of the organism in so far as its deception of stability is exploited by more powerful drives in affirming the law of life. With Socrates "reason" is the result of decadence, i.e., the necessity to debilitate the most powerful drives. This necessity manifests an unbridled instinct of preservation which, in seeking mere preservation, undermines the possibility of *growth*, i.e., the risk of self-destruction essential to all living things. For Nietzsche happiness resides in having taken this risk and emerging victorious. In victory one affirms oneself and at the same time the law of all things as power. Hence in the self-knowledge proposed by Socrates, Nietzsche sees only an impoverishing of the organism man rendering an affirmation of oneself and the cosmos impossible since the most powerful drives are nullified. With Socrates, the path to self-knowledge requires the *negation* of the foundation of life as will to power.

48. See chapter one, p. 41-42.

49. We will look in much greater detail at the phenomenon of *ressentiment* in our next chapter.

50. *MIV*, *PTA*, p. 160, (2).

51. *Ibid.*

52.MIV, PTA, p. 156, (1).

53.MIV, PTA, p. 187, (8).

54.MIV, PTA, p. 1157, (1).

55.Dannhauser, p. 219.

56.MIV, PTA, p. 160, (2).

57.*Ibid.*

58.MIV, PTA, p. 156, (1).

59.Howey, p. 18.

60.Socrates' exhortation to "self-examination" and thus the voice of reason as the means to "virtue" and "happiness" is in direct opposition to the law of life which requires all seekers of knowledge "to live *dangerously*." (V²,GS,283) See also note 47 above.

61.Kaufmann, p. 391.

62.See chapter one, p. 44-45.

63.*Phaedo* 63A. This reference is taken from *Great Dialogues of Plato*, trans. W.H.D. Rouse (New York: Mentor Books, 1956), pp. 466-467.

64.Dannhauser, p. 221.

I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Mat. 18:3-4.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS CHRIST AND THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

The fury and intensity of Nietzsche's attack on Christianity is well known. Nevertheless, it is curious that his portrait of Jesus Christ remains somewhat obscure. At times, Christ is judged to possess the characteristics of nobility (VI¹,Z:I,21) and is called, "with some freedom of expression... a 'free spirit'." (VI³,A,32) Yet at other times in the description of Christ "To speak with the precision of the physiologist a quite different word would rather be in place here: the word idiot." (VI³,A,29) Christ reveals says Nietzsche, "a combination of the sublime, the sick and the childish." (VI³,A,31)

If we ask Nietzsche what is sublime in Christ, he responds by saying how the latter reveals a certain "profound instinct" (VI³,A,33) which translates itself into a particular "psychological reality." (VI³,A,33) This psychological reality points to the *type* of a human being which always had a powerful hold on Nietzsche's imagination and his philosophy, "the type of a *redeemer* of mankind." (VI³,A,24)

If, on the other hand, we ask Nietzsche about the sickness of Christ, he says that the type of the redeemer has been preserved to us only in a very distorted form. That this distortion should have occurred is in itself very probable: there are several reasons why such a type could not remain pure, whole, free of accretions. (VI³,A,31)

The sickness Nietzsche attributes to Christ lies within precisely those "several reasons" as to why the latter is an

aberration of the redeemer type and thus a "most interesting *décadent*." (VI³,A,31)

When we ask Nietzsche what he means in referring to Christ as childish, the question sounds odd since the theme of "the child" permeates the Christian tradition. Nevertheless, it should come as no surprise that Nietzsche's response to this question lies quite outside this tradition. For the time being we can only state that Nietzsche's perception of the childish in Christ is intimately related to what constitutes the latter as a kind of "idiot." (VI³,A,29)

Why is Christ so important to Nietzsche? The answer to this question lies in Nietzsche's own question: "Have I been understood?--*Dionysus versus the Crucified*.--" (VI³,E:IV,9) It must not be forgotten that Dionysus "redeems the contradictions and questionable aspects of existence!" (MXIX,1052) Christ is a degenerate form of the redeemer type best personified in "the *Dionysus of the Greeks*." (MXIX, 1052) The connection between "[t]he two types: *Dionysus and the Crucified*" (MXIX,1052) will be further explored in the next chapter. To prepare for this feature of chapter five, a detailed look at Nietzsche's portrait of Christ is required.

As we found with Socrates, access to Nietzsche's portrait of Christ presupposes the fundamental dynamics of cultural physiology. "The Case of Socrates" presupposed Nietzsche's perception of the physiology of the Greek culture. Once again, if we are to understand how Nietzsche sees Christ, we must look at the culture within which the latter flourished.

Our examination of Nietzsche's perception of the ancient Jewish culture will enable us to us see not only why "A Jesus Christ was possible only in a Jewish landscape," (V²,GS,137) but also why "Christianity can be understood only by referring to the soil out of which it grew." (VI³,A, 24)

Before we go on to look at the ancient Jewish culture, a few general remarks that should be made from the outset. So far we have confined ourselves to remarks on Nietzsche's perception of Christ as opposed to Christianity. This only serves to stress that our main concern here is not with Christianity.

That Nietzsche attacked Christianity as "the highest of all conceivable corruptions" (VI³,A,62) is well known. Thus we do not plan a detailed look at this aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy. We will only concentrate on the physiology which lies at the basis of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity. Consequently, our examination of Christianity is from two essential and interrelated points of view. The first concentrates on the instincts of decadence within the Jewish cultural organism as the source of Christianity. The second elucidates Nietzsche's *distinction* between Christ and Christianity.

Finally, to facilitate an understanding of this second point of view, we will look briefly at Nietzsche's distinction between "master morality and slave morality." (VI²,B,260) This examination is required if we are to find any sense in Nietzsche's observation that "the significance of the Jewish people" is "they mark the beginning of the slave rebellion in morals." (VI²,B,195)

Our examination of the ancient Jewish culture will be brief avoid the needless repetition of physiological dynamics described earlier in chapter two. Hence we will consider only those points in the physiology of the ancient Jewish culture which are fundamental to understanding Nietzsche's portrait of Christ and his critique of Christianity.

MASTER AND SLAVE MORALITY

As regards master morality, we have already seen its genesis when we spoke of the creation of an order of rank among the drives. This creation occurs when the healthiest and most powerful drives exploit and subdue the weaker ones toward power. Here we found the strongest and, of course, the most dangerous individuals. We saw that it is precisely these individuals which enslave the weak toward the goal of maintaining and growing in power.

For Nietzsche it is in this way that the social order of rank is a manifestation of the law of life as will to power. Just as a firm order of rank must exist among the drives of the individual if he is to be healthy, this same individual "transports the order of which he is the physiological representative into his relations with other human beings and with things." (VI³,7:VII,2) As the "physiological representative" (VI³,7:VII,2) of the most powerful, warlike drives, the strongest enslave those who physiologically represent weaker instincts. Of course, the value of these weaker individuals is determined according to their usefulness to the most powerful.

As we have already seen, just as a firm order of rank among the drives constitutes a *healthy* individual, so does a similar order of rank constitute a healthy culture. Thus slavery and "many degrees of bondage" (MXVIII,464) are "the precondition of every higher culture." (MXVIII,464) And it is the strongest, most warlike individuals who unify a culture and transports the order of rank among his own drives into that of the larger cultural organism. This says Nietzsche

is a consequence of the intrinsic Will to Power, which is precisely the Will to Life.--Granting that as a theory this is a novelty--as a reality it is a *fundamental* fact of all history: let us be so far honest with ourselves! (VI²,B,259)

We have already spoken of these dark origins of culture. Here is a world constantly smoldering with a violence that flares up into the love of murder and destruction on the part of "barbarians in every terrible sense of the word." (VI²,B,267) "In the beginning," says Nietzsche, "the noble caste was always the barbarian caste." (VI²,B,257) It is within this barbarian caste that we find "an arrangement, whether voluntary or involuntary for *breeding*" (VI²,B,262) individuals "*born to command.*" (V²,GS,40)

It is precisely among these individuals that we find master morality. We have already seen these individuals and their morality in the ancient Greek nobility prior to Socrates. It was there we found "a species of severe, war-like, prudently taciturn men, close-mouthed and closely linked." (VI²,B,262)

Such men were the product of a firm order of rank marked by a ruthless discipline and generations of an inherited conviction that they were born to rule others. Their morality emerged from "the soul of the ruling clans and castes" (IV²,HH:I,45) as the class which "determines what is 'good.'" (VI²,B,260) Here the exalted, proud states of the soul are experienced as conferring distinction and determining the order of rank.... Everything it knows as part of itself it honors: such a morality is self-glorification.... The noble human being separates from himself those in whom the opposite of such exalted, proud states finds expression: he despises them. (VI²,B,260)

After these observations Nietzsche is quick to point out that in this first type of morality the opposition between 'good' and 'bad' means approximately the same as 'noble' and 'contemptible'.... One feels contempt for those intent on narrow utility; also for...those who humble themselves...the begging flatterers, above all the liars: it is part of the fundamental faith of all aristocrats that the common people lie. 'We truthful ones'--thus the nobility of ancient Greece referred to itself. (VI²,B,260)

Ultimately, master morality is "the sign language of what has turned out well, of ascending life, of the will to power as the principle of life." (VI³,C:Epilogue) In short, master morality deems 'good' whatever affirms life as will to power whether we are speaking of the individual or of a culture.

Slave morality on the other hand, originates within the weakest instincts of life. We have seen that the weakest instincts of the organism are oppressed and exploited by those more powerful. Though exploited, the weakest instincts still attempt to affirm their own perspective. This perspective is the desire for freedom from oppression which, in this case, "wants rest, relaxation, peace, calm--the happiness of nihilistic religions and philosophies." (MXIX,703) But in a healthy organism the most powerful drives do not allow this perspective to become predominant. Because they are enslaved, the perspective of the weaker instincts "cannot assert its degree of independence--here there is no mercy, no forbearance." (MXIX,630)

With the denial of the perspective of the weakest drives, the natural animosity between the instincts here give rise to affects¹ quite the opposite "of the overflowing riches of strength" (VI³,C:Epilogue) typical of powerful drives. On the contrary, the affects of the weakest instincts of life on any organism are a certain pessimistic gloom, something that smells of weariness, fatalism, disappointment, and a fear of new disappointments--or else ostentatious wrath, a bad mood, the anarchism of indignation, and whatever other symptoms and masquerades of the feeling of weakness there may be. (V²,65, 347)

Unlike the more powerful drives which are united in various power alliances, (MXIX,715) the weakest instincts are merely exploited and unable to assert their own perspective. Consequently "solidarity is felt as tyranny: they want no authority, no solidarity, no lining up with the rank and file." (MXVIII,442) But as we have already seen, this antagonism toward the order of rank is typical of the weakest

instincts and goes hand in hand with the decadence and sickness we talked about in chapter one.

The significance of the animosity of the weakest instincts toward the order of rank which oppresses them resides in the type of individual who is actually dominated by his weakest instincts. For Nietzsche the strong, well constituted type is "the physiological representative" (VI³,7:VII,2) of an order of rank among his own instincts and is manifest in "his relations with other human beings and things." (VI³,7:VII,2) Exactly the same goes for the "physiologically unfortunate and worm-eaten" (VI²,6:III,14) or in short, the weak. These are precisely the ones who are enslaved by those "born to command." (V²,65,40) Those who are dominated by the most powerful instincts of life have their accumulated strength harnessed toward "precision and clarity of direction." (MXVIII,46)

The weak on the other hand, reveal as we saw a "disgregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them." (MXVIII,46) This results in the "oscillation and the lack of gravity" (MXVIII,46) typical of the weak. Pulled hither and yon by their instincts, we find individuals with an

abundance of disparate impressions...the impressions erase each other: one instinctively resists taking in anything, taking anything deeply...men unlearn spontaneous action, they merely react to stimuli from outside. They spend their strength partly in assimilating things, partly in defense, partly in opposition.... (MXVIII,71)

These are the ones who are dominated by the strong and who stand at the lowest rank in the social order. Like the strongest type, the weak individual "transports the order of which he is the physiological representative into his relations with other human beings and things." (VI³,7:VII,2) Naturally, the morality of this individual is contrary to that of his oppressor.

Master morality is "the sign language of what has turned out well"; (VI³,C:Epilogue) slave morality, that for

what has turned out badly. For Nietzsche this individual is not weak because he is a slave, rather, he is a slave because he is weak. And his "morality," or what he calls "good" will be whatever enables him endure *himself*. Consequently,

those qualities are brought out and flooded with light which serve to ease existence for those who suffer: here pity, the complaisant and obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honored--for here these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means for enduring existence. Slave morality is essentially a morality of utility. (VI²,B,260)

But if we are to speak of utility, then we are again in the region of the instinct of preservation. As the first instinct of the spirit, (VI³,7:IX,2) it enables the weak to create necessary fictions essential to enduring their condition. And strange as it may seem, the famous Nietzschean idea of *ressentiment* has to be understood as a necessary fiction essential to the survival of "the physiologically unfortunate." (VI²,G:III,14)

If we are to understand how *ressentiment* is not only integral to slave morality but indeed serves as its basis, then we must recognize that while every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is "outside," what is "different," what is "not itself"; and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye--this *need* to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself--is of the essence of *ressentiment*: in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world.... (VI²,G:I,10)

Ressentiment is precisely this "need to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself." (VI²,G:I,10) But if this is what Nietzsche means by *ressentiment*, how is the need to not look at oneself essential to the preservation of the weak? Nietzsche responds by pointing out that *ressentiment* is "born of weakness" (VI³,E:I,6) and that the most effective means the weak have to enduring themselves as such is

finding someone whom...[they] can make responsible for it. The instinct of revenge and *ressentiment* appears here in both cases as a means of enduring, as the instinct of self-preservation.... (MXVIII,373)

We saw that the instinct of preservation shields the strong from the most hideous aspects of existence thus enabling them to affirm life as will to power. Likewise in the case of the weak, this same instinct shields them from too close a perception of how they are the impoverished and disinherited of the earth.

Naturally the question arises as to what would happen if the weak were *not* protected from too lucid a perception of themselves. Nietzsche answers simply that "it *would be unbearable*" (MXIX,765) and lead to a self-hatred which "takes the form of self-destruction." (MXIX,55) But the necessary fiction that "'someone must be to blame'" (VI²,6:III,15) emerges and the "underprivileged...revolt on account of themselves and need victims so as not to quench their thirst for destruction by destroying themselves." (MXIX,765) Here we find "the hatred of the ill-constituted ...which destroys, *has to destroy*, because what exists, indeed existence itself, all being itself, enrages and provokes it." (MXIX,846) Thus their own desire for self-destruction is channelled outward and "into...relations with other human beings and with things." (VI²,7:VII,2)

Ressentiment lies like a constantly festering wound within slave morality and reveals itself as "the profoundest hatred there is." (VI²,7:X,20) It is "the hatred of the ill-constituted" (MXIX,846) and such a one seeks scape-goats and revenge for the fact "'that I am wretched!'" (MXIX,765) The revenge of slave morality resides precisely in saying "...No to what is 'outside,' what is 'different,' what is 'not itself'...." (VI²,6:I,10) And who could be more "different," more "not itself" than those who are "fortunate and happy?" (VI²,6:III,14)

In light of this, the weak "make the ruling classes responsible" (MXIX,765) for their misery. But being in no position to vanquish the masters, the "*ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds... compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge." (VI²,G:I,10) Consequently, Nietzsche points out that the slaves eye is not favorable to the virtues of the powerful: he is skeptical and suspicious, *subtly* suspicious, of all the good that is honored there--he would like to persuade himself that even their happiness is not genuine. (VI²,B,260)

In "the man of *ressentiment*" (VI²,G:I,10) the desire for self-destruction is kept in check through the *fiction* that the powerful are responsible for his condition. And since he cannot take revenge on them, he attempts to convince himself that the values integral to master morality are false. This *denial* is an imaginary negation of the "cause" of his misery, and the pursuit of this fantasy is the means through which he *preserves* himself from himself.

Through the utility of this fiction, he in essence realizes a vicarious revenge on all that "enrages and provokes" (MXIX,846) him; that being life itself. Here once again we see the "creative deed" (VI²,G:I,10) of the spirit as the instinct of preservation providing a deception "as a condition of life." (VI²,B,4) The illusion of "an imaginary revenge" (VI²,G:I,10) sustains him in an existence he despises and thus he

is neither upright nor naive nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul *squints*; his spirit loves hiding places...everything covert entices him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment; he understands how to keep silent, how not to forget, how to wait, how to be provisionally self-deprecating and humble. (VI²,G:I,10)

This individual suffers from the very fact of existence and for this reason will "*lie himself out of actuality.*" (VI³,A,15) *Ressentiment* "has its roots in *hatred* of the natural" (VI³,A,15) and thus does battle against life itself by nurturing this hate and taking imaginary revenge

on all that affirms life. "But to suffer from actuality means to be an abortive actuality." (VI³,A,15) In light of this, we can see that *ressentiment* thrives in the realms of and is integral to decadence and sickness. Indeed, in the case of Socrates we saw that the physiological necessity to fight the most powerful drives "provides the *formula* for *décadence*." (VI³,A,15) And there can be no doubt that these drives are the would-be victims of *ressentiment*.

With these remarks we conclude our examination of master versus slave morality and find ourselves in a better position to see how "A Jesus Christ was possible only in a Jewish landscape...." (V²,GS,137)

THE ANCIENT JEWISH CULTURE

The "significance of the Jewish people," said Nietzsche, is that "they mark the beginning of the slave rebel-lion in morals." (VI²,B,195) We can readily imagine slave morality to have existed "against the aristocratic values of the *ancient world*" (MXVIII,134) and flourishing among the physiologically "underprivileged." (MXVIII,55) But why would Nietzsche attribute this "morality of utility" (VI²,B,260) to the entire Jewish race?

In response to this question, the first thing that deserves mention is that Nietzsche did not think the Jews were always "a people 'born for slavery,' as Tacitus and the whole ancient world say." (VI²,B,195) On the contrary, since Nietzsche speaks of "the *great epoch* in the history of Israel," (VI³,A,26) then clearly there was a time when master morality flourished within the ancient Jewish culture. In light of this, Nietzsche makes the following observation: "Originally, above all in the period of the Kingdom, Israel too stood in a *correct*, that is to say natural relationship to all things. (VI³,A,25)

As far as Nietzsche is concerned, this was an age when the most powerful drives in the cultural organism were manifest in a strong warrior elite. Hence, as we saw among the Greeks prior to Socrates, a firm order of rank prevailed among the drives in the Jewish culture rendering it unified with life as will to power.

No doubt, slave morality existed among the "cannaille in those orders...long...kept down" (MXIX,864) because, as we have seen, it emerged as "a denial" (VI³,A,24) of master morality. But like any healthy organism, it was capable of resisting the degenerate elements within itself since "it is one of life's processes to exclude the forms of decline and decay." (MXVIII,339)

The best evidence of master morality in the ancient Jewish culture lies in their particular "spiritualization" of the world. Guided by life-affirming drives, the instinct of preservation provided the necessary deception appropriate to a healthy organism. Thus Yaweh was the expression of their consciousness of power, of their delight in themselves, their hopes of themselves: in him they anticipated victory and salvation.... Yaweh is the God of Israel and consequently the God of justice: the logic of every nation that is in power and has a good conscience about it. (VI³,A,25)

This is revealed particularly "in the older parts of the Old Testament" (MXVIII,145) wherein we find human beings, things, and speeches in so grand a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to compare with it. With terror and reverence one stands before these tremendous remnants of what man once was.... (VI²,B,52)

Here we find a God who is "both useful and harmful, both friend and foe--he is admired in good and bad alike". (VI³,A,16) Yaweh represented "a people, the strength of a people, everything aggressive and thirsting for power in the soul of a people." (VI³,A,16) In short, he represents "a nation's deepest instinct of life": (VI³,A,25) the will to power. This, says Nietzsche, is what "an affirmative Semitic reli-

gion, the product of a *ruling class*, looks like." (MXVIII, 145)

Ultimately, Yaweh possessed all the virtues exalted by the nobility. That is to say, he was first and foremost a warrior. In such a deity, a culture governed by life-affirming, powerful drives

venerates the conditions through which it has prospered...it projects...its feeling of power on to a being whom one can thank...a God of the merely good would be totally undesirable here. One has need of the evil God as of the good God: for one does not owe one's existence to philanthropy.... Of what consequence would a God be who knew nothing of anger... acts of violence? One would not understand such a God: why should one have him? (VI³,A,16)

In light of the above, we may observe that despite Nietzsche's famous proclamation of the death of God, (V²,GS, 125) there is no doubt that during "the *great epoch* in the history of Israel" (VI³,A,26) this God was very much alive. At this time master morality reflected the strength of an Israel which adored a God who was "fundamentally a word for every happy inspiration of courage and self-reliance." (VI³, A,25)

Given the foregoing we return to our question; why did Nietzsche attribute slave morality to the same culture wherein, as we have seen, master morality was at one time quite apparent. Clearly, some sort of physiological deterioration had set into the cultural organism such that the order of rank among its drives was radically altered.

We saw the Greek culture collapse into decadence when simultaneous with the waning strength of the old nobility, there was a fading of "the love for the old used-up 'fatherland,' which had been touted to death." (V²,GS,23) This occurred when the stored-up strength of the organism could no longer be retained and it exploded into bloom. These we saw, are the "times of corruption" when the apples fall from the tree: I mean the individuals, for they carry the seeds of the future and are the authors of

the spiritual colonization and origin of new states and communities. (V²,GS,23)

In short, we are speaking here of "the autumn of a people"; (V²,GS,23) when the Greek culture was simply too old, and a potentially new transformation of life as will to power was at hand. Essential to this transformation, is the creation of a new order of rank among the drives of the organism so that its strength is not squandered. But in the Greek culture we saw no particular drive harness the power of the others, and the inevitable *revenge* of the weakest instincts of life led to decadence.

Corruption, says Nietzsche, "is something totally different depending on the organism in which it appears"; (VI²,B,258) and this difference is clear when we compare the decline of both the Jewish and Greek cultures. First, we do not see the symptoms of old age in the Jewish culture since the virtues of its warrior caste

long remained the ideal, even after it had been tragically done away with...the people retained as its supreme desideratum that vision of a king who is a good soldier and an upright judge.... (VI³,A,25)

Nietzsche does not specify exactly how the nobility was "tragically done away with." (VI³,A,25) He refers to this destruction as a "misfortune" (VI³,A,25) taking the form of "anarchy within...[and] the Assyrian from without." (VI³,A,25) Perhaps the reason Nietzsche does not go into detail here, is his thinking it less important compared to what took place upon the demise of this warrior elite.

What happened after this "calamity" (MXVIII,173) reveals another distinguishing factor between the physiological makeups of the Jewish and Greek cultures. The disintegration of the old order of rank in the Greek culture brought no other dominating drive to the fore and this resulted in dissipation of the strength of the organism. But with the fall of the Jewish warrior elite, there emerged a drive strong enough to seize power and establish a chain of

command to prevent destruction of the culture; the instinct of *preservation*.

This instinct within the Jewish culture had been honed during "the Exile, the long years of misfortune" (VI³,A,26) and acquired a "capital of spirit and will, which accumulated from generation to generation in the long school of their suffering." (IV²,HH,475) Here once again we find the "discipline of suffering, of *great suffering*" (VI²,B,225) and an echo of Nietzsche's maxim: "What does not kill me makes me stronger." (VI³,T:II,8) Thanks to the "most sorrowful history of all peoples," (IV²,HH,475) the Jewish culture possesses "the toughest national will to life which has ever existed on earth." (VI³,A,27) Thus Nietzsche will say that the Jews "like the Greeks and *more* than the Greeks ...[are]...a people firmly attached to life." (V¹,D,72)²

When the instinct of preservation took control of the Jewish culture, this indicated to Nietzsche a physiological key to explaining how this culture avoided the fate of the Greeks. In short, the Jewish cultural organism was *never* dominated by the instincts of decadence. (VI³,A,24)

This will perhaps sound strange since we have seen how, upon the destruction of a culture's most powerful drives, the instinct of preservation emerges as essential to the phenomenon of decadence. The role this instinct played in the decadence of the Greek culture is a typical case. We saw the weakest instincts rally round that of self-preservation forming an alliance deadly to the health of the organism as a whole.

But there are two points that have to be recalled to clarify how this drive came to power in the Jewish culture such that decadence did not emerge. First, the Greek culture was in a state of exhaustion when the instinct of preservation allied itself with the weakest instincts in the organism. Second, in so far as this alliance was *necessary*,

then clearly the instinct of preservation was itself debilitated and in no position to usurp power on its own.

The situation was quite different with the Jewish culture. Though its warrior caste had been vanquished, this does not mean that the instincts of war disappeared. However, infighting and war with external enemies had left these drives too exhausted to protect and maintain their power over the organism. Thus whatever vitality remained of the warrior instincts was easily absorbed into the domain of self-preservation.

Furthermore, we have seen that "more than the Greeks" (V¹,D,72) the Jews are "a people firmly attached to life". (V¹,D,72) This means their culture's instinct of preservation was remarkably more potent upon the weakening of its most powerful drives than was the case with the Greeks. Due to the strength of this instinct, it could seize power within the organism *independently* of the weakest instincts.

Naturally, when the instinct of preservation took power within the Jewish culture it harnessed the power of the remaining drives toward its own ends. Nietzsche translates the Jewish instinct of preservation into "the priestly caste" (VI²,G:I,7) that took power upon the demolition of old nobility. With the destruction of the latter, the culture was "placed in impossible circumstances". (VI³,A,24) But the caste of priests, representing "the profoundest shrewdness in self-preservation," (VI³,A,24), emerged to exploit the lowest orders of the Jewish culture as a means to cultural survival.

Like the Greek culture there is an alliance between the instinct of preservation and the weakest instincts, but "*not* as being dominated by them." (VI³,A,24) On the contrary, in the hands of the priests "*décadence* is only a *means*." (VI³,A,24) Here we find the instinct of preservation tapping a source of power within the weakest instincts,

or as Nietzsche calls them, the "*décadence* instincts." (VI³, A,24)

By means of the power of the weakest instincts of life, the instinct of preservation was able to maintain an order of rank in the ancient Jewish cultural organism. Hence "they have the priests and then immediately the chandala." (MXVIII,184) Since this culture maintained a firm *order of rank* even "after they had fallen into slavery," (MXVIII,427) we find what is essential to any genuine culture.

But what power lay in the instincts of decadence such that this culture not only remained intact but actually "tried to prevail" (MXVIII,184) after the destruction of its warrior class? To rephrase this question; what power existed among "the chandala" (MXVIII,184) such that it not only served to keep the priests dominant, but was also a *weapon* to use against their enemies? This power, which in the hands of the priests "is only a *means*," (VI³,A,24) was the hatred which is *ressentiment*. As a manifestation of the instinct of preservation, the priest

fights....against anarchy and ever-threatening disintegration within the herd, in which the most dangerous of all explosives, *ressentiment*, is constantly accumulating. So to detonate this explosive that it does not blow up herd and herdsmen is his essential art...to express the value of the priestly existence in the briefest formula it would be: the priest *alters the direction of ressentiment*. (VI²,G:III,15)

We have seen that slave morality resides in "the very seat of *ressentiment*" (MXVIII,167) and naturally existed among the decadent, that is to say, weakest instincts of the Jewish culture. But upon the destruction of the warrior elite, Nietzsche sees the caste of priests stepping into the breach to control and exploit the life-negating revenge characteristic of the weak.

Here was a nation forced into servitude, but "the Jews held firm as a 'people' after they had fallen into slavery." (MXVIII,427) Nietzsche says this was possible in that the priestly caste had discovered among "the underpri-

vileged" (MXVIII,55) that "most dangerous of all explosives, *ressentiment*." (VI²,G:III,15)

We have seen that "in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world." (VI²,G:I,10) When its warrior caste was vanquished, the Jewish culture confronted great hostility since it was "faced with the question of being or not being." (VI³,A,24) But the fiction of "imaginary revenge" (VI²,G:I,10) essential to slave morality was now utilized in a completely original manner. Through the *ressentiment* of slave morality this culture *endured* by rejecting.

all that represents the *ascending* movement of life...self-affirmation on earth, the instinct of *ressentiment* here become genius had to invent *another* world from which...*life-affirmation* would appear evil, reprehensible as such. (VI³,A,24)

In harnessing the revenge characteristic of slave morality, the priestly caste altered "*the direction of resentment*" (VI²,G:III,15) channelling it against the virtues by which strong cultures, *including their own*, had been originally established. Now, everything that represented the virtues of the "*ascending* movement of life" (VI³,A,24) was negated. At that time, says Nietzsche, the Jews "were ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical revaluation of their enemies' values, that is to say, an act of the *most spiritual revenge*." (VI²,G:I,7)

The ancient Jewish culture lacked its former ability to meet its enemies on the battlefield. Nevertheless, by maintaining the discipline of an order of rank, it was not *assimilated*³ by its enemies. The *ressentiment* integral to slave morality was governed by the instinct of preservation which, as we have seen, provides the "shield and spear" (VI³,7:X,38) of the spirit.

The shield it provided this culture was found in the very hatred of authority typical of slave morality, and the spear was the *revenge* of an "imaginary consolation of

outranking those who actually possess[ed] power...[and] the recognition of an order of rank that permits judgement even of the more powerful." (MXIX,774) In short, we find "the invention of new tables of value." (MXIX,774) And it is precisely this invention and the inherent imaginary revenge of "outranking those who actually possess power" (MXIX,774) which constitutes "*the slave revolt in morality.*" (VI²,G:I,7)

This revolt was a conviction physiologically determined by the instinct of preservation embodied in the priestly caste. It consisted in the necessary *fiction* that 'the wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly alone are... blessed by God...[while]...the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil, the cruel, the lustful... and...shall be in all eternity the...damned!' (VI²,G:I,7)

Ultimately, it is accurate to say that Nietzsche attributed slave morality to the Jewish race, but this by no means implies that he considered them physiologically degenerate. Slave morality was simply a means for this culture to remain in existence. Hence Nietzsche will say the "Jews are the counterparts of *décadence*: they have been compelled to act as *décadents*," (VI³,A,24) and this because placed in impossible circumstances, voluntarily, from the profoundest shrewdness in self-preservation, [this culture] took the side of all *décadence* instincts--*not* as being dominated by them but because it divined in them a power by means of which one can prevail *against* 'the world.' (VI³,A,24)

One of the most remarkable features of the Jewish culture for Nietzsche, is that through its very negation of "the world," it managed to remain there. This was possible because fundamental features of life as will to power were realized. First, as has been emphasized, they retained an *order of rank* among the drives of the organism. Hence Nietzsche will say the "tremendously tough will to exist and to power" (MXVIII,180) found in the Jewish culture "lies in

its ruling classes." (MXVIII,180) Through an order of rank, they possessed, no matter how "imaginary," the privilege of rank over their enemies who were "'to all eternity...[the] accursed and damned!'" (VI²,G:I,7) In the Jewish culture, we find a powerful instinct of preservation imposing its self-centered perspective throughout the organism it commands, and upon all that *resists* it. In this manner *it affirms*, in a unique manner, "the primordial law of things." (VI²,B,265)

Secondly, "the long fight with...*unfavorable conditions*" (VI²,B,262), provided this culture its "power of invention and simulation...[its]...`spirit'." (VI²,B,44) Given the "spiritualizing" function of the instinct of preservation, and its power in the ancient Jewish culture, the "*great suffering*" (VI²,B,225) essential to "all strong races" (MXVIII,352) was affirmed according to the law of life. "The will to power," says Nietzsche, "can manifest itself only against resistances." (MXIX,656) In the case of the Jewish culture, it was "faced with the question of being or not being" (VI³,A,24), but the most powerful remaining drive in the cultural organism emerged to resist destruction. Consequently, "they preferred with a perfectly uncanny conviction, being at *any price*." (VI³,A,24)

The irony is, they *affirmed* life as will to power through a "negation" of it as such. But life requires strength, and this culture's actually harnessing the strength inherent to the hatred of life, i.e., *ressentiment*, *affirmed* life yet again by *overcoming* it in a manner wholly unheard of before. Here we find "Jewish 'holiness' and its natural basis"; (MXVIII,299) that is, a "moral law made sovereign...to the point of becoming the antithesis of nature." (MXVIII,299) Thus the "Jews are the most remarkable nation of world history." (VI³,A,24)

However, having utilized the power of *ressentiment*,

the price they had to pay was the radical *falsification* of all nature, all naturalness, all reality.... They defined themselves *counter* to all those conditions under which a nation was able to live, was *permitted* to live; they made of themselves...the *contradiction of their natural values*. (VI³,A,24)

This "*denaturalizing* of natural values," (VI³,A, 25) took place in so far as a "priestly aristocracy" (VI²,G: I,6) began coining the values of the culture. The priests, as the manifestation of instinct of preservation, did what any dominating caste does; strive to retain its power and maintain a firm order of rank. But a basic difference between this caste and the old nobility is that the latter embodied the culture's warrior drives, and thus sought to *grow* in power. The instinct of preservation cannot do this; its perspective is wholly absorbed with the preservation of the organism. In an organism dominated by the most powerful drives we find a willingness to risk destruction for the sake of power. Thus Nietzsche will point out that the perspective of the instinct of preservation is "disadvantageous for it when it comes to war." (VI²,G:I,7)

As long as the organism is dominated by powerful warrior instincts, then that of self-preservation will function and "spiritualize" accordingly. But if these drives do not dominate that of self-preservation, something "unnatural" occurs. This unnaturalness is the organism's attempting to *merely* preserve itself since, as we have already seen, "every living thing does what it can not to preserve itself but to become *more*." (MXIX,689) This becoming "more" in the case of the instinct of preservation, is to realize an enhancement of its own perspective. In promoting its own perspective we see this drive, like any other, manifest the law of life as will to power. But this drive is ultimately concerned with preservation and hence inhibits the growth of the organism as a whole.

In spite of the Jewish culture's desire for "a king who is a good soldier and an upright judge...every hope

remained unfulfilled." (VI³,A,25) Thus, with the dissolving of the warrior class, it became clear that the "old God *could* no longer do what he formerly could." (VI³,A,25) Nietzsche suggests that in this situation, "...one should have let him go." (VI³,A,25) But no, "the conception of him" (VI³,A,25) was altered, and "at this price one retained him." (VI³,A,25) In retaining Yaweh as their God, he was stripped of all the virtues he possessed as a warrior. He became, says Nietzsche, "the God of 'justice'--*no longer* at one with Israel, an expression of national self-confidence: now only a God bound by conditions." (VI³,A,25)

This new conception of God

becomes an instrument in the hands of priestly agitators who henceforth interpret all good fortune as reward, all misfortune as punishment for disobedience of God, for 'sin'.... (VI³,A,25)

Now we find a God "who *demands*--in place of a God who helps ...who is fundamentally a word for...courage and self-reliance," (VI³,A,25) and a

[*m*]orality no longer the expression of...a nation's deepest instinct of life, but become abstract, become the antithesis of life--morality as a fundamental...'evil eye' for all things. (VI³,A,25)

This "*denaturalizing*" (VI³,A,25) process is the instinct of preservation enhancing itself by means of the *revenge* inherent to slave morality. And in so far as the virtues of master morality so essential to the creation of strong cultures are denied, Nietzsche sees it give rise to that "parasitic kind of human being which prospers only at the expense of every healthy form of life, the *priest*." (VI³,A,26)

Hence, both God (MXVIII,190) and the "law" (MXVIII,204) become "thoroughly realistic formalization[s] of certain considerations for the self-preservation of the community." (MXVIII,204) And so, from

now on all things are so ordered that the priest is *everywhere indispensable*; at all the natural events of life... there appears the holy parasite to denaturalize them...[for]

...every requirement presented by the instinct of life...a sanction is...required...which denies the natural quality of these things.... The priest disvalues, *dissanctifies* nature: it is only at the price of this that he exists at all. (VI³, A,26)

Thus from Nietzsche's standpoint, we have the ironical perception of the "concept of God falsified; the concept of morality falsified" (VI³,A,26) by priests undermining the law of life in both morality and religion. Of course, "the Jewish priesthood did not stop there. The entire *history* of Israel was useless: away with it!" (VI³,A,26)

We saw that when the instinct of preservation emerged among the Greeks, cultural decline was "understood as an objection to the foundations of Hellenic culture." (MXVIII,427) Similarly, when this same drive gained power in the Jewish culture then

in the hands of the Jewish priests the *great* epoch in the history of Israel became...an eternal *punishment* for the great epoch--an epoch in which the priest was as yet nothing. According to their requirements they made the mighty ...figures of Israel's history into...pathetic cringing bigots or 'godless men,' they simplified...every great event into the idiotic formula 'obedience to *or* disobedience of God.' (VI³,A,26)

Socrates and "his 'invalids'" (VI³,7:III,10) embodied the instinct of preservation and affirmed as "good, just, wise" (MXVIII,430) whatever constituted an "unnaturalness of the first water." (MXVIII,430) In the Jewish culture, the priest as "the physiological representative" (VI³, 7:VII,2) of this same drive, affirmed a "*denaturalizing* of natural value." (VI³,A,25)

After the negation of a "natural relationship to all things," (VI³,A,25) then "all the remaining unnaturalness follows forthwith." (VI³,A,25) That is to say, the conceptions of God, morality, and the history of Israel were falsified. Ultimately, "the idiotic formula 'obedience to *or* disobedience of God" (VI³,A,26) became synonymous with the

rule of the priests. "Disobedience of God, that is to say of the priests, of the 'Law,' now acquires," says Nietzsche, the name 'sin'; the means of 'becoming reconciled to God' are, as is only to be expected, means by which subjection to the priest is only more thoroughly guaranteed: the priest alone 'redeems.' (VI³,A,26)

In this way

'sins' are indispensable in any society organized by priests: they are the actual levers of power, the priest lives on sins....Supreme law: 'God forgives him who repents'--in plain language: *who subjects himself to the priest.*-- (VI³,A,26)

For Nietzsche, the ancient Jewish culture embraced values antithetical to life itself and the dismal conviction of sin was constant. Here, punishment and reward were scaled according to various degrees of guilt interpreted by an oppressive caste of priests which, through *ressentiment*, compelled this culture to deny all that affirmed life.

THE CASE OF CHRIST

The Jewish culture endured slavery and a caste of priests that oppressed it with a constant consciousness of guilt and sin. And it is into this gloomy and brooding world that Nietzsche sees Jesus Christ emerge as "the type of a *redeemer* of mankind." (VI³,A,24) As Nietzsche puts it;

A Jesus Christ was possible only in a Jewish landscape--I mean one over which the gloomy and sublime thunder cloud of Jehovah was brooding continually. Only here was the...sudden piercing of the general day-night by a single ray of the sun experienced as if it were a miracle of 'love' and the ray of unmerited 'grace.' Only here could Jesus dream of his rainbow...to heaven on which God descended to man. (V²,65,137)

But how is it that Christ was indeed this "ray of the sun" in such a forbidding spiritual landscape? The answer to this question lies in a feature of Nietzsche's portrait of Christ which is integral to his philosophy as a whole; the idea of "a *redeemer* of mankind." (VI³,A,24) For it is in this role that Nietzsche casts and identifies with

Zarathustra (VI³,E:Z,8) and Dionysus. (MXIX,1052) He also expresses the conviction that "the *redeeming* man...this Antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness--he must come one day." (VI²,G:II,24)

We will explore the idea of redemption further in our next chapter, but it is in terms of this potent element in Nietzsche's thought that his portrait of Christ as a redeemer becomes crucial to our investigation.

Our look at the physiology of the ancient Jewish culture places us at the foundation of both Nietzsche's portrait of Christ and his critique of Christianity. It is important to distinguish Christ from Christianity since, for Nietzsche, understanding the former is by no means to understand the latter. In short, Nietzsche consistently maintained this distinction while holding that both are to "be understood only by referring to the soil out of which... [they] grew." (VI³,A,24)

Thus far, we have seen how the Jewish culture underwent a "denaturalizing of natural values" (VI³,A,25) according to its instinct of preservation. Furthermore, this instinct is physiologically represented by the priestly caste "at the head of the chandala--against the noble orders." (MXVIII,184) This order of rank among the drives of the culture was its "last chance of survival, the residue of its independent political existence." (VI³,A,27) For Nietzsche, this denaturalizing feature developed within the body of the culture as a whole, streamlining it into an efficient mechanism for "communal self-preservation under foreign rule." (MXVIII,175) For the sake of brevity, we will follow Nietzsche's lead and refer to this phenomenon as "the Jewish instinct." (VI³,A,27)

Christ must be seen as both diametrically opposed to precisely this Jewish instinct *and* a natural consequence of it. This is to say he represents a negation of the Jewish instinct; a negation of everything essential to his cul-

ture's survival. Yet on the other hand, he was a physiological result of it. We will first consider why Christ "was possible only in a Jewish landscape" (V²,65,137) and then proceed to how he is a negation of the Jewish instinct.

"I confess," says Nietzsche, "there are few books which present me with so many difficulties as the Gospels do." (VI³,A,28) He rejects "the work of the incomparable Strauss"⁴ as "mere learned idling" (VI³,A,28) saying: "What I am concerned with is the psychological type of the redeemer. For it could be contained in the Gospels in spite of the Gospels." (VI³,A,29)

But what does Nietzsche mean by "the type of the redeemer?" We have seen that the goal of life is determined by the principle of all life, the will to power. And [o]ne must not let oneself be deceived; it is just the same with peoples and races: they constitute the "body" for the production of isolated valuable individuals, who carry on the great process. (MXIX,679)

In the Greek culture we saw a "sudden fruitfulness in types" (MXVIII,437) known as the pre-Socratics. The type of the philosopher found in the Greek culture is, as in the case of pre-Socratics, an expression of health. While the philosophical type of decadence is the case of Socrates. The type of the redeemer is, like that of the philosopher or artist, yet another promise of the future and will physiologically represent the level of sickness or health of his culture.

Ultimately, Nietzsche's investigation into "the psychological type of the redeemer" (VI³,A,29) determines his portrait of Christ. Hence this portrait is Nietzsche's articulation of "what order of rank the inner most drives of his nature stand in relation to each other" (VI²,B,6) such that Christ felt *compelled* to redeem the human race.

We saw that the capacity to denaturalize all natural values spearheaded by the instinct of preservation, is the means through which the Jewish culture retained its

identity. The question we now have before us is; how is it that for Nietzsche Christ is a physiological consequence of this "Jewish instinct." (VI³,A,27)

Just as the philosophical type emerged as "physiologically representative" (VI³,T:VII,2) of the Greek culture, so does the type of the redeemer emerge in that of the Jews. For Nietzsche, "Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate gospel of love," (VI²,G:I,8) reveals "the profoundest and sublimest kind of hatred." (VI²,G:I,8) Here is the hatred inherent to *ressentiment* utilized by the Jewish instinct of preservation. This sounds strange to us, but says Nietzsche; *That, however, is what has happened: from the trunk of that tree...there grew something equally incomparable, a new love, the profoundest and sublimest kind of love--and from what other trunk could it have grown? One should not imagine it grew up as the denial of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is true! That love grew out of it as its crown...spreading itself farther and farther into the purest...sunlight...in pursuit of the goals of that hatred...by the same impulse that drove the roots of that hatred deeper....* (VI²,G:I,8)

The Jewish instinct of preservation, which had for generations exploited a hatred of all reality, finally cultivated its most exquisite expression in Jesus Christ. In this light, Nietzsche points out "two *physiological realities*" (VI³,A,30) in the psychology of the redeemer as applied to Christ. The first of these is;

Instinctive hatred of reality: consequence of an extreme capacity for suffering and irritation which no longer wants to be 'touched' at all because it feels every contact too deeply. (VI³,A,30)²

This hatred of reality is dictated by Christ's instinct of preservation in so far as this instinct is so highly refined in him that all contact with reality is unbearable.

Nietzsche is referring here to a sensitivity and suffering in the face of the concrete world which staggers the imagination in its profundity.

The second "physiological reality" inherent to Christ as the type of the redeemer is:

Instinctive exclusion of all aversion, all enmity, all feeling for limitation and distancing: consequence of an extreme capacity for suffering and irritation which already feels all resisting, all need for resistance, as an unbearable *displeasure* (that is to say as *harmful*, as *depreciated* by the instinct of self-preservation) and knows blessedness (pleasure) only in no longer resisting anyone or anything...love as the sole, as the *last possibility of life*.... (VI³,A,30)

In the case of Christ we find says Nietzsche, an instinct of preservation so extraordinarily developed that all capacity for struggle, resistance, anger and revenge are essentially impossible. This capacity is non-existent since it requires a contact with reality which is, as we have just seen, already unendurable. The only way Christ preserves himself is through not resisting anything at all, and this non-resistance is "love" in so far as "[d]enial is precisely what is totally impossible for him." (VI³,A,32) Ultimately, for Christ love must be seen "as the last possibility of life." (VI³,A,30)

For Nietzsche, Christ is a physiological result of the Jewish instinct and hence the love of Christ is a blossom on the tree of hatred. But if enmity was impossible for Christ, exactly how does he reveal "Jewish hatred?" (VI²,G:I,8) The answer to this question lies essentially in how Christ's "instinctive hatred of reality" (VI³,A,30) is lived as a *suffering* from reality. Here we find "something...incomparable" (VI²,G:I,8) in that Christ reveals the suffering characteristic of the "physiologically unfortunate," (VI²,G:III,14) but is *without* any capacity to even begin to blame or want *revenge* because of this suffering. And it is here that the seeds of how Christ is also a *negation* of the Jewish instinct are found.

Ressentiment was integral to the Jewish instinct of preservation. But in Christ we find an extremely refined expression of the Jewish instinct. He was such a perfect "physiological representative" (VI³,T:VII,2) of the instinct of preservation that *ressentiment* was left behind. For

Christ, just to exist meant unbearable pain, and as we saw above, his instinct of preservation "*deprecated*" (VI²,A,30) all enmity in so far as he already "feels every contact too deeply." (VI²,A,30)

Thus Christ, as a magnified expression of the suffering of the "ill-constituted," (MXIX,846) reveals the physiology of his culture since this suffering was essential to the *ressentiment* exploited by its instinct of preservation. He further reveals the physiology of his culture in being the embodiment of a highly refined instinct of preservation which itself had developed as a consequence of "great suffering." (VI²,B,225) But where Christ is the antithesis of his culture lies in his disclosing, as Nietzsche says, "the freedom from, the superiority *over* every feeling of *ressentiment*." (VI²,A,40)

We stated above that the suffering of Christ was a magnification of that characterizing the "physiologically unfortunate" (VI²,G:III,14) and "ill-constituted." (MXIX, 846) It should pointed out here that his suffering is described as such because, as we have already seen, "to suffer from actuality means to be an abortive actuality." (VI²,A, 15) In so far as Nietzsche uses the "two *physiological realities*" (VI²,A,30) mentioned above as the basis of his portrait of Christ, then the latter is not only among the disinherited of the earth, but also a "most interesting *déca-dent*." (VI², A,31)

To fight the ascending instincts of life "that is the formula for *décadence*." (VI²,T:III,11) Our question is how does Christ fit this formula? To answer, we are going to have to recognize that Christ is not, as was Socrates, "a *typical décadent*." (VI²,A,30) Consequently, we must first look at certain physiological peculiarities in Christ if we are to see him within the "formula for *décadence*." (VI²,T: III,11) First, the instinct of preservation is so dominant in him, that fighting the ascending instincts of life is

impossible since, in Christ, these simply do not exist. Here we find such a perfectly refined product of the Jewish instinct *minus its resentment*, that

the opposite of all contending, of all feeling oneself in struggle has here become instinct: the incapacity for resistance here becomes morality...blessedness in peace, in gentleness, in the *inability* for enmity. (VI³,A,29)

We have seen that the will to power only reveals itself in resistance. (MXIX,656) Christ as a living organism must reveal resistance to a certain extent. His "resistance" is, again, that peculiar to his culture in that he constitutes a radical "*denaturalizing* of natural values." (VI³,A,25)

In the Jewish culture we saw life as will to power actually realize the negation of itself wherein is found a *physiological revaluation* of the values of life. Nevertheless in this same culture, this revaluation did not, as it normally would, lead to decadence and sickness. On the contrary, this revaluation was the expression of the rigorously maintained order of rank through which this culture preserved itself. The Jewish instinct of preservation forged an order of rank through which not only its existence was preserved, but also its *denaturalizing* of natural values enabled it to *strike back* with "nothing less than a radical revaluation of their enemies' values...an act of the *most spiritual revenge*." (VI²,G:I,7) In this the Jews chose life "at any price" (VI³,A,24) and affirmed life to the extent that it was the one *reality* never abandoned.

The denaturalization which provided the Jews the "possibility of remaining in being" (VI³,A,27) and striking back at their enemies, finds a more *advanced* physiological expression in Christ. In him is an "instinctive hatred of every reality" (VI³,A,29) and hence a going beyond the Jewish instinct's "*hatred* of the natural." (VI³,A,15) Christ is a living example of a *physiological revaluation* of the values of life cultivated by the Jewish instinct. In this he is

a "specific culture plant" (MXIX,864) constituting a perfect antithesis to *all* natural values. As this antithesis, he is the *means* through which the Jewish culture attained "the goal of its sublime vengefulness." (VI²,G:I,8)

Christ is the antithesis of all "*nobler* ideals" (VI²,G:I,8) and as such appeals to all decadence instincts. For this reason, Nietzsche refers to Christ as "the real instrument" (VI²,G:I,8) of the Jewish "*spiritual revenge*" (VI²,G:I,7) that marked "the beginning of the slave rebellion in morals." (VI²,B,195)

Nietzsche sees Christ as the means through which the Jewish culture undermined the values "*affirmative of life*" (VI³,A,24) in so far as the instinctive hatred of all reality characteristic of Christ could not fail to appeal to the decadence instincts of all cultures wherein master morality still flourished. The extent to which this morality could be undermined, was the promise of a future for the Jewish culture to remain in existence.

Christ is, then, a perfectly cultivated form of decadence and a *means* to the negation of all master morality. Of course, it would be incorrect to see Christ as indicative of a conscious conspiracy on the part of the Jewish culture. We must bear in mind that for Nietzsche this culture, like any other, is an organic form of the will to power and hence follows the path determined by the perspective of its most powerful drives. In the case of the Jewish culture, we find the soil out of which grew the perfect "instrument" (VI²,G:I,8) for a revaluation of all values. It gave birth to a form of decadence it was strong enough to *exclude* from itself while, at the same time, providing "all the opponents of Israel" (VI²,G:I,8) a "*dangerous bait*" (VI²,G:I,8) to "unhesitatingly swallow." (VI²,G:I,8)

For Nietzsche the spiritual revenge of a revaluation of the values of master morality as embodied in Jesus Christ was an overwhelming success since, "One knows *who*

inherited this Jewish revaluation." (VI²,G:I,7) He is of course, referring here to all who embraced Christianity from antiquity to the present.

As we said above, Christ must nevertheless be distinguished from Christianity. And indeed, the best way to assert this distinction is to return to our question concerning how Christ fits into the mold of decadence as opposed to "the Christian."

First it was mentioned above that the Jewish culture, though having spawned Christ "as a *décadence* type" (VI³,A,31) was still capable of excluding him from the body of its culture. This is after all, typical of "all strong races." (MXVIII,352) We saw that the Jewish culture exploited the denial of all natural reality as a means to retaining that one reality they never abandoned, life itself.

Christ is a different story since we must recognize, says Nietzsche,

a condition of morbid susceptibility of the *sense of touch* which makes it shrink back in horror from every contact, every grasping of a firm object. Translate such a physiological *habitus* into its ultimate logic--as instinctive hatred of every reality.... (VI³,A,29)

In Christ's "incapacity for resistance" Nietzsche recognizes "a *décadence* type." (VI³,A,31) Dominated as he is by the instinct of preservation, he "feels all resisting, all need for resistance, as an unbearable *displeasure*...that is to say as *harmful*, as *deprecated* by the instinct preservation." (VI³,AC,30) But it is precisely in his "*inability*" (VI³,C, 29) for resistance that not only is a fundamental feature of life denied, but further, an absolutely essential feature of the existence of the Jewish culture.

As a uniquely specialized expression of the Jewish instinct, the hatred of reality in Christ was transformed into a hatred of "every reality" (VI³,A,29) and thus simply to exist was the source of profound agony. In him we find the embodiment of the physiological revaluation of all val-

ues that the Jewish culture exploited but did not *in reality* embrace. The Jewish culture had to repulse Christ because in his hatred of every reality was the risk of being infected by a hatred of life itself. Hence he reveals "antipathy towards every form, every spacial and temporal concept, towards everything firm, all that is custom, institution, Church." (VI³,A,29) In short, Christ was so constituted that he *had* to stand in direct opposition to "the pile-work upon which the Jewish nation continued to exist at all." (VI³,A, 27)

If fighting the instincts affirmative of life "is the formula for *décadence*," (VI³,T:III,11) then Christ fits into the formula by the fact that his "fight" is not, as was Socrates', through a conscious battle to tyrannize them, but as a *living example* of their destruction. In him there is no "battle" against the ascending instincts of life since these are not in him. There is no rancour nor *ressentiment*, only the quintessential expression of the instinct preservation negating all reality in so far as reality is *suffered*. Christ cannot help, in everything he does and says, but express a negation of all the instincts of ascending life because he is a living proof of their absence.

What Christ requires as a possibility to endure is a state of peace. That is, a state wherein the flux of life as becoming is completely negated. And it was in this light that the "love" of Christ is an expression of an inherent incapacity for resistance of any kind; his "yes" to all things is rooted in a "No" to the law of all life. This betrays a condition wherein the organism desires precisely what the instinct of preservation in all exhausted organisms requires; a perfectly static state, an end to all suffering, a state of finality. In short, it wants death. It is in this light that Nietzsche says the love of Christ ultimately "seeks death." (VI²,B,269)

In chapter one we saw that self-preservation is not "the *primum mobile*" (MXIX,652) of life and that when this instinct becomes dominate such that the mere "will to exist" (MXIX,774) is the goal of an organism, then it is "the lowest form" (MXIX,774) of the will to power. Generally, we are speaking here of an organism wherein, the battle between its drives has reduced it to a state of exhaustion. Furthermore, we saw that in this condition, the weakest instincts rally round that of preservation and eventually undermine the strength of the organism to the point of self-destruction. This is, as it were an inverted order of rank determined by the drives fundamental to sickness and decadence.

In the Jewish culture the most powerful drive is certainly that of self-preservation. Unlike the general case of decadence however, this drive among the Jews was not dominated by the weakest drives. On the contrary, these latter were exploited towards an *essential* affirmation of life. The Jewish instinct of preservation created a new order of rank and hence not only preserved the culture, but more importantly, it could take revenge; "'sweeter than honey' old Homer called it." (MXIX,765) Hence Nietzsche's observation that the "power and certainty of the future in the Jewish instinct its tremendously tough will to exist and to power, lies in its ruling classes." (MXVIII,180)

In light of the above remarks, we must return to the symptoms of decadence in Christ; specifically, how the instinct of preservation in him is fundamentally a desire for destruction. In Socrates we see a death-wish which "betrays a state of emergency," (VI³,7:III,10) namely, his "instincts were in anarchy." (VI³,7:III,9) In this condition, the instinct of preservation in alliance with those of decadence undermine the most powerful drives in the organism. In the end, the weariness typical of all organisms which fight

their most powerful drives set into Socrates until finally he "had had enough of it." (VI³,7:I,1)

Christ is in many respects quite different in that he, unlike Socrates, is not a *typical* decadent. In Socrates we see the anarchy of the drives pulling him in a multiplicity of directions and it is precisely this multiplicity which Socrates sets out to destroy. But Christ as a *décadence* type, *could* in fact have been of a peculiar multiplicity and contradictoriness: such a possibility cannot be entirely excluded. But everything speaks against it (VI³,A,31)

What particularly speaks against it is not only the lack of powerful, war-like drives in Christ, but even more interesting is his "freedom from, the superiority over every feeling of *ressentiment*." (VI³,A,40)

Like everything in Nietzsche's philosophy we must look at revenge from the perspective of the sick toward healthier concepts ...and, conversely, looking again from the fullness of a *rich* life down into the secret work of decadence.... (VI³,E:I,1)

Thus from the standpoint of healthy concepts of life, revenge is quite typical of powerful, life-affirming warlike drives. On the other hand, it can be rooted in the *ressentiment* characteristic of the weakest instincts of life.

What is remarkable about Christ "as a *décadence* type" (VI³,A,31) is that he is lacking in *both* forms of revenge. As we said above, he possesses weak instincts in so far as he is a magnification of their suffering existence, but is without the *ressentiment* generally characteristic of them. This leaves us with the "most interesting of all *décadents*."* Christ's instinct of preservation permeates him to the extent that the revenge characteristic of the weakest instincts of life are wholly nullified.

Christ's weakest instincts rally round that of preservation; their cumulative affect is that of a weariness and suffering in the face of existence. He is not pulled in

a multiplicity of directions; on the contrary, he is a unified organism to the extent that he is wholly directed toward preserving himself from suffering as "the last possibility of life." (VI³,A,30)

Ultimately, Socrates went to war against the multiplicity within himself. This battle against the most powerful drives naturally led to a negation of the strength of the organism until a weariness with life emerges along with a desire for death. Christ on the other hand, does not war against a multiplicity within himself, since there is no anarchy of the instincts in him. Christ is constituted in a such a way that he is *already* a weariness with life and utterly incapable of going against anything. This, as we saw, is the love which "seeks death." (VI²,B,269) Here once again, we see life as will to power weeding out the sick among the strong as "the hand that considerately--kills." (VI²,B,69) In this Nietzsche certainly sees Christ as an individual *born* to suffer and die.

Having looked at Christ as a unique form of decadence, we can now give consideration to his "spiritualization" of the world. The instinct of preservation is "the first instinct of spirituality" (VI³,7:IX,2) and the source of all the fictions necessary to life. The "spiritualizing" of the world that takes place within Christ, is predictably quite different from that of a Socrates.

In Christ we find, says Nietzsche, that the *experience* 'life'...is opposed to any kind of...formula.... the whole of reality...possesses for him merely the value of a...metaphor...such a symbolist *par excellence* stands outside...all experience of the world...he never had any reason to deny 'the world,' he had no notion of the ecclesiastical concept 'world'.... Denial is precisely what is...impossible for him. --Dialectics are likewise lacking, the idea...that a...'truth' could be proved by reasons.... Neither can such a doctrine argue...it simply does not know how to imagine an opinion contrary to its own.... (VI³,A,32)

In an organism incapable of any form of resistance and suffering the very fact of existence, then naturally, it

will create fictions essential to its own preservation. Socrates' "form of ferocity" (VI³,7:III,7) and love of combat, even if degenerately expressed in dialectic, betrays an agonal instinct⁷ unheard of in Christ. For the latter, this world, says Nietzsche, is an "occasion for metaphors" (VI³, A,34) which reflect "only *inner realities*" (VI³,A,34) and a "being at home in a world undisturbed by reality of any kind." (VI³,A,29) We find here an instinct of preservation "spiritualizing" the world in such a way as to render Christ "outside...all experience of the world, all acquirements, all politics, all psychology, all books all art." (VI³,A,32)

The fictions essential to Christ all affirm strictly *protective* measures from a world of becoming; there is no affirmation of attack or vengeance. He is so utterly steeped in symbol and metaphor that he lives, in an impregnable psychological bubble wherein all contact with reality, all feeling of opposition to anything is non-existent.

Thus with regard to "everything pertaining to nature, time, space, history," (VI³,A,34) Christ's "knowledge" is precisely the *pure folly* of the fact that anything of this kind exists." (VI³,A,32) Hence it is "on condition that nothing he says is taken literally that this antirealist can speak at all." (VI³,A,32) Christ, immersed as he is within his "*inner realities*" (VI³,A,34), must like all men, "transport the order of which he is the physiological representative into his relations with other human beings and with things." (VI³,7:VII,2) Consequently, he cannot help but see the world and others strictly in terms of "his expression for the inmost thing." (VI³,A,32) The "physiological *habitus*" (VI³,A,29) of himself as the *negation* of all ascending instincts, determines a "spirituality" at "home in a world undisturbed by reality of any kind," (VI³,A,29) and is precisely "the inmost thing" (VI³,A,32) permeating Christ's relationship to the world and to others.

Such a condition leads Nietzsche to see Christ's "faith" as something which on the latter's part is totally effortless; that is "not a faith which has been won by struggle--it is there from the beginning, it is as it were a return to the childish in the spiritual domain." (VI³,A,32) The "spiritual domain" occupied by Christ has nothing whatsoever to do with that of being "a soldier...defending oneself; preserving one's honour...being *proud*." (VI³,A,38) On the contrary, such

a faith is not angry...does not defend itself: it...has no idea to what extent it could one day cause dissention. It does not prove itself...by miracles or by rewards and promises...it is every moment its own miracle...its own proof, its own 'kingdom of God'...this faith...lives, it resists all formulas. (VI³,A,32)

This resistance to all formulas does not mean a conscious refusal on the part of Christ to put forth a doctrine but simply an inability to "understand that other doctrines exist, can exist, it simply does not know how to imagine an opinion contrary to its own." (VI³,A,32)

As Nietzsche says, this is a *living* faith. (VI³,A,32) Christ has no need to prove or dispute anything; he is the proof of his "'glad tidings'" and "kingdom of Heaven" (VI³,A,32) in the way a child is convinced he is the center of the universe while knowing nothing of what "the universe" or "having convictions" means. It is in this connection "to children" (VI³,A,32) that Nietzsche recognizes in Christ an "occurrence of retarded puberty undeveloped in the organism as a consequence of degeneration [which] is familiar at any rate to physiologists." (VI³,A,32)

Indeed, Christ is for Nietzsche very much a child, or "to speak with the precision of the physiologist a quite different word would rather be in place here: the word idiot. (VI³,A,29)⁸ Here is "a being immersed entirely in symbols and incomprehensibilities" (VI³,A,31) and very much a child in the manner of one who is emotionally and psychologically underdeveloped. Everything Christ does and says

is indicative of that helpless and self-absorbed world of "childlike' idiocy." (VI³,A,31) Of course the "milieu in which this strange figure moved," says Nietzsche, "must have left its mark upon him." (VI³,A,31)

The "mark" of his milieu is ultimately rather arbitrary in that chance "to be sure, determines the environment, the language, the preparatory schooling of a particular configuration of concepts." (VI³,A,32)

Hence Christ

employs *only* Judeo-Semitic concepts.... But one must be careful not to see in this anything but a sign-language, a semiotic, an occasion for metaphors.... Among Indians he would have made use of Sankhyam concepts, among Chinese those of Lao-tse--and would not have felt the difference. (VI³,A,32)

Thus it was "only in a Jewish landscape" that Jesus could "dream of his rainbow and ladder to heaven," (V²,GS,137), and think "God was walking before him and coming alive within him." (MXVIII,176) But in so far as he is the negation of the Jewish instinct, Christ is the antithesis of the Jewish conception of Yaweh, of sin and of course, the messiah.

Given that these concepts were for Christ merely "a semiotic, an occasion for metaphors," (VI³,A,32) then it "is quite another question whether he was conscious of any such antithesis--whether he was not merely *felt* to be this antithesis." (VI³,A,28) It is certainly the case that Jesus was felt to be this antithesis since he was "*misunderstood* to be...a *No* uttered towards everything that was priest and theologian." (VI³,A,27)

With childlike conviction Christ felt himself to be "the son of God" as an expression of "inner realities" (VI³,A,34) which fortified him from a world already "*depre- cated* by the instinct of self-preservation." (VI³,A,30) He had, says Nietzsche, no real conception of reality and certainly "no notion of the ecclesiastical concept 'world.'" (VI³,A,32) This is an individual submerged in a world of

childish fictions whose language is that of a culture steeped in the concepts of "God," "sin" and "messiah." He copies this language in the same way a child does that of his parents, and is equally ignorant of its significance. Christ can no more be responsible for a revolution "against the Jewish Church" (VI³,A,27) than can a child be responsible for mimicking his parents.

Jesus possessed, says Nietzsche "the most innocent and desirous heart," (VI²,B,269) and was murdered for reasons which, to this holy simpleton, were *incomprehensible* since cruelty, vengeance, punishment, hate and *ressentiment* did not exist in his "'real' world." (VI³,A,29)

He had no doctrines to defend, nor did he require any formulas, any rites for communicating with God...he knows that it is through the *practice* of one's life that one [is]...at all times a 'child of God.' It is *not* 'penance,' *not* 'prayer for forgiveness' which leads to God: *evangelic practice alone* leads to God, it is God...the whole of Jewish *ecclesiastical* teaching was denied in the 'glad tidings.' (VI³,A,33)

What he taught says Nietzsche, was a "new way of living, *not* a new belief." (VI³,A,33) In Christ "blessedness is not promised, it is not tied to any conditions: it is the *only* reality--the rest is signs for speaking of it." (VI³,A,33) Jesus is the *living example* of a "physiological *habitus*" (VI³,A,29) which "projects itself into a new *practice*, the true evangelic practice." (VI³,A,33) The genuine Christian "is distinguished by a *different* mode of acting" (VI³,A,33) epitomized by Christ who made "no distinction between foreigner and native, between Jew and non-Jew.... He is not angry with anyone, does not disdain anyone. (VI³,A,33)

"The life of the redeemer," says Nietzsche, "was nothing else than *this practice*" (VI³,A,33) which always points back to "fundamentally *one* law, all consequences of *one* instinct." (VI³,A,33) The instinct of preservation in Christ provided the fictions necessary to living with pain and suffering. In non-resistance and the negation of the

affects of *ressentiment*, he could endure. And it is precisely this practice which sustained him and which he taught.

In this light, Nietzsche makes the interesting observation that with Christ is "an absolutely primary beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement, to an actual and *not* merely promised *happiness on earth*." (VI³,A,42)⁹ In short, "he bequeathed to mankind...his *practice*," (VI³,A,35) that is, a technique for enduring suffering. Consequently, even "today such a life is possible, for *certain* men even necessary: genuine, primitive Christianity will be possible at all times. (VI³,A,39)

With Christ the abyss between God and man was bridged in so far as he was not able to feel any contradiction between himself and God. In him *existence* is to feel oneself 'in heaven,' to feel oneself 'eternal,' while in every other condition one by *no* means feels oneself 'in heaven': this alone is the psychological reality of 'redemption.' A new way of living, *not* a new belief.... (VI³,A,33)

Nietzsche says the significance of Christ's teaching has nothing to do with eternal rewards and punishment, but is something which must be *lived* here on earth according to his example. Hence his

words to the *thief* on the cross contain the whole Evangel. 'That was verily a *divine* man, a child of God!'--says the thief. 'If thou feelest this'--answers the redeemer--'thou art in *paradise*, thou art a child of God.' (VI³,A,35)

Christ "redeemed" in so far as he provided a *means*, a teaching, whereby mankind could find "happiness" in the midst of suffering. The suffering of men led him to pity them and this was "*Christ's error*." (V²,GS,138) As Nietzsche puts it;

The founder of Christianity thought that there was nothing of which men suffered more than their sins. That was his error--the error of one who felt that he was without sin and who lacked firsthand experience. Thus his soul grew full of that wonderful and fantastic compassion for a misery that even among his people, who had invented sin, was rarely a great misery. (V²,GS,138)

The suggestion here is not so much that pity was an error but rather the error lay in Christ's judgment as to why men suffered. But this error in judgement points back to what for Nietzsche is a fundamental symptom of decadence; knowing "as little as possible about physiology." (MXVIII,423)

We already saw this symptom in Socrates¹⁰ who, like Christ, wanted to alleviate suffering and make men happy. Socrates provided "his expedient, his cure, his personal art of self-preservation." (VI³,7:III,9) Christ has his self-preservative technique as well in "love as the sole, as the last possibility of life." (VI³,A,30)

Like Socrates, Christ's perception of the world "is a symptom of certain physiological conditions, likewise of a particular spiritual level of prevalent judgments." (MXVIII,254) In both the cases of Socrates and Christ the instinct of preservation seeks the avoidance of suffering as a means to "happiness." Hence both will see the world in terms of what is essential to their own survival. With the former it was "reason," with the latter, it is "love."

The pity Christ had on men not only points to an error in thinking they suffered from "sin," but also that this was the root of all suffering. For Christ "love" was the means to a negation of suffering and the way of bringing "happiness" to men. But to actually want to undermine all suffering and make men "happy" leads, as we saw in the case of Socrates, to "errors in physiologicis." (MXVIII,454)

These errors are determined by the physiology of Christ for whom it is constitutionally impossible to see that all life strives for power "not an increase in 'happiness.'" (MXIX,704) Suffering is not something that must necessarily be negated since it is inherent to "the primordial law of all things" (VI²,B,265) which "seeks that which resists it." (MXIX,656)

Christ's desire to see men happy provides "the formula for *décadence*" (VI³,7:III,11) insofar as he only

sees suffering from the standpoint of the instincts of decadence. The idea that "as long as life is *ascending*, happiness and instinct are one" (VI³,7:III,11) is incomprehensible to him since precisely he is utterly lacking in ascending instincts. For him the suffering of others is pitiful and can be alleviated through a "love" which, as non-resistance, is the means "to feel oneself 'in heaven,' to feel oneself 'eternal.'" (VI³,A,33) In short, one *preserves* oneself in existence, in so far as its essential conditions are negated. We have already seen however, that this "is not the chance product of some individual talent, some exceptional nature. *Race* is required for it." (VI³,A,44)

Once again, the capacity of the Jewish instinct to negate all reality as a means to retaining one's place in it finds a sublime expression in Christ. Through him an instinctive hatred of reality is promoted as a means to the preservation of the physiologically depraved. Naturally, the Jewish culture had to exclude Christ and his "love" from itself insofar as it is decadent; strong races will find Christ's love a threat to its existence, but the weak will find him irresistible.

Christ's pity then, is necessarily directed at the suffering of the physiologically depraved since this is *his* suffering. His "love" is a means to his own preservation as well as to that of the weak in general. And through providing a means to the preservation of the ill-constituted, then Christ, like Socrates, selects "as an expedient, as a deliverance...only another expression of *décadence*--they alter its expression, they do not abolish the thing itself." (VI³,7:III,11)

The question arises as to how Christ's "love" as non-resistance is actually a vehicle for the preservation of the weak. We have seen that in organisms exhausted by the anarchy of the drives, we find that typical characteristic of the weak; the inability to resist stimuli.¹¹ In Christ

however, we find a profound "resistance" to stimuli insofar as his instinct of preservation dissuades as "harmful" (VI³, A,30) all contact with reality. Here, says Nietzsche, the "instinct is on the right track insofar as doing nothing is more expedient than doing something." (MXVIII,45) What is required then, is the realization of a state wherein the organism's inability to avoid reaction is brought under control. That is to say, it requires a state of total passivity.

Christ's "non-resistance" to stimuli is fundamentally the affect of an instinct of preservation basically leaving him numb, as it were, to all contact with reality. His incapacity for resistance of any kind, is not therefore the discipline inherent to an order of rank among the drives, but the affect of the instinct of preservation conserving energy that would be dissipated if the organism was actually "'touched'" (VI³,A,30) by reality.

This physiological state of affairs is manifest in various monastic "orders, the solitary philosophers, the fakirs" (MXVIII,45) who "are inspired by the right value standard that a certain kind of man cannot benefit himself more than by preventing in himself as much as possible from acting." (MXVIII,45)¹² In short, we find here the physiological basis of asceticism.¹³

In organisms pulled in multiple directions by the anarchy of their drives, energy is dissipated in multiple directions leading to its fragmentation. It is the prevention of this dissipation which lies in Christ's saying, "'resist not evil!'" (VI³,A,29) which, says Nietzsche, is "the profoundest saying of the Gospel, its key in a certain sense." (VI³,A,29) Ultimately, Christ is the redeemer of the physiologically "underprivileged" (MXVIII,55) insofar as his "love," like Socrates' "'rationality at any cost,'" (VI³,T: III,11) is the "last possibility of life." (VI³,A,30)

Nevertheless, as we said above, this "love" of Christ's is symptomatic of the death-wish typical of all exhausted organisms. We have already seen that in organisms dominated by the instinct of preservation, Nietzsche translates their need for peace and repose into a longing for a fixed and static world wherein the flux of becoming is entirely negated. This was the case with Socrates who wanted to inhabit a world entirely devoid of the chaos of becoming and who strove to inhabit a "good" world. This world being one entirely "fixed" through dialectic. But Socrates' "subtle conscience and self-examination" (VI²,B,191) showed him that "rationality" and its inherent "good" justified neither this world nor his own existence until finally "it was not Athens, it was *he* who handed himself the poison cup." (VI³, 7:III,12)

Unlike Socrates, Christ was fundamentally incapable of becoming transparent to himself and hence the former "had the greater intelligence." (IV³,HH:II,86)¹⁴ The idea of Christ as a harmless "idiot" (VI³,A,29) is taken quite seriously by Nietzsche, and hence the former's death-wish is already realized in so far as he was "at all times a 'child of God,'" (VI³,A,33) actually feeling himself "'in heaven'" (VI³,A,33) and "'eternal.'" (VI³,A,33)

For Nietzsche, since Christ "is purely inward," (MXVIII,160) and steeped in fictions essential to avoiding contact with reality, then the "'hour of death'...time, physical life and its crises, simply do not exist for the teacher of the 'glad tidings.'" (VI³,A,34) In this sense Christ was a living death and genuinely occupied that perfectly static state characteristic of the perspective of the instinct of preservation. He was "dead" to this world in all but the physical reality of death.

Ultimately, Socrates may have possessed "the greater intelligence," (IV³,HH:II,86)¹⁵ but "this shrewdest of all self-deceivers" (VI³,7:III,12) could not attain, as

Christ did, a "world" wherein life as will to power was negated. Christ never had to "strive" to convince himself of anything. In him the "kingdom of heaven" is a condition of the heart" (VI³,A,34) which betrays, as we saw, a condition "of retarded puberty." (VI³,A,32) Thus with regard to Christ the description of Dostoevsky's "idiot" seems appropriate in that

'he was utterly a child...he was like an adult only in stature and face, but in development, soul, character, and perhaps even in mind--he was not an adult and so he would remain.'¹⁶

C.S. Lewis said that when we are confronted with Christ, we have three options as a means to explaining him. He was either the Devil, a lunatic, or he was telling the truth.¹⁷ Nietzsche clearly verges toward the second option and laments that

no Dostoyevsky lived in the neighbourhood of this most interesting *décadent*: I mean someone who could feel the thrilling fascination of such a combination of the sublime, the sick and the childish. (VI³,A,31)

Had a person like Dostoevsky been at hand, Nietzsche feels a much more accurate psychological profile of Christ would have been possible. In short, this profile would have been more in accord with Nietzsche's perception of Christ than that provided by the Gospels.

In the opening remarks for this chapter, it was said that precisely the "combination of the sublime, the sick and the childish" (VI³,A,31) characteristic of Christ had to be understood. Given the above remarks, it is clear what Nietzsche meant by the childish in Christ. As regards his sickness, this can be seen in terms of how Christ reveals the symptoms of "a *décadence* type." (VI³,A,31)

On the other hand, the question as to what is sublime in Christ takes us into an arena of Nietzsche's philosophy wherein "Jesus of Nazareth" (MXVIII,182) constitutes the "type of the redeemer." (VI³,A,31) And it is in so

far as Jesus is a redeemer that Nietzsche finds nobility in him.

In Christ there is a profound example of a "wonderful and fantastic compassion" (V²,6S,138) for the suffering of men as well as a means to enduring suffering. No doubt, Nietzsche sees problems with this very compassion in that it was based on a misunderstanding of "sin" as its cause, and it sought to negate all suffering. Nevertheless, Nietzsche possessed the compassion of a physician who felt his task inherently involved providing a way for men to endure suffering. In light of this task, he looked at Christ as he once did Socrates, seeing the former's "redemption" as not only a misunderstanding of this task but also, a further promotion of decadence.

Christ the "idiot," Christ the "sick," says Nietzsche; but these judgments should not blind us to their legitimacy within the clinical standpoint of the will to power. "The value for *life* is ultimately decisive" (MXIX, 493) and there is in Christ something Nietzsche saw as valuable for life; hence Christ stands on the plateau of the sublime.

To appreciate the nobility of Christ in Nietzsche's eyes, we must recall the meaning of "great suffering." (VI²,B,225) Nietzsche could not be indifferent to suffering in so far as it marks the path of life as will to power. In Christ we saw that just to exist was to suffer and yet he not only endured but more, he lived "in heaven," as if he occupied a state of perfection. Furthermore, he taught the means to this perfection as something to be *lived* here on earth.

In this light, Nietzsche made a comment which at present indicates paths we must follow in our next chapter but will serve us now to some extent. He said, "'The world is perfect'--thus speaks the instinct of the most spiritual, the affirmative instinct." (VI³,A,57) Christ inhabited a

"perfect" world and in his compassion for the suffering of men, wanted to give them this perfection. This was his "redemption" from all suffering. Out of his own pain, Christ provided a means which enables men to live in suffering and hence to *this extent* life is affirmed.

Christ's "Kingdom of Heaven" (MXVIII,161) is here on earth as "a condition of the heart." (MXVIII,161) It is not, says Nietzsche,

something 'above the earth.' The Kingdom of God does not 'come' chronologically-historically, on a certain day in the calendar, something that might be here one day but not the day before: it is an 'inward change of the individual.' (MXVIII,161)

The means to endure the suffering inherent to life which Christ taught was, as we saw, a fundamental negation of everything necessary to life. This is exactly what connects Christ to the Jewish instinct since it is precisely this paradox which enabled that culture to survive and fight its enemies. Christ represents this paradox but, again as we saw, he is devoid of the *ressentiment* integral to the Jewish instinct. The perfection Christ affirmed resides in this incapacity for bitterness and revenge toward this world which, as we saw, he had no real contact with.

As a redeemer of men, Christ reveals "the most spiritual, affirmative instinct," (VI³,A,57) but in a physiologically decadent condition. And it is due to this condition that Nietzsche will see in Christ "the type of a redeemer of mankind" (VI³,A,24) but "only in a completely degenerate form." (VI³,A,24) Christ's affirmation presupposed the negation of this world. Nevertheless, since he would redeem mankind saying, "'The world is perfect,'" (VI³,A,57) Nietzsche recognizes the sublime in this redeemer whose affirmation was appropriate to the physiologically depraved.

Ultimately, Christ is a manifestation of life as will to power in so far as he affirms an essential characteristic of life as such, i.e., decadence. (MXVIII,40)

However only decadence is affirmed and hence Nietzsche had to oppose Christ. Nietzsche himself dreamed of a redeemer (VI²,G:III,24) but not one physiologically crippled. His was expressed in "that mysterious symbol of the highest world-affirmation and transfiguration of existence that has yet been attained on earth": (MXIX,1051) Dionysus. Between Christ and Dionysus, we must "see that the problem is that of the meaning of suffering." (MXIX,1052)

CHRISTIANITY

In light of Nietzsche's concern with Christ as the psychological type of the redeemer, he says his interest lies in

[n]ot the truth about what he did, what he said, how he really died: but the question *whether* his type is still conceivable at all, whether it has been "handed down" by tradition. (VI³,A,29)¹⁰

Nietzsche claims the attempts he knows of "to extract even the *history* of a 'soul' from the Gospels," seem "proofs of an execrable psychological frivolity." (VI³,A,29)

An example of this frivolity is provided by Ernest Renan¹⁷ who "appropriated for his explication of the type Jesus the two *most inapplicable* concepts possible in this case: the concept of the *genius* and the concept of the *hero*." (VI³,A,29) Given Nietzsche's appellation of "the word idiot" (VI³,A,29) to Christ we can appreciate his criticism of applying the idea of "genius" to him. The idea of "the hero" is equally untenable since for Nietzsche it is wholly inappropriate to see Jesus as one who brings "the sword." (VI³,A,32)

We saw above that Christ "as a *décadence* type" (VI³,A,31) could have revealed the "multiplicity and contradictoriness" (VI³,A,31) typical of decadence. But, says Nietzsche, "everything speaks against it." (VI³,A,31) The physiological factor speaking against it is, as we saw,

Christ's incapacity for the *ressentiment* characteristic of the typical decadent.

However, there is another factor speaking against this multiplicity in Christ since, "if it were so the tradition would have to have remained remarkably faithful and objective: and we have reasons for assuming the opposite." (VI³,A,31) In short, the Christian tradition *has* given us an image of Christ revealing the "multiplicity and contradictoriness" (VI³,A,31) Nietzsche denies.

As he puts it,

there yawns a contradiction between the mountain, lake and field preacher, whose appearance strikes one as that of a Buddha on a soil very little like that of India, and the aggressive fanatic, the mortal enemy of theologian and priest which Renan wickedly glorified as '*le grand maitre en ironie*'." (VI³,A,31)

For Nietzsche, Jesus was the harmless child incapable of attacking anything, possessing "no idea to what extent...[he] would one day cause dissention." (VI³,A,32) He remained in Nietzsche's eyes "a Buddha on a soil very little like that of India." (VI³,A,31) The upshot of these considerations is that "the type of the redeemer has been preserved only in a very distorted form." (VI³,A,31)

The question is asked; how is it that the Christian tradition portrays Christ as one who brings "the sword?" (VI³,AC,32) This, says Nietzsche, is "comprehensible only with reference to warfare and the aims of propaganda." (VI³,A,31) But whose war and propaganda?

To answer this question we must recall the order of rank within the ancient Jewish culture. We have here, "the priests--and then immediately the chandala." (MXVIII, 194) However, since an order of rank was maintained, the Jewish priesthood retained a sense of "caste, the privileged, the noble." (MXVIII,194) We saw that the authority of the priestly caste rested on the power of *ressentiment*. Yet for Nietzsche, the very hatred of authority and rank characteristic of the lowest orders existed in the Jewish culture

towards the ruling caste of priests. In short, we find "a revolt of the chandala: the origin of Christianity." (MXVIII,184)

Christianity has its origins in the weakest instincts of the Jewish culture. Once again we find here the antagonism toward any semblance of an order of rank and the hatred of authority. This, as we have seen, is a fundamental symptom of decadence. The Gospels, says Nietzsche, introduce us to a "strange and sick world" wherein the "refuse of society, neurosis and 'childlike' idiocy seem to make a rendezvous." (VI³,A,31) Out of the underworld of the Jewish culture, the *ressentiment* of the weakest drives, so long held in check by the priestly caste, could not be entirely contained. Here that profound hatred of all reality, so essential to the *life* of the Jewish culture exploded into the expression of a negation of reality *in toto*.

Hence Nietzsche will observe that

one understands nothing of the psychology of Christianity if one takes it to be the expression of a newly arisen national youthfulness and racial invigoration. On the contrary: it is a typical form of decadence, the moral hypersensitivity and hysteria of a sick mishmash populace grown weary and aimless ...all the neurosis keep a rendezvous in them--the absence of duties, the instinct that everything is really coming to an end, that nothing is worthwhile anymore.... (MXVIII,180)

Christianity was a sect the religiosity of which could only appeal to "the lower masses, the women, the slaves, the non-noble classes." (MXVIII,196) Here "the instincts of the subjugated and oppressed come into the foreground: it is the lowest classes which seek their salvation in it." (VI³,A,21) This "salvation" is guided by the instincts of *ressentiment* which, flourish among the "outcasts and the condemned" (MXVIII,207) of the Jewish culture. In this regard, Nietzsche says the background of Christianity is insurrection, the explosion of stored-up antipathy towards the 'masters,' the instinct for how much happiness could lie, after such long oppression, simply in feeling oneself free.... (MXVIII,209)

Yet since this was a revolt against the priestly caste, then it opposed the order of rank through which the Jewish culture retained its very existence. Thus the "salvation" sought by the Christians was in opposition to the last reality never abandoned by the Jewish culture, that being life itself. And insofar as Christianity fought this "laboriously-achieved last possibility of remaining in being," (VI³,A,29) it was not only deadly to this culture, but a profound expression of the death-wish typical of the exhausted.

What does Christ have to do with any of this? For Nietzsche, nothing. Of course, there are physiological similarities between Christ and these "lepers of all kinds" (MXVIII,207) such as; exhaustion, sickness and decadence. In Christ however, these similarities are only apparent since he lacks one important factor; *ressentiment*. Christ provided an example of a "way of life"; (MXVIII,212) a means for the weak and decadent to preserve themselves from the fragmentation inherent to exhaustion. The indifference to external stimuli and the passivity of asceticism²⁰ was the essential physiological technique "he bequeathed to mankind." (VI³,A,35) And it was in this light that Nietzsche said "[e]ven today such a life is possible...Christianity will be possible at all times." (VI³,A,39)

What Christ offered was a means to avoiding the detrimental affects of *ressentiment* but the founder of Christianity had to pay for having directed himself to the lowest class of Jewish society and intelligence. They conceived of him in the spirit they understood.... (MXVIII,198)

That is to say they saw him through the eyes of *ressentiment* and he became the center of "a popular uprising within a priestly people--a pietistic movement from below." (MXVIII,182) And since the "symbolism of Christianity is based on the Jewish, which had already resolved all reality...into a holy...unreality," (MXVIII,183) then the "followers of

Christ" required "nothing less than 'the Son of God' to create a faith for themselves." (MXVIII,182)

For Nietzsche this "faith" presupposes the interpretation of the death of Jesus. Why was he crucified? Because he was fundamentally "a political criminal, in so far as political criminals were possible in an *absurdly unpolitical* society." (VI³,A,27) Christ was essentially "*misunderstood*" (VI³,A,27) to be in revolt

against the Jewish Church...against 'the good and just,' against 'the saints of Israel,' against the social hierarchy --*not* against a corruption of these but against caste, privilege, the order, the social form.... (VI³,A,27)

It was this which

brought him to the Cross: the proof is the inscription on the Cross. He died for *his* guilt--all ground is lacking for the assertion, however often it is made, that he died for the guilt of others. (VI³,A,27)

As we noted above, it is, says Nietzsche, "quite another question" (VI³,A,28) whether Christ was conscious of the motives behind his crucifixion. And indeed, given Nietzsche's portrait of Christ, it is clear that taking him to the Cross was in many respects torturing a child to death.²¹ Nevertheless, it was

this unexpected shameful death...which brought the disciples face to face with the real enigma: '*Who was that? What was that?*'.... Only now did the chasm open up: '*Who killed him? who was his natural enemy?*'.... Answer: *ruling Judaism*, its upper class. From this moment one felt oneself in mutiny *against* the social order, one subsequently understood Jesus as having been *in mutiny against the social order*. Up till then this warlike trait...was *lacking* in his image; more, he was the contradiction of it. (VI³,A,40)

From Nietzsche's point of view, this *reaction* to the death of Christ lies behind the traditional view of him as the "hero" bringing "'the sword.'" (VI³,A,32) The idea of Jesus as a warrior is, as we mentioned above, explicable "only with reference to warfare and the aims of propaganda." (VI³,A,31) This is the war of the lowest social orders within the Jewish culture against "*ruling Judaism*." (VI³,A,40)

This image of Christ is essentially the product of *ressentiment* and hence betrays "a sign of how little they understood" (VI³,A,40) him since his "followers" "failed to understand" his "freedom from...[and] superiority over every feeling of *ressentiment*." (VI³,A,40)

On the contrary, "his disciples were far from *forgiving* his death...*vengefulness*, again came uppermost...one required 'retribution.'" (VI³,A,40) Out of the instincts of *ressentiment*, all the religious symbols which constituted "the pile-work upon which the Jewish nation continued to exist" (VI³,A,27) were dredged up and predictably the

popular expectation of a Messiah came...into the foreground; an historic moment appeared in view: the 'kingdom of God' is coming to sit in judgement on its enemies. (VI³,A,40)

Now the contempt and bitterness toward everything that was "Pharisee and theologian" (VI³,A,40) was adjusted to Christ "according to their requirements." (VI³,A,31) At this point "everything is misunderstood" (VI³,A,40) since Christ had been "precisely the existence...the actuality" (VI³,A,40) of the "'kingdom of God.'" (VI³,A,40) But his "followers" could not

endure that evangelic equal right of everyone to be a child of God...and their revenge consisted in *exalting* Jesus...in severing him from themselves: just as the Jews, in revenge on their enemies, had previously separated their God from themselves and raised him on high. The *one* God and the *one* Son of God: both products of *ressentiment*.... (VI³,A,40)

After missing what Nietzsche considers central to the teaching of Christ, "an absurd problem came up." (VI³,A,41) That being the question as to how God could have allowed him to die. And his "followers"

found a downright terrifyingly absurd answer: God gave his Son for the forgiveness of sins, as a *sacrifice*.... *The guilt sacrifice*, and that in its most repulsive, barbaric form, the sacrifice of the *innocent man* for the sins of the guilty! (VI³,A,41)

But this has nothing to do with Jesus, says Nietzsche, because he

had done away with the concept 'guilt' itself--he had denied any chasm between God and man, he *lived* this unity of God and man as *his* 'glad tidings'.... And *not* as a special prerogative! (VI³,A,41)

From the standpoint of *ressentiment* Christ is a "mere 'motif'" (MXVIII,177) for "this *indecent* of an interpretation." (VI³,A,41) With this interpretation of the death of Christ, "the whole and sole reality of the Evangel, is juggled away" (VI³,A,41) for

the doctrine of a Judgement and a Second Coming, the doctrine of his death as a sacrificial death, the doctrine of the Resurrection...for the benefit of a state after death! (VI³,A,41)

Around such doctrines, all forms of sickness will rally since here the desire for death is most poignantly expressed as a shifting "the centre of gravity of life out of life into the 'Beyond'--into *nothingness*." (VI³,A,43) And it is in this that "Christianity" is "something fundamentally different from what its founder did and desired." (MXVIII, 195) It is, says Nietzsche,

the great antipagan movement of antiquity, formulated through the employment of the life, teaching and 'words' of the founder of Christianity but interpreted in an absolutely arbitrary way after the pattern of fundamentally different needs.... (MXVIII,195)

Christ taught "a way of life, not a system of beliefs." (MXVIII,212) He "wanted to bring the peace and happiness of lambs," (MXVIII,195) not a life seen "through the eye of contempt" (MXVIII,193) typical of the *ressentiment* "of the weak, the inferior, the suffering, the oppressed." (MXVIII, 195)

Yet it is precisely among these latter wherein the hatred of life flourishes and seeks "freedom." This "freedom" is translated by Nietzsche into the death-wish typical of decadent exhausted drives. It is a desire for a blissful state of "*nothingness*." (VI³,A,43) In this light Nietzsche recognizes Christianity as

a degeneracy movement composed of reject and refuse elements of every kind: it is not the expression of the decline of a

race, it is from the first an agglomeration of forms of morbidity crowding together and seeking one another out--It is therefore not national, not racially conditioned; it appeals to the disinherited everywhere; it is founded on rancour against everything well-constituted and dominant: it needs a symbol that represents a curse on the well-constituted and dominant.... (MXVIII,154)

Unfortunately, "Jesus of Nazareth was the sign by which they recognized themselves," (MXVIII,182) and hence "in reality there has been only one Christian, and he died on the Cross." (VI³,A,39)

In so far as Christianity appeals to "the disinherited everywhere," (MXVIII,154) it cannot be seen as the expression of any particular race. This will sound odd in that Nietzsche says it

could have arisen only on the soil of Judaism, whose principal deed was to associate guilt with misfortune and to reduce all guilt to guilt against God: Christianity raised all this to the second power. (MXVIII,182)

In saying Christianity does not require race, Nietzsche means not only that it lacks a fundamental feature of any strong culture, but also that this feature is actually attacked. We are speaking here of the necessary basis for any flourishing culture; an order of rank. As a "degeneracy movement composed of reject...elements of every kind," (MXVIII,154) Christianity opposes any semblance of an order of rank. In this it combats the distinctive mark of any genuine culture. It borrowed the symbols of power which reflected the "spirituality" of the Jewish ruling class it repudiated.

Christianity is "not racially conditioned," (MXVIII,154) since degenerate elements exist within all cultures, (MXVIII,41) and that of the Jews was no different. For Nietzsche, Christianity emerged from the sewers of Jewish society and its hatred of authority was typical of the "already existing...religions of the lower masses" (MXVIII, 196) throughout the ancient world. This is what Nietzsche means in saying that Christianity does not require race. It

was "forged out of the *ressentiment* of the masses," (VI³,A, 43) like "every other already existing subterranean religion," (MXVIII,195) and thereby possessed the "*chief weapon* against ...everything noble...on earth." (VI³,A,43)

Without the Jewish culture Christianity would not have been possible in that it employed

as a matter of principle only concepts, symbols, attitudes manifested in the practice of the priest, the instinctive rejection of every *other* practice, every *other* kind of perspective in the realm of values...that is not tradition, it is *inheritance*: only as inheritance does it have the effect of a natural quality. (VI³,A,44)

Nevertheless, it was "a sect within which Nietzsche sees a rendezvous of all life-negating drives. All those things indicative of "strong races" (MXVIII,352) are here denied. With it,

there is no...*meaning* in living: that now becomes the 'meaning' of life.... What is the point of public spirit...of gratitude for one's descent and one's forefathers...of cooperation, trust, of furthering and keeping the general welfare?... So many 'temptations,' so many diversions from the 'right road'.... (VI³,A,43)

Christianity is not racially conditioned in so far as it does not *discriminate* against decadence and hence appeals to that of all cultures at all times. In *this* it "is therefore not national, not racially conditioned." (MXVIII,154) Consequently, it flourishes in "thoroughly morbid soil" (VI³,A, 51) everywhere. All that is required is that "one must be sufficiently sick for it." (VI³,A,51)

The God of the sick will be invested with all the characteristics valued by them because when the "prerequisites of *ascending* life, when everything strong, brave, masterful proud is eliminated from the concept of God," (VI³,A,17) then

he declines step by step to the symbol of a staff for the weary, a sheet-anchor for all who are drowning...the poor people's God the sinner's God, the God of the sick *par excellence*.... (VI³,A,17)

In such a deity "all *decadence* instincts, all cowardliness and weariness of soul have their sanction." (VI³,A,19) Here we find a "low-water-mark in the descending development of the God type...the *contradiction of life*...nothingness deified, the will to nothingness sanctified." (VI³,A,18)

It is important to bear a certain point in mind with regard to Nietzsche's claim regarding the Jews. They mark, he says, "the beginning of the slave rebellion in morals." (VI²,B,195) We want to emphasize here the word "beginning." With Christianity the slave rebellion in morals gained real momentum. Under its banner the instincts of decadence everywhere could find a home and Nietzsche sees it taking root and spreading like a cancer throughout "the *underworld of the ancient world*." (VI³,A,22)

Christianity is slave morality *par excellence* and negates *everything* necessary to ascending life. Here the hatred of life typical of *ressentiment* and its underlying desire for self-destruction places all meaning and value in a "'Beyond'" (VI³,A,43) life. Everything it affirms is necessarily destructive to life on earth. Here we find individuals who "imagine that for their sakes the laws of nature are continually being *broken*." (VI³,A,43)

In our next chapter, we will look at how Christianity went hand in hand with the influence of Greek philosophy. We saw Socrates as a force that undermines life and Nietzsche certainly sees Christianity in the same vein. Indeed, the brand of philosophy that emerged from Socrates onwards, is seen by Nietzsche to be a "preparation of the soil for Christianity." (MXVIII,427) As far as he is concerned, the two decadence movements of Post-socratic philosophy and Christianity spread throughout Western culture like a disease.

Such questions as to how these forms of sickness infected Western culture will be left for the opening section of our next chapter. There we will look at Nietzsche's

philosophy as an attempt on the part of the physician to cure the disease our culture inherited from these two decadence movements.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER IV

1. See chapter 1, p. 31; chapter 2, p. 87 and chapter 3, pp. 101-102.

2. My italics.

3. See *MXIX*, 656.

4. Nietzsche is referring here to David F. Strauss' *The Life of Jesus*, originally published in 1835.

5. As we have seen in previous chapters, the activity of the drives, specifically their affects on consciousness, is the basis of Nietzsche's psychology. It is their subterranean activity, "a host of partly contradictory, partly congruous stimuli" (*VI³,A,14*) which rises to consciousness as the "'will'" (*VI³,A,14*) of the organism. Thus in Nietzsche's concern with "the psychological type of the redeemer," (*VI³,A,29*) we should not be surprised that it presupposes "physiological realities." (*VI³,A,30*) The profound suffering that marks the very fact of existence for Christ is of a psychological nature. In saying, for example that Christ reveals a "morbid susceptibility of the sense of touch," (*VI³,A,29*) Nietzsche does not mean that Christ felt physical pain when holding an object. Rather, he is translating an abnormally developed instinct of self-preservation's affect on the consciousness of Christ such as to render a condition of psychological pain in beholding existence. All subsequent references therefore to the suffering of Christ are made with regard to the above.

6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, trans. W. Kaufmann in, *The Portable Nietzsche*, (New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1984), p. 603.

7. See chapter 3, pp. 121, 148-150, 154.

8. Much has been made of Nietzsche's use of the term "idiot" as descriptive of Christ, specifically in reference to the influence of Dostoevsky. Walter Kaufmann, for example, says Nietzsche's regret that "no Dostoevsky lived in the neighbourhood of this most interesting decadent," (*VI³,A,31*) is "one of many indications that Nietzsche's image of Jesus was decisively influenced by Dostoevsky's portrait of Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*." (*Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, AntiChrist*. Vintage Books Ed. 1968, pp. 340-41). This is in certain respects quite true, however, since Kaufmann is reticent to acknowledge the importance of physiology in Nietzsche's philosophy, he does not, as Dostoevsky did, give

consideration to the physiological significance of Myshkin's epilepsy. Kaufmann will say that in Nietzsche's later period he "repudiated 'physiologism.'" (Kaufmann, p. 294) Yet he never explains why Nietzsche still wanted to "speak with the precision of the physiologist" (VI³,A,29) in the last year of his creative life. Indeed in the notes of this same year (1888-89), Nietzsche refers to St. Francis as "neurotic, epileptic, a visionary, like Jesus." (MXVIII,221) In this light it may be asked whether Nietzsche took the physiology of Prince Myshkin more seriously than did Kaufmann.

9. A comparison between "the *two* physiological facts upon which...[Buddhism] rests" (VI³,AC,20) and "the two *physiological realities*" (VI³,A,30) inherent to the psychology of the redeemer both reveal means to the endurance of suffering. It is in so far as the above physiological concerns are *primarily* related to this endurance that Buddhism and "genuine, primitive Christianity" (VI³,A,39) are both "*décadence religions.*" (VI³,A,42)

10. See chapter three, p. 152.

11. See chapter one, pp. 41-43.

12. Once again, Nietzsche's connection in this regard to Buddhism are interesting. See for instance sections 20-22 of *The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1972) and sections 155 and 159 in, *The Will To Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968).

13. This reference to asceticism should not be confused with that Nietzsche constantly railed against. This is not a "doctrine" of asceticism whereby one is closer to God if one mortifies the flesh. Such mortification would presuppose *ressentiment* and a taking revenge on one's body. Christ taught an asceticism which is not a "formula for holiness" but rather is more in line with Nietzsche's idea of that of Buddhism. That is, an attempt on the part of the individual to realize a state not of antagonism towards oneself or the world, but rather one of complete passivity such that no matter what happens, one is, as it were numbed to it. The "love" of Christ is precisely a non-resistance to anything, a not fighting for or against anything. It is precisely this *practice* (VI³,A,35) which enables the exhausted to realize "happiness," in a sublime indifference to everything. Such a happiness is the feeling of escape from the burdensome affects of *ressentiment*. It is, as it were, a state of physiological hibernation wherein all possible resources of strength are channelled toward the preservation of the individual. It is a technique of relaxation and rest from a world which from the standpoint of *ressentiment* is despised.

This is the "Kingdom of Heaven" and living as a "child of God." It is in this light that Nietzsche will say "Christianity is possible as the most private form of existence." (MXVIII,211) It has nothing to do in Nietzsche's mind with the "necessity" to "deny" the body or "the world" as a means to salvation in the hereafter.

14.This is from "The Wanderer and His Shadow," *HH:II*. The translation is Walter Kaufmann's in his, *The Portable Nietzsche*, (New York: Penquin Books Ltd., 1984), p. 69.

15.See note 14 above.

16.Konstantin Mochulsky. *Dostoevsky: His Life And Work*, Trans. M.A. Minihan, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1967), p. 375.

17.C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (Fontana Books: Great Britain, 1975), p. 52.

18.As regards Christ as an object of historical inquiry, Nietzsche's rejection of the "scientific procedures" (VI³,A, 28) fashionable in the historicism of his day makes an interesting comparison to that of Soren Kierkegaard's in the latter's *Philosophical Fragments*. Kierkegaard thought the task of *Christian faith* was by no means enhanced through "knowledge" of historical facts about the life of Christ. Nietzsche disparges the historical facts because the attempt to get "to the facts" only deals with "the contradictions of 'tradition.'" (VI³,A,28) But this "tradition" consists of the Gospels, and legends and as we will see, Nietzsche is deeply suspicious of both. Consequently, "to apply...scientific procedures *when no other records are extant* seems to me wrong in principle--mere learned idling." (VI³,A,28) In the end, Kierkegaard thought historical facts about Christ meant nothing in regard to the task of *faith*; for Nietzsche they meant little in regard to the task of the problem of "the psychological type of the redeemer." (VI³,A,29)

19.Ernest Renan (1823-1892) wrote a very popular text entitled, *The Life Of Christ*, published in 1863 and it is to this text that Nietzsche is referring.

20.See note 13 above.

21.In this connection it is interesting to recall Dostoevsky's, *The Brothers Karamazov*,* wherein Ivan states his refusal to put mankind into the state of paradise if all that was required was the torturing to death of one innocent child. Ironically, this refusal is essential to Ivan's argument for atheism. In short God himself had an innocent child tortured to death for the sake of the human race. This is a

"love" both Ivan and Nietzsche reject.

*The few that saw something like this and, starry-
eyed
But foolishly, with glowing hearts averred
Their feelings and their visions before the
common herd
Have at all times been burned and crucified.¹
Faust*

CHAPTER V

VISIONS OF INNOCENCE

Introduction

Over the last four chapters, we have seen both the physiology inherent to Nietzsche's clinical standpoint and its application in diagnosing cultural health and sickness. But if we settled with this, we would be giving "physiology" more importance than it deserves. Certainly Nietzsche's philosophy rests to a great extent on his clinical standpoint. But it is absurd to suggest that his primary philosophical motive was to demonstrate a physiological interpretation for all possible phenomena. In short, our investigation, like Nietzsche's, is not concerned with physiology for its own sake. If we settle with showing this physiology permeating his critique of ancient Greek and Hebrew culture, we fail to see his philosophical motive. This motive is only appreciated if we remember that Nietzsche, no less than Socrates, was a physician of culture. And as such he does not stop at mere diagnosis of a disease, he also proposes a cure.

He called the disease "nihilism" and our investigation into the decadence movements of metaphysics and Christianity has uncovered the origins of this disease. The diagnosis is famous, the cure, if not infamous, is often regarded as incomprehensible. We are speaking here of those interdependent themes of the "Overman" and "Eternal Recurrence." Nietzsche's name is virtually synonymous with these conceptions along with the rubric under which they stand:

the "revaluation of all values." But before these themes can be properly entertained, the character of the disease of nihilism must be clarified.

To this end we will first have a brief look at Nietzsche's view of the origins of nihilism. Since it is a sickness beginning with metaphysics and Christianity, its roots are in antiquity. But these two decadence movements find "their logical consequence" (MXVIII:Preface,4) in nihilism as an illness peculiar to modernity. Thus Nietzsche tells us that he "*looks back* when relating what will come." (MXVIII:Preface,3)

Our second consideration will be an investigation of nihilism proper. It is the enemy against which Nietzsche said: "This time, old artilleryman that I am, I'm moving in my big guns."² Our third consideration will be the battle-plan Nietzsche called the "revaluation of all values." Finally, we will look at Eternal Recurrence, the Overman and the symbol of Dionysus within this strategy.

Before we proceed to the concerns above, a few points deserve mention. Our look at Nietzsche's clinical standpoint reveals a terrific violence. That is, we have seen the diagnostician judging what deserves to live and die. In this Nietzsche is ruthless. But just as "physiology" for its own sake is not the essential motive in Nietzsche's thought, neither is violence and destruction. He once said that every great philosophy is "the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir." (VI²,B,6) Philosophy, then, is the indirect narrative of the philosopher's own existence.

As we proceed through the concerns of this chapter, violence, destruction and cruelty by no means disappear. Indeed, at times these themes cannot help but inspire terror. But if Nietzsche's philosophy is his "personal confession," (VI²,B,6) then we will seek to confirm his observation: "I speak only of what I have lived through, not

merely of what I have thought through; the opposition of thinking and life is lacking in my case."³ Nietzsche experienced a terror which, as Erich Heller says, "is hardly understood anymore."⁴ Its character is such that his legendary illness and loneliness are secondary.

There are many who have suffered physical illness and loneliness, and in this Nietzsche is no more unique than those who endure these today. But what if this suffering is seen to be devoid of meaning or purpose? This, Nietzsche tells us is the greatest pain. It lies, he says, in the "meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself." (VI², G:III,28) There must be an "answer to the crying question, 'why do I suffer?'" (VI²,G:III,28) Unless man "is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering," (VI²,G:III,28) then he will destroy himself. Nietzsche raised this "crying question" and, when he doubted a possible answer, sought "deterrence from the deed of nihilism, which is suicide." (MXVIII, 247)

Again, in this Nietzsche is not extraordinary. There are many who fight the desire for death when their suffering appears "in vain!" (VI²,G:III,28) Nietzsche's uniqueness resides in how he saw his terror of the absurd as symptomatic of the "spiritual" disease of his age and a spectre that would haunt "the history of the next two centuries." (MXVIII:Preface,2) In short, the violence and cruelty of the diagnosis *and* cure reveal the blueprint of that experienced by Nietzsche. He witnessed within himself the collapse of everything that formerly sustained men within the most profound suffering. He called it the "advent of nihilism," (MXVIII:Preface,2) the extinction of faith in life itself now becomes a world-historical event.

Nietzsche despised this extinction both within his epoch and himself. On the other hand, he saw it as unavoidable; something that, like any illness, had to be endured and defeated. And he claims success when he tells us he is

"the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself." (MXVIII:Preface,3) What did this success provide? For Nietzsche, precisely what nihilism had undermined: faith in life and therewith the possibility to create new mores, new paths, values, and perhaps new gods.

It is in this that we must look to see the philosophical motive in Nietzsche's thought. The diagnosis of that modern illness he called nihilism is only part of the story. The cure is the other. He would settle for nothing less than the high philosophical rank he identified with the pre-Socratic thinkers. From them he derived his vision of the type of the genuine philosopher whose task is creation and carrying "the seeds of the future and...the spiritual colonization...of new states and communities." (V²,6S,23) This individual, "even when he seeks to be a *founder...*, is most useful when there is a *lot to be destroyed*, in times of chaos or degeneration."⁵

Nietzsche believed much had to be destroyed within himself as well as in his epoch. In assessing his own age he said, "nothing comes of this situation. Why indeed? *They are not philosophers for themselves. 'Physician heal thyself!'* is what we must shout to them."⁶ Nietzsche shouted this at himself loudest of all and is precisely the physician who attempts to heal himself. The cure for nihilism he prescribed for his culture reflects an experiment he made with himself. Hence his philosophy is self-referential. We do not intend to reduce Nietzsche's philosophy to his biography. But it will be clear that in saying, "people shall say after I am dead that I was a *good* physician--and not only in my behalf,"⁷ he described his philosophical motive. In coming to terms with his own suffering he believed he found "a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*" (VI³,T:II,44) for future generations.

* * *

It is well known that Nietzsche sees Christianity as the embodiment of modern sickness. The last chapter has shown however that his attack on Christianity is not arbitrary, nor merely a product of his "atheism."⁹ We have seen this attack hinge on his critique of the physiological dynamics of the ancient Hebrew culture. Christianity is seen therefore, as a form of decadence whereby *ressentiment*, a relentless hatred of life, is transformed into a religion. Nietzsche's critique of the ancient Greek culture revealed decadence in the form of metaphysics--personified in the patron saint of Western philosophy, Socrates.

Here are two forms of cultural sickness with much in common: both, A) emerge in times of cultural dissolution; B) constitute a reevaluation of the values essential to the foundation of their respective cultures; and, C) originate from the lowest ranks of the social hierarchy. For Nietzsche, Christianity and metaphysics synthesized into a poison spreading throughout Western culture. These two decadence movements ran "side by side," (MXVIII,427) and inevitably united through the "symbiosis of centuries." (MXVIII, 50)

A clue to this symbiosis lies in Nietzsche's conviction that "since Plato, all theologians and philosophers are on the same track." (VI²,B,191) The track being that of decadence. Plato reveals the disease of his age in his antagonism toward the instincts. In this he took up the task of his great teacher Socrates⁹ and became one of the most powerful promoters of decadence. Nietzsche sees Plato like any philosopher, that is, as symptomatic of his epoch. He is the philosophical voice of the Greek "world grown senile and sick" (MXVIII,438) seeking solace in the ideal, eternal "world" of dialectic wherein suffering, "death, change... procreation and growth" (VI³,7:IV,1) are reduced to "conceptual mummies." (VI³,7:IV,1)

In Plato's transcendent "reality" all facets of life as will to power are the characteristics of a merely "apparent" world. The "Truth" exists "in a higher world"-- instead of *in a very much lower one.*" (VI³,7:IV,5) By placing the value of existence "in a 'higher world,'" we find the symptoms of exhaustion and sickness. In short, "one invents a world" (MXVIII,430) to the extent that this world can not be endured. And, as we have seen, in this the "virtuous man," i.e., the metaphysician, *denies* precisely "the foundations of Hellenic culture." (MXVIII,427) In turning to a reality transcending this world, metaphysics constitutes a reevaluation of the values integral to the cultivation of the Greek culture. Now the "great concepts 'good' and 'just'" (MXVIII,430) are "denaturalized" (MXVIII,430) and "torn from their conditionality, in which they have grown and alone possess any meaning, from their Greek and Greek-political soil." (MXVIII,430) And, as we saw, this leads Nietzsche to see both "Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay, as agents of the dissolution of Greece, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek." (VI³,7:III,2)¹⁰

The desire for a world transcending this one is precisely the means through which Greek metaphysics is a "preparation of the soil for Christianity." (MXVIII,428) In affirming a transcendent reality which "contradicted this world," (MXVIII,461) Plato provided the "decayed soil" (MXVIII,438) wherein Christianity "could only take root." (MXVIII,438) Greek metaphysics opted for "denaturalized" (MXVIII,430) and hence abstract "virtues" the origin of which is a "world" antithetical to this one. Christianity follows a similar pattern. Its *ressentiment* "shifts the center of gravity of life out of life into the 'Beyond'" (VI³,A,43) as the source of virtues revealed "*only in harmful...life-poisoning and heart-poisoning errors.*" (VI³,A,39) In both cultures decadent instincts dominate and a "spiritualization" of the world in "*contradiction of life*" (VI³,A,

18) emerges. Both cases reveal the instincts of decadence as the source of revaluations of the values of their respective cultures.

What Christianity had in common with Greek metaphysics was "the denaturalization of moral values." (MXVIII, 430) In this vein Nietzsche says "Greek moral philosophy had already done everything to prepare the way for moral fanaticism even among the Greeks and Romans." (MXVIII, 202) In chapters three and four, we looked at the physiological conditions of this "denaturalization." But the synthesis of these two ancient decadence movements must not be seen in terms of reciprocal necessity. That is, in saying metaphysics prepared "the soil for Christianity," (MXVIII, 428) Nietzsche does not mean the former was essential to the existence of the latter.

Strictly speaking, these two decadence movements saw the light of day quite independently of each other. Granted both are decadent; and from Nietzsche's clinical standpoint, the physiology is essentially the same. However, given Nietzsche's analyses of each within the Greek and Hebrew cultures, he certainly would not say they are interchangeable in their historical manifestations. Indeed, he regards Christianity as much more dangerous. *Ressentiment* reveals a hatred of such intensity that the Socratic revenge of metaphysics seems to pale in comparison.

Measured against Christian *ressentiment*, Greek metaphysics seems like a sleepy desire for happiness in so far as this world is merely "apparent." As long as one pursues dialectic, "virtue" is assured and one is superior to whatever life requires for the cultivation of a genuinely healthy culture. In short, this is the torpor of a once vital culture seeking to justify a fundamental incapacity to meet the exigencies one's ancestors met with relish. Essentially,

no one had the courage to conceive virtue as a consequence of immorality (of a will to power) in the service of the species (or of the race or *polis*), for the will to power was considered immorality. (MXVIII,428)

Ressentiment on the other hand, flourished within the Hebrew culture and, ironically, was actually exploited as a means to staying firmly within existence. Unlike the Greeks, the Jews did not collapse into decadence and this for the reason that in spite of everything they maintained an order of rank. Eventually, this *ressentiment* gave birth to Christianity, which was in direct opposition to everything "upon which the Jewish nation continued to exist at all." (VI³,A,27) Here was an "instinctive hatred for actuality" (VI³,A,39) that had been honed "for hundreds of years." (VI³,A,44) As we saw, Christ was only an occasion through which this prodigious power was unleashed first and foremost against "ruling Judaism, its upper class." (VI³,A,40)

The ruling class resisted this threat to its survival. But the *ressentiment* of slave morality, the essential weapon of the Jewish priestly caste, proved irresistible to the most decadent instincts of almost all other cultures.

Thus Nietzsche saw

the Christian movement...from the first [as] a collective movement of outcast and refuse elements of every kind (-- these want to come to power through Christianity). It is *not* the expression of the decline of a race, it is an aggregate formation of *décadence* types from everywhere crowding together and seeking one another out. (VI³,A,51)

We have seen that decadence "belongs to every age and every people" (MXVIII,41) and is held in check by any healthy culture. Clearly, by the time metaphysics emerged in the figures of Socrates and Plato, the Greek culture had lapsed into decadence and was in no condition to fight "the contagion of the healthy parts of the organism." (MXVIII,41) Indeed, this contagion was only enhanced through metaphysics which prepared "the soil for Christianity" (MXVIII,427) because the former, like the latter "refused to see nature in

morality." (MXVIII,202) Plato, says Nietzsche, "had already debased the Greek gods with his concept 'good.'" (MXVIII, 202) In that Christianity, like metaphysics "is a degeneracy movement," (MXVIII,154) it is physiologically irresistible in its appeal "to the disinherited everywhere." (MXVIII,154) Thus, not being racially conditioned, (MXVIII,154) Christianity "left its original home, the lowest orders" (VI³,A, 22) of Jewish society and spread throughout "the *underworld* of the ancient world." (VI³,A,22)

Nietzsche recognized in Christianity a profound ability to adapt and appeal "to the needs and level of understanding of the religious masses at the time." (MXVIII, 196) That is, the religions of "the lower masses, the women, the slaves, the non-noble classes." (MXVIII,196) These were the "subterranean cults, those of Osiris, of the Great Mother, of Mithras for example." (VI³,A,58) Christianity insinuated itself into these "Chandala religions" (VI³,A,58) because of their "latent Christianity" (VI³,A,58) revealed in such characteristics as: "hope of a beyond"; (MXVIII,196) "blood-drinking"; (MXVIII,167) "the bloody phantasmagoria of the sacrificial animal"; (MXVIII,196) "the *unio mystica* with the 'sacrifice'"; (MXVIII,167) "asceticism, world-denial" (MXVIII,196) and "above all the slowly stirred up fire of revengefulness, of Chandala revengefulness." (VI³,A,58)

Christianity also attempted "to found and make itself possible philosophically" (MXVIII,195) and this is manifest in its "predilection for the ambiguous figures of the old culture, above all for Plato." (MXVIII,195) For Nietzsche, placing absolute "Good" in a world transcending this one, led Plato to promote Socratic decadence--the *moral* condemnation of this world. In this, Plato not only deviates "from all the fundamental instincts of the Hellenes," (VI³, 7:XI,2) he is also "morally infected...an antecedent Christian." (VI³,7:XI,2) He "is a coward in the face of reality--consequently he flees into the ideal." (VI³,7:XI,2) And this

flight "was the greatest of rebaptisms," (MXIX,572) that is, reevaluations of the values of his culture. And, for Nietzsche, "because it has been adopted by Christianity, we do not recognize how astonishing it is." (MXIX,572) In the great fatality of Christianity, Plato is that ambiguity and fascination called the 'ideal' which made it possible for all the nobler natures of antiquity to misunderstand themselves and to step on to the *bridge* which led to the 'Cross.'" (VI²,7:XI,2)

In opting for the "Good" and "Truth" of a transcendent world, Plato "reversed the concept 'reality' and said: 'What you take for real is an error, and the nearer we approach the 'Idea,' the nearer we approach 'truth.''" (MXIX,572) Herein lies the Greek decadence "adopted by Christianity." (MXIX,572) Plato, is Christianity's most profound, albeit inadvertant, philosophical advocate. He provides the means through which *ressentiment* becomes "wrapped in Greek togas and concepts" (MXVIII,195) as a kind of "cultural window dressing."¹¹ Christianity "is Platonism for the people," (VI²,B:Preface) that is, an "appalling mishmash of Greek philosophy and Judaism." (MXVIII,169) It proved irresistible to "the scum of previous society of all classes" (MXVIII,50) and "was forcibly disseminated among uncivilized peoples: this is the history of Occidental culture."¹²

We know Nietzsche's attack on this history speaks neither from the standpoints of Christianity nor "metaphysics but from animal physiology." (MXVIII,275) From this standpoint he held that, thanks to two thousand years of Christianity, something "sickly, and mediocre has been bred, the European of today." (VI²,B,62) It is as *morality* that Christianity has come to dominate the "spirituality" of the West. As such, it has been the "history of the struggle of morality with the basic instincts of life." (MXVIII,274) This antagonism to life has itself become instinct; it is "in our blood." (MXVIII,765) Since what "*ought to perish*" (VI²,B,62) has been preserved and held in honour by Chris-

tianity, modern men "have taken up sickness, old age, contradiction into all their instincts." (VI³,A,19) Consequently, our culture proceeds "*step by step further into decadence.*" (VI³,T:X,43)

What is the ultimate and, indeed, *natural* consequence of this procedure? Death. The death-wish of Socrates was masked in the longing of metaphysics for the "virtue" of a world devoid of "error." The death-wish of Christ was exploited and deified by a mob the *ressentiment* of which he had no grasp. For Nietzsche, the death-wish inherent to all decadence, and cultivated for two millennia, finally comes to fruition in modernity. Nietzsche called it nihilism: "the logical conclusion of our great values and ideals." (M:Preface,4)

What is nihilism? It is that historical phenomenon whereby "*the highest values devalue themselves.*" (MXVIII, 2) We are about to see that this devaluation is, on the one hand, the lucid perception of "God," and "Truth, as *deceptions.* On the other hand, this perception renders a vision of life so terrifying that degenerate modern man stands paralyzed: the "aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer." (MXVIII,2) Since "all of us have, unconsciously, involuntarily in our bodies values" (VI³,C:Epilogue) of decadent "descent--we are, physiologically considered, *false.*" (VI³, C:Epilogue) With the collapse of the highest values hitherto, modern man's *instinctive* preference for what is ill render him almost incapable of overcoming their demise. For Nietzsche, if we do not overcome this loss cultural despair and suicide are inevitable.

Extreme situations require extreme measures and our physician does not hesitate to take the latter both in regard to himself and his epoch. "Physician, heal yourself: thus will you heal your patient too." (VI¹,Z:I,22) This was Nietzsche's motto and, in looking at the "relation between what's called 'improvement' of mankind...and the *elevation*

of the species Man,"¹³ he experimented with himself "first and last." (VI³,C:Preface)

Nietzsche's philosophy is a prodigious attack upon "everything men have heretofore respected and loved."¹⁴ But if we see Nietzsche's philosophy strictly in terms of attack and destruction we do him an injustice. Like Socrates, Nietzsche diagnosed the sickness of his age and sought to provide "his expedient, his cure." (VI³,7:III,9) Of course, essential to this task is his attack on Socrates and Christianity. But this is directed toward putting the foundation of Western culture on a new footing and is not an exercise in destruction for the sake of destruction. His war on decadence brings him closest to the Socrates he believed fought decadence within the Greek culture.¹⁵ We have seen that, for Nietzsche, the philosophical type embodies the physiological status of his culture. Hence Nietzsche sees *himself* infected with the decadence of his age.

"Nothing," he said, "has preoccupied me more than the problem of decadence." (VI³,C:Preface) However, "I resisted it. The philosopher in me resisted." (VI³,C:Preface) Such resistance requires the philosopher "to overcome his time in himself, to become 'timeless.'" (VI³,C:Preface) By this means, the philosopher sets out to "protect and defend his native land."¹⁶ Nietzsche considered Socrates a decadent who, as such, could only reveal the sickness of his age. Nietzsche saw *himself* as "a child of this time; that is, a decadent." (VI³,C:Preface) Like Socrates, he "grasped that *his case...was already no longer exceptional*" (VI³,7:III,9) since the "same kind of degeneration was everywhere silently preparing itself." (VI³,7:III,9) And, like Socrates, Nietzsche resisted decadence both within himself and his culture.

These observations give rise to the following questions: since Nietzsche realized he was a decadent, does he "believe" in his philosophy? In admitting his decadence,

is he indirectly warning us of the decadence inherent to his own philosophy? Zarathustra says to his disciples: "You revere me; but what if your reverence tumbles one day? Beware lest a statue slay you." (VI¹,Z:III,5) Nietzsche did not believe in his philosophy as a hard and fast truth "for there is no truth." (MXVIII,616) In referring to himself as a decadent, he is saying the "main tenets" of his thought must be regarded with suspicion. We find a clue here not unlike that Nietzsche found in Socrates' suicide. This suicide was Socrates' ironical communication of the failure of "his faith in 'rationality at any cost.'" (VI³,T:III,11)¹⁷ When Nietzsche refers to his own decadence, he is pointing to his own skepticism as regards his philosophy.

Gadamer has spoken of Nietzsche the experimenter¹⁸ and in this he is quite right. Yet, haunted by the fact of his decadence, Nietzsche feared committing the Socratic error: promoting the very sickness one seeks to cure. The conviction permeating Nietzsche's ideas on the Recurrence, the Overman and Dionysus reveal his dedication to the necessity for a revaluation of all values in the fight against decadence and nihilism. But Nietzsche was not convinced of these conceptions as the best means to promoting the future health of the West.

Under the rubric "Revaluation of all Values," he articulates the ideas of Recurrence, the Overman and Dionysus with passion and conviction--of that there is no doubt. But these are not eternal truths. Rather they are the medicine used by the physician on a patient which, in this case, happens to be Western culture. There is danger for a patient when the doctor does not have complete faith in his medicine. However, in this case, the doctor has created the medicine himself and, with great trepidation, begins an experiment.

PART I

NIHILISM

A. The infection

Given the observations above, we are not surprised at a hiss of contempt in Nietzsche's references to "modernity." Compared to the intrepid man of antiquity who lived in accord with Life, the "hopelessly mediocre and insipid man" (VI²,G:I,11) of today is the price "we...pay for having been Christians for two thousand years." (MXVIII,30) Modern man is sick through having embraced this infection which, from "the standpoint of general breeding," (MXVIII,246) can only "*worsen the European race.*" (VI²,B,62) And such a race is destined to "have descendants even more degenerate than they are themselves." (MXVIII,52) Ultimately, the malaise beginning with metaphysics and absorbed by that of Christianity has brought us to the point where "modern society is no 'society,' no 'body,' but a sick conglomerate of chandalas-- a society that no longer has the strength to *excrete.*" (MXVIII,50) And, as we have seen, Nietzsche calls this state of affairs "nihilism."

"What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves.* The aim is lacking; 'why' finds no answer." (MXVIII,2) Our values, steeped as they are in decadent origins, are only the palest image of what at one time were expressions of a profound health. We saw that the pre-Socratic Greek culture and pre-Christian Hebrews developed a "spirituality" in accord with the law of life. In both cases however, decadence movements peculiar to each marked a *revaluation of the values* essential to the affirmation of life. Both these decadence movements retained the values of their respective cultures but *in name only.* The old values of the Greeks and the Hebrews affirmed life, but the decadence movements within each culture reinterpreted these into its

negation. This is why Nietzsche emphasizes two undercurrents in the history of the West. The first is its original manifestation of health in the values and religions of the pre-Socratic Greeks and pre-Christian Hebrews. The second is the reevaluation of the values of these ancient cultures by decadence movements peculiar to each.

Ultimately, Nietzsche puts his finger on Christian morality as the path through which all forms of exhaustion, decadence and sickness were preserved and promoted up to the present. Thus Western culture is so ill that the capacity to create a healthy "spirituality" is greatly jeopardised: that is, its capacity to create the *fictions* essential to its preservation and growth. To understand this we must recall that Christianity is a profound threat to the *necessity of an order of rank* determined by the law of life. And as we have repeatedly seen, for Nietzsche, a firmly maintained order of rank is the essence of any healthy "spirituality."

In its hatred of an order of rank, "Christianity has waged a war to the death." (VI³,A,43)

It stands against every feeling of reverence and distance between man and man, against, that is, the *precondition* of every elevation, every increase in culture--it has forged out of the *ressentiment* of the masses its *chief weapon*... against everything noble, joyful, high-spirited on earth, against our happiness on earth. (VI³,A,43)

Clearly, the "aristocratic outlook has been undermined most deeply by the lie of equality of souls." (VI³,A, 43) The Christian God "has sat still nowhere...he is at home everywhere, the great cosmopolitan," (VI³A,17) the "God of the 'great majority,' the democrat among gods." (VI³,A,17) Since "many degrees of bondage" (MXVIII,464) are essential to cultivating the strongest, most "spiritual" human beings, the idea of an equal value between man and man is anathema.

"'Human equality'" (MXVIII,315) is an idea "forged out of the *ressentiment* of the masses" (VI³,A,43) constituting Christianity's "*chief weapon* against" (VI³,A,43) the "precondition of every higher culture." (MXVIII,464) This

precondition is an order of rank; that feeling of "distance between man and man" (VI³,A,43) within the cultural organism. Ultimately, if "the degenerate and sick ...[are] to be accorded the same value as the healthy...or even more value ...then unnaturalness becomes law." (MXVIII,246)

As we have seen, an order of rank provides "an arrangement, whether voluntary or involuntary, for *breeding*" (VI²,B,262) human beings to "carry the seeds of the future." (V²,GS,23) Within this natural greenhouse, it is essential that "the ill-constituted, weak, degenerate, perish." (MXVIII,246) But since Christian *ressentiment* has come to determine the values of our culture, we find, says Nietzsche, the "poison of the doctrine 'equal rights for all.'" (VI³,A,43)

The "real *historical effect*" (MXVIII,246) of this doctrine was to make the individual, particularly the sick, "so important, so absolute, that he could no longer be sacrificed." (MXVIII,246) Hence the idea of the individual's "infinite value" and the principle of equality "has from the standpoint of general breeding, no meaning at all." (MXVIII,246) Since Christianity is necessarily¹⁹ opposed to the idea of "distance between man and man," (VI³,A,43) then it "is the counterprinciple to the principle of *selection*." (MXVIII,246) The doctrine of equality "has been more thoroughly sowed by Christianity than by anything else" (VI³,A,43) and its dominant physiological effect has been "for eighteen centuries--to turn man into a *sublime miscarriage*." (VI²,B,62)

Naturally, this antagonism toward political equality, led Nietzsche to condemn both democracy and socialism. Of the latter he said: "the human beings or races that think up such a doctrine must be bungled." (MXVIII,125) And democracy, "as the heir of the Christian movement," (VI²,B,202) reveals "a tremendous *physiological process*" (VI²,B,242) whereby "Europeans are becoming more and more similar to

each other...more detached from the conditions under which races originate." (VI²,B,242) Ultimately, the idea that "'Everyone is equal to everyone else'" (MXIX,752) breeds a populace of "self-seeking cattle and mob.'" (MXIX,752)

Given Nietzsche's belief in maintaining a strong, natural order of rank, his hatred of "equality" should come as no surprise. As far as he was concerned, our adherence to egalitarian principles is symptomatic of the decadent instincts dominating our culture. This diagnosis, brought Nietzsche's philosophical task clearly before him. He says that in this age of "*suffrage universal*, i.e., when everyone may sit in judgment on everyone and everything, I feel impelled to establish *order of rank*." (MXIX,854)

This task was essential since, without a new order, our "highest values" will be our doom. The conceptions of "justice," "courage," and the "good" did not originate in conditions wherein "everyone may sit in judgment on everyone and everything." (MXIX,854) On the contrary, they presupposed the "spiritual" strength typical of a firmly established order of rank and therefore intimately connected to an affirmation of life on earth. Without this order, the sick and weak have flourished to the point where our culture is equal to "the *sum of zeroes*--where every zero has 'equal rights,' where it is virtuous to be zero." (MXVIII,53)

Thus far we have spoken of our cultural inheritance of a sick "spirituality" which, in turn, led us to embrace values that promise cultural destruction. This, generally speaking, is what is meant by nihilism. But this tells us little of the *dynamic* of disintegration inherent to nihilism whereby "the highest values devalue themselves." (MXVIII,2) How does Nietzsche understand this devaluation? How does it occur that the very affirmation of everything "holy" and "good" for at least the last two millennia actually compels us to deny the "holy" and "good?" It is to this strange paradox that we now turn.

B. The Absurd

Bearing in mind that Greek metaphysics and Christianity are a "spiritualization" of the world appropriate to decadence and exhaustion, Nietzsche makes the physiological connection to "inheritance." That is, he sees our age as the physiologically debilitated offspring of decadent antiquity. As is well known, he seizes upon "morality" as the dominating factor in this debilitation since it stands diametrically opposed to the key for a healthy culture or individual: an order of rank among the drives.

No doubt the morality we have inherited from decadent antiquity presupposes the negation of an order of rank determined by the law of life. For Nietzsche, the lack of such an order naturally allows this morality to thrive. Since this morality is *decadent*, then we return to that peculiarity of decadence which, from Nietzsche's standpoint, determines the ultimate *telos* of Greek metaphysics and Christianity. That being, how decadence leads any organism to ultimately seek death. We have spoken of Nietzsche's perception of the death-wish in the "late and decadent"²⁰ Greek culture as well as that inherent to Christianity. The time has come to look at his perception of how the death-wish inherent to the morality of the West begins to bear fruit in his own age.

It is important to recall here that in decadence the weakest instincts rally round that of preservation and undermine the vitality of the organism as a whole. In this process we saw how the instinct of preservation, as the "first instinct of spirituality," (VI³,7:IX,2) only renders a fiction determined by its perspective. In short, it provides the deception of stability essential to the organism. However, since the law of life requires *growth* in power and not preservation, the organism dominated by preservation

becomes further devitalized and seeks the ultimate "stability" of death.

The paradox of decadence lies in how the very intensity of the organism's search for preservation only enhances the prospect of exhaustion and the death-wish. The more intensely it seeks to preserve itself, the more it rushes headlong into the devitalization it is trying to ameliorate.²¹ This however, is quite natural since it is simply nature's way of weeding out degenerate organisms. As we saw in chapter one, the paradox here is that we see the *will to power* in decadence since it seeks power over the organism as a whole. But the instinct of decadence can only affirm its perspective through the inevitable destruction of the organism. The more the perspective of self-preservation is affirmed via the debilitation of the most powerful drives, the more the law of life is affirmed in the necessity for the destruction of the weak. Here Life, as *will to power*, is affirmed through self-destruction. What exactly did Nietzsche see in our morality which is symptomatic of this strange inversion? Where is its inherent death-wish which, as nihilism, casts a shadow over "the next two centuries?" (MXVIII:Preface,2) "What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer.*" (MXVIII,2) When the highest values devalue themselves, then the meaning and goal of life "is lacking." Here the law of life reveals the necessity of self-destruction in an organism gone awry: its "'why?' finds no answer."

Our morality has its origins in a "spirituality" which essentially provided a fiction meant to shield the weak and degenerate elements in both the Greek and Hebrew cultures. These fictions, be they the "virtues" of the dialecticians or Christians, presuppose an attack on the source of cultural vitality, i.e., an order of rank dominated by

the most *powerful* drives. And this, as we saw, "is the formula for *decadence*." (VI³,T:III,11)

In cultivating the idea: "'Everyone is equal to everyone else'" (MXIX,752) we negate "the *precondition* of every elevation, every increase in culture." (VI³,A,43) Whether we speak "of an individual or a people," (MXIX,852) this precondition is an order of rank among the drives. It makes possible the "feeling of plenitude, of *dammed-up strength*" (MXIX,852) essential to man's "spiritualization" of the world and himself. This is the function of a healthy instinct of preservation rendering an intoxicating vision of beauty "even to things and conditions that the instinct of impotence could only find *hateful* and 'ugly.'" (MXIX,852)

We saw this healthy "spiritualization" of the world and oneself in the case of the early Hellene who, "[c]onscious of the truth he has once seen...now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence...he is nauseated." (III¹,BT,7) But he was physiologically sound enough to withstand the perception of an ugly truth. In short, "when the danger to his will...[was] greatest, art...[approached] as a saving sorceress, expert at healing." (III¹,BT,7) This culture's instinct of preservation stood in a proper accord with more powerful drives enabling it to create in the face of everything "hateful and 'ugly.'" (MXIX,852) They created the fictions necessary to affirm Life and Nietzsche saw the art of tragedy as a profound example of this. It is in this sense that he said "[p]recisely their tragedies prove that the Greeks were *not* pessimists." (VI³,E:BT,1) Here we find so "many subtleties of ultimate self-deception, so many seductions to life, so much faith in life!" (MXIX,853)

Nietzsche sees modern man's "instinct of impotence" (MXIX,852) manifest in his inability to see beauty in the ugliest truths. It is the "feeling of *power*," Nietzsche says, that "applies the judgement 'beautiful.'" (MXIX,852)

He is not saying we moderns are incapable of seeing beauty, rather, in having embraced a "spirituality" opposed to an order of rank, we lack "the large-scale economy which justifies the terrifying, the evil, the questionable." (MXIX,852) At best, we see beauty in "salvation" from "the terrifying and questionable character of existence." (MXIX,853) The pre-Socratic Greek and pre-Christian Hebrew cultures possessed this "economy" of strength. They reveal "a symptom of strength" (MXIX,852) in their "preference for questionable and terrifying things." (MXIX,852) They could look at the ugly truths of existence through the fictions which allowed them to say, "That is beautiful." (MXIX,852)

It is not inaccurate to say Nietzsche understood nihilism to be modern man's incapacity to have faith in Life. But such an observation is deceptive by its very simplicity since it conceals the strange abyss over which Nietzsche constructed his philosophy. It is ironic that Nietzsche, the one who would smash the foundations of Western thought in a "relentless underground war against everything men have heretofore respected and loved,"²² ultimately affirmed the necessity of some kind of faith.

If he perceived nihilism as the modern incapacity for faith in Life, and in stark contrast to healthy antiquity, what does faith require? How is faith possible? Nietzsche saw this possibility in the capacity to see even life's most horrible faces as somehow inspiring and beautiful. What we find here is the "spiritualization of cruelty" (VI²,B,229) described in chapter two. By means of this physiological process the Hellenic culture overcame the dark face of life. It is the phenomenon of assimilating whatever gives resistance through fictions that enabled this culture to see life's cruelty and promise of destruction as sources of beauty. In doing this it realized victory over life and simultaneously affirmed it as will to power. Through "the spiritualization of cruelty" (VI²,B,229) the ancient Hel-

lenic culture could feel at home in a world of violence and terror. And that in the sense of being "master in and around its own house." (VI³,B,230) Thanks to their "spiritual" ability, they could embrace this world and its hostility convinced of their *command* over both.

"Spirit" provides the means to so "many subtleties of ultimate self-deception, so many seductions to life, so much faith in life!" (MXIX,853) It is the artistic instinct in us revealing our "will to appearance, to illusion" (MXIX,853) and "counts as more profound, primeval." (MXIX,853) Thus, in the case of early Greek antiquity, "tragedy is a tonic" (MXIX,851) because it was "the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant to life." (MXIX,853) As Nietzsche puts it: "We possess art lest we *perish of the truth.*" (MXIX,822)

What is this truth? What vision is capable of stopping men cold, leading them to utter, "I am better off dead?" For Nietzsche, it is the brutal certitude that "there is only *one* world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning--A world thus constituted is the real world." (MXIX,853)

We saw the early Hellenes confront this phenomenon through the question: "'What is a life of struggle and victory for?'"²³ Suddenly the *meaninglessness* of the values for which they suffered and risked death stepped before them. But the "Hellenic genius,"²⁴ their "spiritual" ability, restored their faith since it was always "ready with yet another answer to the question...and it gave that answer throughout the whole breadth of Greek history."²⁵

For Nietzsche, we moderns are a different story. He doubted our possibility for faith in the future since we are virtually incapable of the creating fictions of inspiring beauty necessary to affirming our relation to *this* world.²⁶ In short, Nietzsche had serious doubts about our ability to deal with that truth of the will to power from

which man can perish. For what does it promise? The cosmic violence of chaos:

an ebb and flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory. (MXIX,1067)

This is the law of madness which, if acknowledged, only leads us to a vision of existence as a product of this very madness and hence absurd.

The fictions of "spirit" are meant to conceal the law of madness, falsify the brutal truth that human suffering is, at bottom, a *danse macabre* without rhyme or reason. Through "life-preserving" (V²,GS,110) fictions man has possessed the means to conceal from himself the meaninglessness of existence. By these means he has *grown* in power. Thus his "truths" have always been the illusions that conceal the absurd and in this, we "are all afraid of truth." (VI³,E:11, 4) In the end, Nietzsche's vision of the will to power, wherein "unreason crawls out...into the light like a worm," (V²,GS,307) is a *truth* he never denied. His denial of "Truth" (MXIX,616) hinges on how it has always been a fiction embraced by man allowing him to believe *he* is the heart of some transcendental *telos* and "the measure of all things." For Nietzsche, man is the measure of all things to the extent that this fiction conceals the absurdity upon which it rests.

What possibility emerges when the capacity to create the illusions necessary to concealing the absurd breaks down? Nothing less than "the *deed of nihilism*, which is suicide" (MXVIII,247) since the "aim is lacking; 'why' finds no answer." (MXVIII,2) Man requires faith in a vision through which the absurd is denied. Essentially, Nietzsche held that the denial of truth, i.e., the absurd, enabled man to survive.²⁷ The deceptions of "spirit" reveal the "profoundest and supreme secret motive behind all that is virtue, science, piety, artistry." (MXIX,853) This motive is

that "the character of existence is to be misunderstood." (MXIX,853) But what does our morality have to do with this? How is it "a concealed will to death?" (V²,GS,344)

"Moralities," says Nietzsche "are merely a *sign language of the affects.*" (VI²,B,187) The master morality of the ancient, warlike Hellenes and Hebrews was the product of powerful, life-affirming drives generating fictions through which they revered themselves and this world. Their taste for "everything...frightful, evil, a riddle, destructive, fatal" (III¹B7:S,4) indicates a certain acceptance and even delight in a world which promised destruction. They looked into the abyss of the absurd and came away not disheartened but *inspired* with faith in themselves and life. What they deemed "good" and "bad" was determined by strength. That is, one's ability to not only withstand a vision of the *truth* but see it as something deserving reverence.²⁹ This is the ultimate test of strength.

The healthiest races of antiquity had that "*genius in lying*" (MXIX,853) manifest in the creation of illusions which turned the vision of the absurd itself into a lie. They could accept horror, random violence, and all the suffering life had to offer, but *never* fully affirmed the idea that existence is devoid of meaning or value. Here at the very abyss of the *truth* of life as will to power, the Greeks and Hebrews displayed "the occasional will of the spirit to let itself be deceived...that such and such is *not* the case." (VI²,B,230)

As we saw, "spirit" embellishes the world according to the dominant perspective of the organism and this includes the decision in favor of ignorance...an internal No to this or that thing...a...state of defense against much that is knowable, a satisfaction with...a Yea and Amen to ignorance--all of which is necessary to a spirit's power to appropriate, its 'digestive capacity' to speak metaphorically... (VI²,B, 230)

If "'the spirit' is relatively most similar to a stomach," (VI²,B,230) the Greeks and the Hebrews, could not fully digest the absurd. They had their limits determined by a healthy instinct of preservation "which senses that one might get a hold of the truth *too soon*, before man has become strong enough, hard enough, artist enough." (VI²,B,59)²⁹

Modern Western morality, on the other hand, led to the cultivation of the "hybrid European." (VI²,B,223) Rooted in decadence and hence antagonistic to any semblance of a natural order of rank, it found "a political formula, [in] Europe's *democratic* movement." (VI²,B,242) This movement represents "a tremendous *physiological* process" (VI²,B,242) of "a radical mixture of classes, and hence *races*" (VI²,B,208) leading "to the production of a type...prepared for *slavery*." (VI²,B,242) How would this type, "all in all a tolerably ugly plebian," (VI²,B,223) cope with the *truth* that even healthy cultures had to have "thinned down?" (VI²,B,59) Doubtless Nietzsche feared this culture of slaves would proceed to the logical consequence of all decadence; self-destruction. The question is, why?

To respond, we must bear in mind that self-deception, error, and falsehood in the face of the absurd have been the means through which man has maintained faith in life. As always, it is not a question of "Truth," nor whether a "morality" is "right" or "wrong" since these are simply the fictions "without which a certain species of life could not live." (MXIX,493) It is inaccurate to say Nietzsche was antagonistic to morality *per se*; as always, the "value for *life* is ultimately decisive." (MXIX,493) That of the ancient Hellenes and Hebrews served to protect them from the absurd and at the same time say yes to the dark face of existence. Here is a morality determined by life, that is, "as an illusion of the species, designed to moti-

vate the individual to sacrifice himself to the future."
(MXVIII,404)

In contrast, our decadent morality reveals the modern *incapacity* to affirm "everything underlying existence that is frightful, evil, a riddle, destructive, fatal." (III¹,BT:S,4) Given the origin of our morality this is no surprise. It only affirms as "Truth" whatever is appropriate to decadence and sickness thereby negating "all that is life-furthering, all that holds a guarantee of the future." (VI³,A,43) The "spirit" of early antiquity created "Truths" which allowed faith and reverence for life in this world. That of modernity created "Truths" inspiring faith and reverence in *flight* from this world, and sanctioned whatever contradicted the conditions of life. Hence the essential distinction Nietzsche makes between healthy and decadent antiquity is not to be understood in terms of "'truth' in struggle with life, but *one* kind of life in struggle with another." (MXIX,592)

Since decadence has dominated Western man for the last two thousand years, Nietzsche asks, "What is morality really? The instinct of decadence; it is the exhausted and disinherited who...take their revenge and play the master." (MXVIII,401) This revenge lies in opting for a world as it "ought" to be. As Nietzsche puts it, since "this world is good for nothing, there must be a 'real world.'" (MXVIII, 401) Here is the function of "spirit" gone awry. Rather than creating fictions affirming this world, decadent "spirituality" negates and embraces weakness and sickness as virtues.

We have seen how this "revaluation" became naturally regarded as "Truth" in the metaphysics of a decadent Greek culture³⁰ and "divine Truth" in Christianity.³¹ But "centuries of moral interpretation," (MXVIII,5) render the old death-wish inherent to decadence unavoidable. Since our morality has preserved everything weak and sick, and holds as "Truth" whatever contradicts *life*, Nietzsche believed

modern man too debilitated to affirm life in the face of the *truth*. Now the dark *truth* of life, the absurd, instinctively avoided by healthy antiquity, emerges before us with such lucidity that we are driven to despair.

This battle between "Truth" and *truth*³² represents the eye of the storm which is Nietzsche's philosophy. The former constitutes "everything men have heretofore respected and loved,"³³ the latter, everything men have despised, i.e., the idea that this world and our existence are the product of blind chaos and hence absurd. The history of "Truth" constitutes all the illusions which protected man from getting "a hold of the *truth too soon*." (VI²,B,59)³⁴ When this history, "upon which a tremendous amount of energy has been lavished," (MXVIII,1) is *perceived* as a compilation of illusions in the face of the absurd, then "Nihilism stands at the door." (MXVIII,1) This "uncanniest of all guests" (MXVIII,1) awakens "the suspicion that *all* interpretations of the world are false." (MXVIII,1)

Nietzsche tells us nihilism means "*the highest values devalue themselves*." (MXVIII,2) He provides the best example of this devaluation in his description of the pursuit of "Truth" as a *moral imperative*. The paradox wherein this pursuit results in the negation of its goal resides in the very sincerity of the pursuit itself. Nietzsche saw, as Erich Heller says, that the "boundless faith in truth, the joint legacy of Christ and Greek, will in the end dislodge every possible belief in the truth of any faith."³⁵ After "centuries of moral interpretation" (MXVIII,5) one of the most powerful "forces cultivated by morality was *truthfulness*," (MXVIII,5) that is, the moral compulsion to pursue "Truth" at all costs. The moral necessity of "Truth" presupposes this pursuit as the path to the "improvement" of man.³⁶ For Nietzsche this pursuit results in despair over "Truth." And this for the reason that "Truth," as the pro-

duct of decadent "spirituality," is essentially antagonistic to *life*.

Beginning with Greek metaphysics and throughout the history of Christianity, the foundation of "Truth" has resided not in the world wherein we find ourselves, but in that "Eternal" world wherein death, "change, becoming, as well as procreation and growth" (VI²,7:IV,1) are denied. It is the expression of decadence, a world wherein exhaustion, weakness and sickness are sanctified. Furthermore, it guarantees that this world which cannot be endured is "merely apparent" and "false." This "other world" is a *stable*, eternal, dead world wherein the suffering and cruelty of *life* is denied. The "true world" of Greek metaphysics and "heaven" of Christianity is the *illusion* essential to the preservation of everything that *wants out* of this world. "Truth" at all costs leads us to see that "Truth" has always presupposed an "Ideal" world standing in contradiction to the one wherein we live.

Yet that "will to truth" (VI²,B,1) which originally was to lead men to the "happiness" and "salvation" of the "True and Eternal world" leads not to its goal, but rather the moral necessity to deny it. For Nietzsche, our "will to truth" inevitably leads us to see "that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be 'divine' or morality incarnate." (MXVIII,3) In all honesty, that is, out of loyalty to the moral dictum to pursue the "Truth," we are *morally compelled* to acknowledge that our faith in it is "fabricated solely from psychological needs." (MXVIII,12) In short, everything that guaranteed man his eternal value and meaning would be recognized as an illusion. This is the paradox whereby "Truth" devaluates itself. Its great pursuit, proclaimed by Greek metaphysics and Christianity as the path to happiness and salvation, has to honestly conclude that the ideal world which guaranteed

happiness and salvation does not exist. Hence the whole *telos* of "Truth" caves in.

Modern man is, from Nietzsche's standpoint, caught in his own web. Having for centuries negated the value of this world in the name of "Truth," he finds the very foundation for this negation is a myth. Hence he is confronted with precisely that world the hatred of which constituted the foundation for the virtue of "Truth." Yet, having undermined his "spiritual" strength for two thousand years through belief in a "True" world, he is thrown back into the one from which he sought "Salvation." At this point the problem of truth came before us--or was it we who came before the problem? Who of us is Oedipus here? Who the Sphinx? It is a rendezvous, it seems, of questions and question marks. (VI²,B,1)

It is an extraordinary "rendezvous." Suddenly the question emerges; why pursue "Truth" when it commands no moral necessity and reveals the ugliness this illusion was meant to conceal? Illusion was essential to the pre-Socratic Greeks and pre-Christians who, through self-glorification, "spiritualized" the ugly truth that existence is absurd.³⁷ Through this "spiritualization," they affirmed life on earth. The illusion of metaphysics and Christianity concealed, through self-glorification, weakness and cowardice in the face of the absurd. Inherent to the illusions of metaphysics and Christianity was the desire for revenge on life and thus it was essential "to invent a world beyond it, a true world." (MXVIII,12)

Modern man, however, is doomed to recognize that the "True world" is "unattainable, undemonstrable" (VI³,T:V, 3) and "that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be 'divine' or morality incarnate." (MXVIII,3) The moral necessity to pursue "Truth" compels us to admit that the "True world" which sanctions this pursuit is: "Unattained at any rate. And if unattained also *unknown*. Consequently also no consolation, no redemp-

tion, no duty: how could we have a duty to something unknown?" (VI²,7:V,3) Here is the other side of the paradox inherent to the pursuit of "Truth." As we have seen, it leads, on the one hand to a recognition of "Truth" as a fiction, and thus we are morally compelled to deny it as "falsehood." Yet in so far as it is seen as "falsehood" we are morally compelled to *deny* the necessity of illusion "as a condition of life." (VI²,8,4)

We "discover in ourselves," says Nietzsche, "needs...that now appear to us as needs for untruth; on the other hand, the value for which we endure life seems to hinge on these needs." (MXVIII,5) This is the calling-card of that "uncanniest of all guests" (MXVIII,1) nihilism. Our moral duty to pursue the "Truth" brings us face to face with the human need "for untruth." (MXVIII,5) The highest value of "Truth" devaluates itself. Its pursuit has brought us to the point where we realize that the "virtue" of this pursuit rests on foundations that are "*fictions*" and "*illusions*," i.e., untruth.

Yet man requires fictions, those necessary deceptions which enable him to survive. But in modern man we find the "antagonism--not to esteem what we know, and not to be *allowed* any longer to esteem the lies we should like to tell ourselves." (MXVIII,5) Centuries "of moral interpretation" (MXVIII,5) as a belief in "Truth" at all costs render him incapable of affirming the necessity of illusion because he still cleaves to "Truth" i.e., the moral obligation to deny falsehood. This incapacity "results in a process of dissolution" (MXVIII,5) which "may become a fatality!" (MXVIII,404)

The "Truth" we have pursued and justified in terms of a world other than this one, is perceived as "false." This is the whirligig Nietzsche saw as nihilism. Man can no longer believe in "Truth" because it is shown to be "false"; yet he cleaves to this belief in so far as he will not af-

firm deception and "falsehood" as the foundation upon which he has ever attained real greatness.

Now we must recall the rest of Nietzsche's definition of nihilism: "The aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer." (MXVIII,2) This emphasizes how the devaluation of the highest values undermines our faith in the future. The great faith in "Truth" upon which Western culture pinned its hopes has vanished. We are caught in the undertow of our convictions. On one hand, we want to believe in what provides our eternal validity and significance. On the other, our ardent faith in "Truth" has revealed this faith as a "falsehood" and more, "the suspicion that all interpretations of the world are false." (MXVIII,1)

Consequently man becomes appalled at the "falsehoods" upon which everything has rested. Furthermore, he is rendered impotent at the prospect of the future since, confronted with the terrible truth that he lacks eternal value, he is also aware that any attempt to affirm this can only stand on another "falsehood." He is, as it were, overwhelmed by his perception that indeed there is no "objective" guarantee of his value from the standpoint of a "real world" or a God "out there." And so this "real world" and the God who guaranteed the virtue, nobility, greatness and very telos of the pursuit of "Truth" disappear.

With this, the meaning and value of existence in this world becomes dubious. The "Truth" is dead, "God is dead," the illusion of Western metaphysics is revealed. Where does one go from here? Why should we go on? God has passed away and with Him, the "true world" of metaphysics. We are left with this world wherein all that is guaranteed is suffering and death and there is nothing left to justify either. We find ourselves confused by our split desire for freedom, beauty and greatness on the one hand and our drive toward truth on the other, a drive which asks merely 'And what is life worth, after all?'³⁰

"Truth" demands that we deny illusion as "false," but Life demands illusion as the means to its affirmation. Locked in this "spiritual" stalemate, the foundation for "a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal" (VI³,A,1) is obliterated.

Man is now confronted with a vision of how everything that promised "freedom, beauty and greatness"³⁹ has been a deception. And, looking into the future, we realize that

human life is sunk deep in untruth; the individual cannot pull it out of this well without growing profoundly annoyed with his entire past, without finding his present motives (like honour) senseless, and without opposing scorn and disdain to the passions that urge one on to the future and to the happiness in it. (IV²,HH:I,34)

Looking at the past as a great falsehood while staring into the abyss of truth as chaos, a

question seems to weigh down on our tongues, and yet not want to be uttered: whether one *is capable* of consciously remaining in untruth, or, if one *had* to do so, whether death would not be preferable? (IV²,HH:I,34)

Millenia of belief in the inherent "goodness" of "Truth" has, in its very pursuit, revealed "Truth" as bereft of "virtue" and the "good." Thus the old foundation of "Truth" caves in and man despairs of the future. Everything which conferred *meaning* on the risk of death, enduring pain, great loneliness--in short "*great suffering*" (VI²,B,225) is revealed as "false." There is nothing worth living or dying for, and the future promises "falsehood" as the basis for any such meaning again. In light of this state of affairs, Nietzsche makes the observation: "'Will to truth'--that might be a concealed will to death." (V²,GS,344)

Now the death-wish inherent to the decadent "spirituality" of the West emerges as a *moral* obligation. The hatred of this world upon which the Western pursuit of "Truth" has taken its departure reveals itself in the realization that self-destruction is the only "honorable" thing to do. Truth as the means to salvation, i.e., the good, is seen to be a great failure. Its pursuit has revealed not

salvation from this world, but rather the impossibility of this salvation. Now the whole history of the West which embraced "Truth" as the road to salvation and virtue is seen as a sham.

The pursuit of "Truth" has led us to the sanctuary of the Good and Eternal and we find it empty. Yet we still prefer "Truth" over myth, the "true" over appearance. But do we then opt for illusion and myth? Nietzsche saw how this would be next to impossible since we are too *conscious* of the fact that a new myth would not be "True."

Thus, the desire for "Truth" and the vision of its being a beautiful illusion leads to despair over our history and the future. We see the past as built on lies, and the future requires more lies. At least, when we still had faith in "Truth" we could go on into the future--but this faith is shattered, we are no longer naive. We have seen through "Truth" and the consciousness of this perception will no longer allow us to believe in the lies and illusions required for the future. With "Truth" destroyed, we are left to ask "What is the meaning and value of existence when 'Truth' is gone?" Nietzsche foresaw that we would answer: "There is no meaning or value to existence without 'Truth.'" At this point the "aim is lacking; 'why' finds no answer" (MXVIII,2) and self-destruction is the only path left to us --the road to nothingness.

This became Nietzsche's tortured vision of the future. A kind of "spiritual" holocaust wherein after centuries of a morality which presupposed revenge and *ressentiment*, the ultimate act of revenge would occur as its logical consequence. The secret will to nothingness like a worm coiled in the heart of Western morality finally corrupts not only faith in "Truth" but more important, our ability to create a new vision for the future.

What in the end are we to gather from this strange reversal wherein "*the highest values devalue themselves?*"

(MXVIII,2) We have seen how convinced Nietzsche was that illusion is absolutely essential to life, but more than this, it becomes clear how *faith* in the illusion is essential. In short, the illusion cannot be seen as such, it must be seen as "True." Again, as we saw in chapter two, man must be deceived, self-deceived into pursuing something which confers greatness on him; something convincing him of his eternal value and that he is not only at home in the world but also lets him to *revere* himself and the world.⁴⁰

Nietzsche perceives we moderns far removed from "the Greek philosopher's pure, naive conscience." (IV²,HH:I,261) We behold the sunset of the ancient Greek enthusiasm for "Truth." We have followed "the highways and byways" (MXIX, 585) to the "True" world and pursued its deification in the guise of Christianity. With the demise of "Truth" is the simultaneous negation of the conviction of an inherent meaning and value to existence derived from "Beyond." This ignites the secret death-wish smoldering in Western morality. It is manifest not only in perceiving the "'in vain!' nor is it merely the belief that everything deserves to perish: one helps to destroy." (MXVIII,24) In the end, the nihilist can only follow his creed "that everything deserves to perish" (MXVIII,24) including the future. His faith rests on the denial of faith in anything. "This is, if you will, illogical; but the nihilist does not believe that one needs to be logical." (MXVIII,24) His "Truth" is the necessity for the destruction of any semblance of "Truth."

In this regard we are reminded of Nietzsche himself who made "a *grand declaration of war*" (VI³,T:Preface) upon everything men have "*most believed in.*" (VI³,T:Preface). We find in Nietzsche a certain intoxication in the destruction of the foundation of the values of the West. Indeed, this is one of the most spellbinding features of his philosophy. There is a rage in him as well; directed at that failure of two-thousand years of Western "spirituality" he

called "the pathos of 'in vain.'" (MXIX,585) Out of this pathos he walks into the house of everything men have held sacred and strangles all its occupants. Thus in the case of nihilism he regarded himself an authority: "the first perfect nihilist of Europe." (MXVIII:Preface,3)

The conviction of his expertise in this matter hinged on that of having "lived through the whole of nihilism." (MXVIII:Preface,3) He experienced the rage and despair of nihilism himself. "I speak," he says, "only of what I have lived through, not merely of what I have thought through; the opposition of thinking and life is lacking in my case."⁴¹ Nietzsche held that the ground upon which Western man built his ladder to eternal value and meaning was eroding. But this perception presupposes how he felt this erosion within himself. In short, Nietzsche, "offspring of generations of Christian preachers"⁴² realized that God was dead in him.

For Nietzsche, to perceive the ugly face of existence is to see the absence of God everywhere and hence the abyss. Inherent to proclaiming "God is dead," (V²,65,125) is Nietzsche's own experience of a kind of hell* that of despair and rage at how God, the shepherd of the cosmos, was only a mask man utilized when confronted with the absurd. In this vein Eric Heller says:

God is dead. The terror with which this event--and he did call it an *event*--filled Nietzsche is hardly understood anymore. Yet to that latecomer in a long line of theologians and believers it meant the disappearance of meaning from the sentiment of life.⁴³

With the death of God all "Truth" is lost and Nietzsche's rage and despair at this loss is expressed in *The Gay Science*, in a section entitled, "From the seventh solitude":

One day the wanderer slammed a door behind himself, stopped in his tracks, and wept. Then he said: 'This penchant and passion for what is true, real, non-apparent, certain--how it aggravates me! Why does this gloomy and restless fellow keep following and driving *me*? I want to rest, but he will not allow it. How much there is that seduces me to tarry!

...everywhere I must keep tearing my heart away and experience new bitternesses. I must raise my feet again and again, weary and wounded though they be; and because I must go on, I often look back in wrath at the most beautiful things that could not hold me--because they could not hold me.' (V²,GS, 309)

Nietzsche once remarked that he and Lou Salomé shared a unique ability "to glean...many *objective insights* from personal experience."⁴⁴ His "personal experience" of the death of God forced him to confront the question: "to what extent one can endure to live in a meaningless world?" (MXIX,585) But more than this, his experience of nihilism provided an "objective insight" into "the history of the next two centuries." (MXVIII:Preface,2) "I describe," he said,

what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism...* This future speaks even now in a hundred signs, this destiny announces itself everywhere; for this music of the future all ears are cocked even now. (MXVIII:Preface,2)

The task of Nietzsche's philosophy emerged in light of his vision of European culture moving "toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade." (MXVIII:Preface,2) What is this task? In essence, finding a path through nihilism toward a restoration of *faith* in life. To this end Nietzsche takes on "the role of *cultural physician*"⁴⁵ guiding a sick culture through a disease inherited from antiquity toward a reawakening of faith in a tomorrow and the day after tomorrow...anticipation of a future, of impending adventures, of seas that are open again, of goals that are permitted again, believed again. (V²GS:Preface,1)

The task of restoring health to Western culture indicates an injustice done to Nietzsche if we see his philosophical project as one devoted to destruction. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger said it was necessary to destroy the history of ontology in order to begin anew and hence "its aim is *positive*."⁴⁶ With regard to the necessity of the destruction of Western metaphysics Nietzsche is, in this and

in other instances, Heidegger's precursor.⁴⁷ That rage, despair and, at times ardent celebration of destruction we find in Nietzsche's texts has appealed to those who, as Marianne Cowan says, "enjoy with unholy glee the apparently irresponsible behaviour of the 'mad' philosopher."⁴⁸ Others, not attracted to philosophical vandalism, have rejected Nietzsche's philosophy as nihilism. Both those attracted to Nietzsche's "apparently irresponsible behaviour" and those who despise it fail to see the depth of responsibility Nietzsche possessed. In this they have missed "the whole point of his philosophy."⁴⁹

Doubtless, we have witnessed the destructive element in Nietzsche's thought in his diagnosis of the sources of modern decadence. But Nietzsche the physician does not stop at diagnosis anymore than did his philosophical ancestor Socrates. We turn now to his cure for Western culture and to Nietzsche "as the physician of culture going beyond his role as diagnostician to begin to function as the healer of the spirit."⁵⁰

Part II

REVALUATION OF ALL VALUES

A. In Search of Faith

If, as Nietzsche said, every philosophy is "the personal confession of its author," (VI²,8,6) then his task of healing the "spirit" of man reveals Nietzsche's attempt to heal himself. His passionate devotion to overcoming a vision of existence as absurd, or, in a word, nihilism, hinges on how he saw this enemy as deadly to himself. But what are the conditions wherein the fight against nihilism became, not only necessary for him, but led to his "brooding over the future of mankind?"⁵¹

These conditions emerged when Nietzsche "underwent that terrible metamorphosis called sickness."⁵² In 1880 he

described his situation to a physician: violent headaches, sensitivity to light, vomiting, feelings of paralysis and conditions like unto seasickness.⁵³ Such "illnesses afflicted him throughout his *entire* life in varying degrees of severity."⁵⁴ These afflictions, including serious eye problems, were not as severe in childhood⁵⁵ but his twenty-ninth year marked a turning point since he "was *constantly ill in some way after 1873.*"⁵⁶ As Lev Shestov puts it: "Almost in a moment...Nietzsche, falling asleep as a young man, awoke an old and broken man, with the terrifying consciousness that his life was gone and could never return."⁵⁷ "I seem designed," he once said, "for lengthy torment and skewering over a slow flame."⁵⁸ Advancing blindness, days and nights of headache and vomiting exacerbated by large doses of chloral hydrate,⁵⁹ led him to say "I've been, body and soul, *more of a battlefield than a human being.*"⁶⁰

Illness reduced Nietzsche to living, in many respects, the life of an invalid. The solitude of such a fate only enhanced that continual sense of loneliness he felt from "an absurdly early age." (VI²E:II,10) In a letter to his friend Franz Overbeck he said:

If I could only give you some idea of my feeling of *isolation*. Neither among the living or dead is there anyone with whom I feel kinship. This is inexpressibly horrible; only the experience I've had ever since childhood, of living with this growing isolation makes it comprehensible why I haven't been destroyed by it.⁶¹

Elsewhere, he speaks of experiencing "for years not a word of comfort, not a drop of human feeling, not a breath of love."⁶² Loneliness was his most constant companion and this was perhaps "far more painful than all of his physical torments".⁶³ Sick and alone, he told Overbeck:

I've lost interest in everything. Deep down, an unyielding black melancholy.... Most of the time I am in bed.... The worst of it is, I no longer see *why* I should live for even half a year more.⁶⁴

It is hardly surprising that out of unspeakable sadness

Nietzsche would say, "the barrel of a revolver is for me now a source of relatively pleasant thoughts."⁶⁵

"Nietzsche may have faltered, but he never succumbed"⁶⁶ to suicide.⁶⁷ He speaks to us out of the miseries of illness and lonely solitude. But how does he endure? By means of trying to communicate precisely the answer to this question. In his situation, God and traditional "metaphysical comforts" (MXVIII,30) were like "the chemical analysis of water...to a boatman facing a storm." (IV²,HH,9) In the storm of suffering he saw not only the inadequacy of these "comforts" for himself, but also for Western man. His philosophy is indeed "the personal confession of its author" (VI²,B,6) to the extent that one "will see that the problem is...the meaning of suffering." (MXIX,1052)

This problem is the path to understanding the destructive element in Nietzsche's philosophy. The attack on Greek metaphysics and Christianity is rooted in his perception of their inadequacy to sustain men in the face of suffering. The former revealed a "detestable pretension to happiness,"⁶⁸ the latter a preoccupation with "'salvation of the soul'"⁶⁹ to the extent "that they forget the world and men on that account."⁷⁰

On the island of sickness and, at times, tempted to remove himself "with a single stroke,"⁷¹ Nietzsche saw the "Truth" of Western "spirituality" reveal a world "fabricated solely from psychological needs." (MXVIII,12) How could he have faith in life from standpoints fundamentally antagonistic to life? When he experienced the failure of Western "spirituality" to give him faith in the midst of suffering, his philosophical task emerged. On the one hand was the destruction of the dead "spirituality" of the West, but this, on the other hand, only has significance in his search for a new path to faith in life.

In Nietzsche's diagnosis of the genesis and symptoms of the "spiritual" sickness of Western culture, we have

seen a terrific violence. But it must be seen in terms of his recognition that the greatest pain lies in the "meaninglessness of suffering, *not suffering itself.*" (VI²,G:III,28) Unless man "is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering" (VI²,G:III,28) he will destroy himself.

Nietzsche witnessed the collapse of the foundations of the values of the West in himself and in this he caught a glimpse of "the history of the next two centuries." (MXVIII:Preface,2) His philosophy is not merely an exercise in destruction, nor an attempt to reduce everything to what we have called the "clinical standpoint." Destruction, and its inherent "physiology," only make sense in terms of Nietzsche's task to answer "the crying question, 'Why do I suffer?'" (VI²,G:III,28) with a "pride that refused the *conclusions* of pain." (V²,GS:Preface,1)

He extrapolated his perception of the collapse of faith within himself over to that of Western culture.⁷² His illness, he says, gave him the capacity to look from the perspective of the sick toward *healthier* concepts and values and, conversely, looking again from the fullness and self-assurance of a *rich* life down into the secret work of the instinct of decadence--in this I have had the longest training, my truest experience; if in anything, I became master in this. (VI²,E:I,1)

No doubt Nietzsche made vast generalizations in seeing his loss of faith in life as the experience reserved for the "next two centuries." (MXVIII:Preface,2) But despite the, at times, dogmatic tone in his extrapolations, their uncanny accuracy has been vastly influential.⁷³

"Only the day after tomorrow belongs to me...", he said, "Some are born posthumously." (VI²,A:Preface) The "advent of nihilism" (MXVIII:Preface,4) within Nietzsche became his blueprint for "what is coming, what can no longer come differently." (MXVIII:Preface,2)⁷⁴ In himself he saw the destruction of "whatever is comforting, holy, healing; all hope, all faith in hidden harmony, in future blisses and justice." (VI²,B,55) And in this he got a preview of what is

"reserved for the generation that is now coming". (VI²,B,55) With Nietzsche "nihilism becomes conscious for the first time."⁷⁵ But how "many centuries," he asked, "does a spirit require to be comprehended?" (VI²,B,285) He saw how the "ice that still supports people today has become very thin; the wind that brings the thaw is blowing." (V²,GS.377)⁷⁶ But his contemporaries did not see, as he did, "the disappearance of the primitive foundation of all faith--namely, the belief in life."⁷⁷

Richard Howey says "Nietzsche could come to terms with physical and spiritual sickness only as something to be overcome."⁷⁸ In so far as he "diagnosed in himself, and in others, the inability to believe,"⁷⁹ a two-fold philosophical agenda was born. First, he set out to destroy faith in the values he knew would sustain neither himself nor future generations. Second, he sought a means to restore the faith in life he believed was undermined by the instincts of decadence. This two-fold task is "the revaluation of all values"; overcoming the problem "of the meaning of suffering" (MXIX,1052) after the traditional reservoirs of meaning had evaporated both for himself and future generations.

Nietzsche's task of a revaluation of all values is a passion the vitality of which reveals a man fighting for his life. Given his illness and loneliness, he could not afford nihilism; could not afford a guest who mocked the pain within which he fought to believe in life. In this, the revaluation of all values is the attempt to overcome the psychological problem of nihilism.⁸⁰

There is no mystery here. The problem of keeping faith in life in the midst of suffering was an urgent one for Nietzsche. He witnessed within himself the decomposition of the traditional foundations for faith in life. Yet, when he saw how the values adhered to by his culture only sanctioned the pleasures promised by, "the barrel of a revolver,"⁸¹ he reveals great psychological tenacity. That is, he

did not commit "the deed of nihilism" (MXVIII,247) but rather went in search for the means to sustain faith in life.

He projected the psychological moments of nihilism he experienced as those for the future.

Nihilism as a psychological state will have to be reached, *first*, when we have sought a 'meaning' in all events that is not there: so the seeker eventually becomes discouraged. Nihilism, then, is the recognition of the long waste of strength, the agony of the 'in vain'...as if one had *deceived* oneself all too long. (MXVIII,12)

Nihilism "as a psychological state is reached, *secondly*" (MXVIII,12) when the foundation for man's faith in *his own* value is undermined. Convinced of a rational or divine foundation behind all things, man derives "a deep feeling of standing in the context of, and being dependent on, some whole...infinitely superior to him, and he sees himself as a mode of the deity." (MXVIII,12) When he sees that no "infinitely valuable whole works through him" (MXVIII,12) he will lose "faith in his own value." (MXVIII,12)

Nihilism as a

psychological state has yet a *third* and *last* form. Given these two insights, that becoming has no goal and that underneath all becoming there is no grand unity in which the individual could immerse himself completely as in an element of supreme value...the last form of nihilism comes into being: it includes disbelief in any metaphysical world and forbids itself any belief in a *true* world. (MXVIII,12)

Here, the individual realizes "justice," the "holy," the "good" as well as the concepts of "'aim,' 'unity,' 'being' which we used to project some value into the world" (MXVIII, 12) all "*refer to a purely fictitious world.*" (MXVIII,12) In the interests of "Truth" we then deny that this world is subject to these categories. But lacking other means to affirm the value of this world we find ourselves "surrounded by a fearful void" (VI²,GIII,28) wherein "the world looks *valueless.*" (MXVIII,12)

Nietzsche had first-hand experience of the "fearful void" of nihilism. And his fight with it reveals an extremely lonely and equally ferocious psychological struggle.

The traditional values of the West did not provide him the "purpose of suffering." (VI2,G:III,28) And his "Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values" (MXVIII:Preface,4) seeks to articulate this purpose for himself and, he believed, for the future.

The ideas of Eternal Recurrence, the Overman and the symbol of Dionysus were conceived prior to the ill-fated "Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values."⁸² Under the banner of the Revaluation, Nietzsche dug in for war and sought to marshal these conceptions in a coherent and sustained assault on nihilism.

In the end Nietzsche's "revaluation of all values" does not give us "new values." Perhaps, if his creative life had not been destroyed shortly after the project of the Revaluation occurred to him, we could have heard more about his "great new tidings."⁸³ As early as *Zarathustra* (1883-85) Nietzsche took up the themes of Eternal Recurrence and the Overman. And Dionysus, though given an interpretation in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is transformed into a theme of vastly wider significance as early as 1882 in *The Gay Science*.⁸⁴ His correspondence indicates he conceived of the Revaluation between 1887-88 as a definite philosophical task. That is, in terms of his "pressing need...to create a coherent structure of thought during the next few years."⁸⁵

He refers to Eternal Recurrence, the Overman, Dionysus and the task of the Revaluation in the texts written between 1887-88, yet the projected *magnum opus* remained for the most part in the form of fragments.⁸⁶ These ideas are integral to Nietzsche's project of the Revaluation since they articulate his belief in the destruction of the values of the West to create new values for the future.

Though there are "plans" for a work entitled "Revaluation of all Values," and he speaks of it in his late correspondence and texts, the revaluation was inherent to Nietzsche's thought long before it became a pet project.

Its destructive element is found in Nietzsche's earliest texts. The attack on Socrates alone can easily be seen in his first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. As far as the constructive element of the "revaluation" is concerned, the idea of "overcoming," found in *Zarathustra*, speaks not only of the necessity of overcoming man, but also, the vision of the "cultivators and sowers of the future" (VI¹,Z: III,12) and the call to "press your hand upon millennia as upon wax." (VI·Z:III,12) In this sense, the revaluation was already imbedded in Nietzsche's thought prior to his conceiving of a work bearing that title.

In a letter to Jakob Burckhardt, Nietzsche speaks of the uncanny preconditions of cultural growth, the extremely questionable relation between what's called 'improvement' of mankind...and the elevation of the species Man, above all the contradiction between every moral and scientific view of life.... Articulating it may well be the most dangerous venture there is, not for the one who dares to express it but for the one to whom it is addressed.⁶⁷

This excerpt expresses the nucleus of the "revaluation of all values."⁶⁸ In tracing the genesis of our values back to the influence of decadent antiquity, we found his "*diagnosis of the modern soul*." (VI³,C:Epilogue) There we saw how these values have, over millennia, poisoned the original health of Western culture to the point where we "have, unconsciously, involuntarily in our bodies values, words, formulas, moralities of *opposite* descent—we are, physiologically considered, *false*." (VI³,C:Epilogue)

Our physician looks upon Western culture as a patient "spiritually" deranged and the Revaluation is the name for an operation he wants to carry out. In looking at this prospect, Nietzsche does not exactly exude the "cheerful optimism" (III¹,BT,19) of the first great cultural physician, Socrates. But, like Socrates, he is aware of being infected by the disease of his age. When, for example, Nietzsche looks upon Wagner's art as a form of decadence irresistible

to "modernity," he says, "I am, no less than Wagner, a child of this time; that is, a decadent; but I comprehended this, I resisted it. The philosopher in me resisted." (VI³,C:Pref-ace)

Socrates also resisted decadence and it is important to bear in mind that when Nietzsche considered "The Problem of Socrates," he said:

It is a self-deception on the part of philosophers and moralists to imagine that by making war on *décadence* they therewith elude *décadence* themselves. This is beyond their powers: what they select as an expedient, as a deliverance, is itself only another expression of *décadence*--they alter its expression, they do not abolish the thing itself. (VI³, 7:III,12)

Nietzsche saw the decadence of his age within himself in so far as he had inculcated the same values.⁸⁹ In setting out to destroy the foundations of the values of his age, he made war on every vestige of these within himself and came to "know the truth as something that one has to tear, piece by piece, from one's heart, every victory taking its revenge in a defeat."⁹⁰

Here speaks "the wanderer" (V²,GS,309) whose journey began when he saw that "everything men have heretofore respected and loved"⁹¹ could not sustain him. The sickness inherent to what Western man called "salvation" was revealed to Nietzsche as a disease come to fruition in himself. Like Socrates, "he grasped...his case, the idiosyncrasy of his case," (VI³,7:III,9) and herein lay his prophetic powers. That is, he saw the "same kind of degeneration...everywhere silently preparing itself"; (VI³,7:III,9) the Europe of his forefathers, like the Athens of Socrates "was coming to an end." (VI³,7:III,9)

The "disappearance of the primitive foundation of all faith--namely, the belief in life"⁹² was fading in him and "Nietzsche employed all the power of his soul to find a faith."⁹³ He would have liked to believe in the God of Christianity, but felt Him dead within himself. He was

"deeply wounded by the loss of positive religious convictions"⁹⁴ and hence was "in need of an articulate religious faith."⁹⁵ The death of God constituted the collapse of the *order of rank* of Western culture and: "Whoever has seen this catastrophe at close range or, better yet, been subjected to it and almost perished of it, will no longer consider it a joking matter."⁹⁶

B. The Devil's Innocence

Without recourse to God or other transcendent possibilities for faith derived from Beyond, Nietzsche had to undermine within himself everything men have cherished. These only betrayed values which, since antiquity, had inexorably been leading man into the void. His war on everything men have valued is one he conducted within himself. It is not easy to carve out of oneself the humanity of one's own epoch. But Nietzsche attempted this with an eye toward healing himself and the future from whatever rendered man "cursed with an everlasting appetite, to feed which all the Heavens may be ransacked without result."⁹⁷

In this he recognizes, as we have seen, how the philosopher is "*of necessity a man of tomorrow*" (VI²,B,212) carrying "the seeds of the future." (V²,GS,23) If they emerge in ages of cultural vitality and health, then their thought will, like that of the pre-Socratics, manifest this health. But like Socrates, Nietzsche lived in an age of decadence and hence he is a "child of this time; that is, a decadent." (VI³,C:Preface) Nietzsche wanted a cure appropriate to the uncanny preconditions of cultural growth...[and] the extremely questionable relation between what's called 'improvement' of mankind...and the *elevation* of the species Man.⁹⁸

But, as a decadent, he ran the same risk as Socrates who, in the end, poisoned the species even further. Conscious of the dangers of the decadent philosopher promoting decadence, Nietzsche wanted to protect the future from precisely the

disease afflicting himself and his age. If he was going to speak with authority to future generations, he would have to negate within himself everything which marked "him as the child of his time." (VI³,C:Preface) That is, turn his back on everything symptomatic of "humanity" within himself.

Is it possible to endure life without a divine witness to one's pain, loneliness and solitude and cheerfully accept life devoid of any transcendent meaning? Is it possible that in the absence of these man can not only endure but even find joy? Nietzsche saw the humanity of his age defined precisely by the *denial* of these possibilities; a humanity believing that to embrace these possibilities was the mark of the damned. But Nietzsche *had* to entertain these possibilities because he felt the demise of exactly what led his contemporaries to deny them. The values of his age could not bring him faith in life, and, in quest of this faith, he turned to "what mankind has always hated, feared and despised the most--and precisely out of this I've made my 'gold.'"⁹⁹

Nietzsche attempted the task of saying "yes" to what men "always hated, feared and despised"; that being the suffering of accepting life devoid of any transcendent meaning, divine or otherwise. Those who suffer from the illness of their age must philosophize for themselves; cure themselves. And to those who do not, "'Physician heal thyself!' is what we must shout to them."¹⁰⁰ The Revaluation moves not away from suffering, but rather straight into its darkest depths. What is this most profound suffering? We have already spoken of it--the vision of existence as absurd wherein all hope for escape is cut off.¹⁰¹

Every inclination he found in himself to find solace in what "men have heretofore respected and loved"¹⁰² appeared as the path to nihilism. Hence these avenues were cut off to him. But rather than remain in the dead world of Western "spirituality," he chose to "live dangerously." He

took the risk of stepping into the hurricane of chaos where all foundations are gone, where all ideas of a transcendent meaning to life are naive. There he sought an unconditional "yes" to life and exposed himself to what he could least afford: nihilism.

This was the means our physician saw toward curing himself. If he remained attached to the values of his age, then he should take his cue from Socrates "who handed himself the poison cup." (VI³,7:III,12) Thus he only had one option--going through the illness of nihilism. If he was to have a viable cure for sickness then experience is the best teacher. In short, he had to cure himself before he could cure his culture.

And so he went through the moments of despair in confronting the grim spectre of life bereft of meaning. But something happened to Nietzsche "out there," far from the virtues and convictions of his age. It occurred to him that life was neither meaningful nor meaningless. To insist on it one way or the other betrayed a certain *ressentiment*. To demand that life have a "meaning" in itself is to say "No" to it because life is growth and must shed all interpretations of itself within the vortex of becoming. Then again, to insist that it is "meaningless" in itself, is the "No" of those angry at life for having taken their "meaning" away.

Man broke solidarity with the earth when he ardently pursued the "virtues" of the "True World" and the Beyond wherein God resided. In fully experiencing nihilism, one recognizes that the "True world" is "an idea no longer of any use, not even a duty any longer--an idea grown useless, superfluous, consequently a refuted idea: let us abolish it!" (VI³,7:V,5) Here, the typical nihilist lapses into despair because he finds himself trapped in a world wherein "the character of existence is not 'true,' is false."
(MXVIII,12)

But Nietzsche saw that judging this world as "false" only makes sense in so far as it presupposes the "True World." Thus the nihilist must at least have the courage of his convictions. If he ardently maintains this world as "false," then, at bottom, he still hankers after the dead world of Truth. The old opposition, the old sickness remains and hence what the nihilists "select as an expedient, as a deliverance, is itself only another expression of *décadence* --they alter its expression, they do not abolish the thing itself." (VI³, T:III,11) But "the first perfect nihilist of Europe" (MXVIII:Preface,3) went further. In light of how the "True World" is abolished, Nietzsche asked, "what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? . . . But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!*" (VI³, T:V,6)

Nietzsche pushed the insight of nihilism to its farthest extreme and saw that the destruction of the "True World" undermined all the dichotomies inherent to the physiology "*of the modern soul.*" (VI³, C:Epilogue) By subjecting himself to the worst possible visions of nihilism, the "*astounding finesse, that the value of life cannot be estimated*" (VI³, T:III,2) appeared to him. The "True World" is no more, and its demise is also that of the merely "apparent" and "false" world. In this Nietzsche glimpsed "*the seductive flash of gold on the belly of the serpent vita.*" (MXIX,577) He saw man riding this serpent, calling it "good," "evil," "meaningful," and "meaningless" in the attempt to command it. But the serpent goes where it will, not for revenge nor love of man, but rather, because it is Life forever on its way to transformations of power in *all* of its forms. And man, as one form of life, is "its object, and not judge of it." (VI³, T:III,2)

Yet man *must* judge life; that is, create the deceptions necessary for survival and growth. In short, he "spiritualizes" his world in the teeth of chaos thereby

creating a "world" within which he can grow in power. In this he is at one with life, since, through "spirit," man is the lust to *command* all things. But, in the end, "value judgments concerning life, for or against, can in the last resort never be true: they...come into consideration only as symptoms." (VI³,7:III,2) They are symptomatic of a psychology determined by the affects of the instincts¹⁰³ and reveal the individual's *rank* within life as will to power. Judgments on life "for or against" (VI³,7:III,2) are symptomatic of the health or sickness of the judge. He cannot express the character of life in its totality; "no one could do it; one cannot judge, measure, compare the whole, to say nothing of denying it! Why not?...because *nothing exists besides the whole.*" (MXIX,765) The very possibility of "affirming" or "denying" life presupposes it. These judgments express the will to power of either ascending or descending drives. One way or the other, man cannot jump out of his skin; as *living* he remains a hunger for what is always unnamed in the midst of transformation.

Like all living things, we are the experiment of life on the path of transformation or obliteration. In pushing the vision of the absurd to extremes, Nietzsche saw man as a child of becoming and, like the stars, neither justified nor unjustified. We

are *not* the product of an attempt to achieve an 'ideal of perfection' or an 'ideal of happiness' or an 'ideal of virtue'.... There is no place, no purpose, no meaning, on which we can shift the responsibility for our being.... (MXIX,765)

But here, rather than collapsing into nihilistic despair, Nietzsche's perception of the twofold destruction of the "True World" and "False World" showed him the path to a "Yes, a sacred Yes." (VI¹,Z:I,1) Why cast aspersions on life? There is no cosmic conspiracy against man, nor a God to confer a meaning to suffering. Why take revenge on life because it lacks a transcendent goal or purpose? And why insist that it possess this transcendent foundation? Is it not

enough, more than enough, to suffer, love and live in the midst of the beauty and horror of "the *innocence of becoming?*" (MXIX,552)

Nietzsche saw that personal happiness and suffering, including that of the whole history of the human race, do not constitute arguments for or against life. Such arguments betray "the *hyperbolic naiveté* of man: positing himself as the meaning and measure of all things." (MXVIII,12) On the other hand, man must see himself as the meaning of all things; his interpretations are the deceptions essential to his preservation and growth. As we have seen, his interpretations "are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination." (MXVIII,12) And he can no more avoid interpreting his world than he can breathing. His happiness, suffering and judgments of "life," pro or contra, are nothing within the totality of endless becoming.

The perception of the utter indifference of the cosmos to man drives him to despair and nihilism. But Nietzsche looked upon the turbulent ocean of becoming and found, not a reason for suicide but rather, a new vision of himself and, indeed, the whole human race. There was man, that unique form of will to power wherein life articulates itself. Here is life trying to capture itself within interpretations torn asunder as soon as they are rendered. Here life tries to clasp itself to itself as a totality never realized. Becoming strives to hear its own voice in its form as man but the voice itself is ever changing.

In this Nietzsche saw himself and the human race inextricably unified to a terrifying and majestic innocence. Man had created values, laws and gods; through these he sustained himself, created cultures, a sense of homeland within the cosmos. In this man had followed the path of all life toward transformation. These "homelands" sheltered him from

the absurd; even the strongest types of Greek and Hebrew antiquity would never accept the absurd. They created, they "spiritualized" the world as a means of protection from the abyss of becoming. Nietzsche clearly saw that these old forms of "spirit," these old deceptions once so necessary, had long run their course. The old "virtue" was at an end, there was no God to hand out eternal rewards and punishments. For Nietzsche this opened up exhilarating prospects and "a tremendous restorative; this constitutes the innocence of all existence." (MXIX,765)

The death of God is not a call to despair but that of "a new beginning" (VI¹,Z:I,1) and a sign of release from the bondage of values steeped in the hatred of *ressentiment*. Thus "the innocence of becoming gives us the *greatest courage* and the *greatest freedom!*" (MXIX,787) By leaping into the volcano of becoming man regains that innocence he lost in positing God as his shield from Life. He does not need the old code of "good" and "evil" because he finds himself where he has always been: in the innocence of all creation. In this Nietzsche saw man at the threshold of a freedom terrifying to behold. The old God and code of "good and evil" are gone. "The sea is stormy," says Zarathustra, "everything is at sea" (VI¹,Z:III,12) and if man is to secure a future then he will have to create it without an *apriori* cosmic blueprint. He must take the side of life and follow its most dangerous pathway; that of experiment. And "Alas, with what protracted searching and succeeding, and failing and learning and experimenting anew!" (VI¹,Z:III,12) If he is to have a future, he has to create and to create is to experiment. He has to therefore risk destruction and understand that as a creator *everything is permitted*.

Hence the perception of the innocence of becoming is not a bed of clover whereon man reclines. As Jaspers says, "Nietzsche's philosophizing is not intended to allow thinking man to sink peacefully into the undisturbed inno-

cence of becoming."¹⁰⁴ From the standpoint of the old morality, this "innocence" constitutes the demonic. For Nietzsche the "demonic" is necessary if we are not to "crucify the whole human future." (VI¹,Z:III,12) It is with an eye on the future of man that Nietzsche embraced what is called the "demonic." That is, in so far as the values of the West led man to see this life as evil, then the ruthlessness of the Devil himself is required for the task of creating a future for man. The Devil's work is generally seen as that of destruction, but in referring to himself as the Anti-Christ, Nietzsche is ultimately dedicated to creation.

We were saying above that Nietzsche's Revaluation does not actually provide us with new values. That is, it provides no "Ten Commandments," or step by step formula for determining "good and evil." But this does not render the Revaluation "value-free." On the contrary, since Nietzsche believed in its necessity, this necessity derives its intensity from an appeal to something of value. But what is this "something of value?" Our physician answers, "the value for life is ultimately decisive." (MXIX,493) But we have seen that life is itself forever on the way to transformation in all of its forms and hence its value "cannot be estimated." What then is the value to which Nietzsche's "revaluation of all values" is appealing? Again, the value is life but now liberated from the illness which denies its innocence within constant transformation. At bottom, the Revaluation is an appeal to health; a health manifest in a profound faith in life.

We are speaking here of a faith which does not require a standpoint outside of life from which its value can be measured. Indeed we are speaking of a faith hinging on man's capacity to affirm his unity with life and requires no guarantee of eternal rewards or punishments. Life is transformation and the constant experiment with itself toward new expressions of power. In short, life is *overcoming*.

And man, standing within the nexus of life, shares the destiny of all living things and hence is subject to transformations beyond anything he may today recognize as "human."

It is in the desire to say "Yes" to ourselves as integral to life's transformation and experiment that we realize our integrity and unity with the law of life. "'You shall become the person you are'"; (V²,GS,270)¹⁰⁰ this is the motto of the Revaluation. It expresses a willingness and faith in transformation and experiment as the law of all life. Such a faith betrays great health in so far as one is able to affirm destruction not for the sake of destruction, but as integral to the *creation* of new expressions of life. This is what life demands of us. In meeting this demand, one answers, says Nietzsche, the call of a "conscience behind your 'conscience'"; (V²,GS,335) the one with "a pre-history in your instincts." (V²,GS,335) Life as will to power exhorts us to transformation and experiment and, for Nietzsche, our authenticity is realized in saying yes to the life within us. Life demands that we affirm the transformation and experiment we are. The values of the last two millennia have negated life as such and hence we are on the road to self-destruction. The Revaluation is the attempt to eradicate the values of decadence, and at the same time, lead man back to his origins as a form of life as will to power. It constitutes an attempt to restore the innocence of becoming to man, thereby liberating him to the will to power he is. In short, it grants him the terrible freedom inherent to all life--to *create himself* "beyond good and evil."

With the Revaluation we can see Nietzsche in the manner he once had Zarathustra describe: "Here I sit and wait, old shattered law-tables around me and also new, half-written law-tables." (VI¹,Z:III,12) On the one hand the old laws have been shattered but those of the future are, as it were, half-written fragments. We noted above that the Revaluation is a two-fold philosophical task; that is, both de-

structive and constructive. What requires destruction are "the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations... that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*." (VI²,B,230) These interpretations have been, for the most part, determined by the values of decadence. What is to be constructed is a restoration of faith in life. The hallmark of such faith is man's capacity to "spiritualize" his world in such a manner that he not only preserves himself but can grow in power. "Spirit" is the means to saying "Yes" to life, the best example of which we have seen in the healthy epochs of the Greek and Hebrew cultures. But, since decadence has poisoned the "spirit" of Western culture, Nietzsche was very dubious as to the chances of that restoration of faith we spoke of above.

The Revaluation is directed toward this restoration, but if it is to be realized, certain physiological criteria must be met. The question now is; how did our physician attempt to turn the patient around toward the health required for affirming and having faith in life? Through what means did he attempt to push man toward a "spiritualization" of the world which allows him to stare *with love* into the abyss of becoming? In short, what does Nietzsche resort to as the *cure* for a mankind "spiritually" unhinged? To give these questions their due we now turn to three interdependent themes in Nietzsche's thought: Eternal Recurrence, the Overman and Dionysus.

PART III

ETERNAL RECURRENCE

A. A Cosmic Therapy

"...it's going very badly," Nietzsche told his friend Overbeck, "My health is back to where it was three years ago. Everything is wrecked....What a life! And I'm the

great affirmer of life!!"¹⁰⁶ He said this just as the "fundamental conception" (VI³,E:Z,1) of Eternal Recurrence¹⁰⁷ was about to be published in *Zarathustra*. In a note written while writing *Zarathustra* we read:

I do not wish to live *again*. How have I borne life? By creating. What has made me endure? The vision of the Overman who affirms life. I have tried to affirm life *myself*--but ah!¹⁰⁸

The idea of Recurrence oppressed Nietzsche and in this it is no surprise that he referred to it as the "*greatest weight*." (V²,GS,341) But why was it such a burden to him? Because as "the great *cultivating idea*," (MXIX,1056) it both "removes degenerate and decaying races to make way for a new order of life," (MXIX,1055) and implants in the degenerate "a longing for the end." (MXIX,1055) But in saying "I do not wish to live *again*," Nietzsche confesses "as it were, behind the back of the reader of *Zarathustra*"¹⁰⁹ that he cannot endure Recurrence. And in this he stands condemned under the "*moral code for physicians*" (VI³,T:X,36) which says: the "weak and ill-constituted shall perish." (VI³,A,2)

How did Nietzsche reconcile this situation to himself? If the physician of culture uses Recurrence to determine those with "the *right to life*," (VI³,T:X,36) how did Nietzsche justify his role as such in light of his admission of despair before Recurrence? In response, it is clear that Nietzsche could only legitimately speak as a physician of culture from the standpoint of a health he did not possess. Hence all he could do was speak *against* everything he saw within *himself* that was repulsed by the idea of Recurrence. In this battle, Nietzsche strove to stand on the side of life but in so doing took a stand against himself; against everything that said "I do not want to live *again*."

We have seen that he went through the illness of nihilism and arrived at the vision of the innocence of becoming wherein

'you do not have a perpetual guardian and friend...there is no avenger for you any more nor any final improver; there is no longer any reason in what happens, no love in what will happen to you; no resting place is open any longer to your heart....' (V²,GS,285)

These must all be renounced if one is to affirm life within the innocence of becoming and thus "will the eternal recurrence of war and peace." (V²,GS,285) But could the man who asked, "All this overcoming of self, all this endurance-- what good has it done me?"¹¹⁰ accept there being "no reason in what happens?" (V²,GS,285) Could the man who said "I for my part suffer horribly when I am deprived of affectionmy whole philosophy wavers after an hour's friendly conversation with a total stranger"¹¹¹ joyfully say "yes" to "no love in what will happen to you?" (V²,GS,285)

Nietzsche certainly tried to renounce within himself "everything men have hitherto respected and loved (which I call a 'revaluation of all values')." ¹¹² In short, he made a genuine attempt to "dehumanize" himself. The "human" had been determined by decadence for the last two thousand years. Anyone who cleaves to this definition embraces the illness of millennia. Our physician sought to undermine this illness and whatever this illness defines as "human." Thus the "human, all too human" has to be carved out of the soul of man and, just as Nietzsche subjected himself to the illness of his epoch, he did likewise with the cure he proposed. Hence "Lonely and deeply suspicious of myself...I took...sides against myself and for anything that happened to hurt me and was hard for me."¹¹³

Man must go beyond himself; that is, turn his back on what constitutes the "human," and Nietzsche begins this task within himself first and foremost. Subjecting himself to this operation, allowed him to act in good conscience when, as the cultural physician, he asked of his age nothing he did not already ask of himself. "...a philosophy like mine," he said, "is like a tomb--it seals one off from the

living."¹¹⁴ The man who said, "I do not want to live again" fought against this "No" within himself. This struggle allowed him a legitimate voice to speak to his age because it was the proof to himself that he stood on the side of life. Within this struggle he said "the tension under which I live, the pressure of a great passion and a great project, is too enormous.... The solitude around me is something frightful...."¹¹⁵

The process of carving from his heart everything that marked him as "a child of this time; that is a decadent," (VI³,C:Preface) revealed "the task for which I live --as a *factum* of indescribable sadness."¹¹⁶ And this not only in terms of what it cost him "to be right at the expense of love,"¹¹⁷ but also what it would cost the generations to come. In the end that struggle to undermine the decadent, i.e., "human", in himself, revealed "truth as something... one has to tear...from one's heart, every victory taking its revenge in a defeat."¹¹⁸ There were enough defeats to lead Nietzsche to conclude that in the battle to turn one's back on whatever constituted the "human," "Nobody yet has ever had this strength!" (V²,GS,285)

Who could renounce everything men had "hitherto respected and loved?" Who could hold all of this in utter contempt and despise whatever man formerly found solace in? Certainly not Nietzsche. Thus to the question, "What has made me endure?"¹¹⁹ he answers, "The vision of the Overman who affirms life."¹²⁰ Nietzsche could not live for the likes of himself nor his contemporaries. What he had in common with them was the illness of the age. Hence the task of preparing the way for the type of man who is "a *different* kind of spirit from that likely to appear in the present age" (VI²,G:II,24) became intimately connected to Recurrence. To this type he applied the "word 'overman,' as the designation of a type of supreme achievement." (VI³,E:III,1)

In embracing Recurrence Nietzsche entered into what we have called a process of "dehumanization." That is, he experienced it as fundamentally and violently opposed to the "human" as this term has been understood for the last two millennia. And it is precisely the "human" as determined by the values of decadence which is eradicated by Recurrence. It lies at the heart of the Revaluation as the means to destroying the "human" and creating "a higher species than man to come into existence." (MXIX,859) Thus far we have been speaking in very general terms about Recurrence as "the great *cultivating* idea." (MXIX,1056) But we must clarify this further and look at its intimate connection to Nietzsche's conception of the Overman.

Devils, it seems, are not unfamiliar with the idea of Recurrence. An "insignificant"¹²¹ one appears in Dostoevsky's, *The Brothers Karamazov*, saying:

'You're thinking of our present earth: why, our present earth has probably repeated itself a billion times. I mean, it has become extinct, frozen, cracked, fallen to pieces, resolved itself into its component elements, again the water above the firmament, then again a comet, again a sun, again an earth from the sun--this evolution, you see, has repeated itself an infinite number of times, and all in the same way, over and over again, to the smallest detail. A most indelicately tedious business....'¹²²

And Nietzsche asks:

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 'This life as you now live it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence--even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!' (V²,GS,341)

The "loneliest loneliness" emerges upon the death of God. His absence leads man to stray "as through an infinite nothing" (V²,GS,125) wherein all value and meaning to exist-

tence has vanished. In short, we are confronted with the absurd.

Nietzsche's demon compounds the loneliness by suggesting that the absurdity of life, suffering, joy and death will be repeated in exactly the same way into infinity. If this demon were to appear to you, would you, asks Nietzsche: throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: 'You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.' (V²,GS,341)

Apparently Ivan Karamazov never experienced the "tremendous moment" allowing him to call his devil a god. At best, he tells him to "shut-up"¹²³ and calls him "a flunkey."¹²⁴ Nietzsche, on the other hand, saw in his demon a god who offered a vision of redemption.

"Redemption from what?" we ask. From "all these shadows of God," (V²,GS,109) Nietzsche answers. With Recurrence, he wants to scorch from the soul of man everything reminiscent of the dead God of decadence. The old morality is rooted in sickness and hatred of life and man has listened to "the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers ...piping...for too long, 'you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!'" (VI²,B,230) Man is not "more," "higher," nor of a "different origin" than life itself. But, poisoned by life-negating values, he has become a pale shadow of life. Thus the task is to "translate man back into nature" (VI²,B,230) and restore that innocence which has for so long been instinctively denied and despised. Recurrence is meant to "'naturalize' humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, redeemed nature." (V²,GS,109) Through it Nietzsche hopes men will attain the *perfection* of nature through a return to "their *physis*... heed[ing] it[s] demands down to the subtlest nuances." (V²,GS,39)

However, we have to ask ourselves why Recurrence should have this effect on mankind. As the "fundamental conception" (VI³,E:Z,1) of *Zarathustra* it is articulated

within "the mythic style of the book."¹²⁵ But Nietzsche did not want to leave it at that. He says he had a "terrible antagonism...for the whole Zarathustra image."¹²⁶ Yet Zarathustra constituted "the outline I've made of my 'philosophy.'"¹²⁷ Thus, along with the other themes expressed in *Zarathustra*, Recurrence required "filling in."¹²⁸ "For me ...[Zarathustra] is 'devotional literature.' For everyone else, it is obscure, mysterious, and ridiculous."¹²⁹

If Recurrence was to be "the great *cultivating* idea," (MXIX,1056) it would have to be expressed more effectively than it was in *Zarathustra*. Nietzsche had plans in this direction as seen in the outlines for his projected work, *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*.¹³⁰ But, like this project, the idea of Recurrence is, for the most part, scattered through fragments written after *Zarathustra*. But whether it is expressed "poetically" or otherwise, it is not particularly complicated. Its simplicity is obscured by Nietzsche's attempts to "prove" it as "the most *scientific* of all possible hypotheses" (MXVIII,55) and the objections to it as such. His tremendous enthusiasm for Recurrence¹³¹ is odd since Recurrence as a "scientific" idea is not convincing in its "*theoretical* presuppositions and consequences." (MXIX,1057)

In the "proof" for Recurrence Nietzsche asserts that time is infinite but the combinations of power which constitute "things" are finite. Within infinite time all possible combinations of *power* "must pass through a calculable number of combinations." (MXIX,1066) This means that within infinite time all possible combinations of power would have to be realized. But these realizations do not by any means indicate a purpose or end to becoming because in infinite time this "end" would have been attained. Hence becoming is without beginning or end; on the contrary, it is "now" what it has always been and will be. For Nietzsche, the determination of each "moment" within becoming is al-

ready "past" in so far as it has been "selected" as such. When I say "now" it is already "past" which is to say I have determined it after it has "occurred," i.e., in the future which is "now." Thus within each "now," the "past" and "future" are *present* because the "now" can only be determined after (future) it has occurred (past). Hence each moment is *the past* and *is the future*. Thus the determination of "past," "present," and "future" presuppose becoming. It is in so far as I am caught up in the flux of will to power that temporality can be determined.

But saying the "now" is past and future seems different from saying it has *always* been. Different, that is, from saying the moment is *eternal*. How then does the idea of the "eternal recurrence" of all things come into play here? As we have seen, within infinite time all possible combinations of power would be realized. But since this "realization" does not halt becoming whereby it comes to an end, then the entire process "is realized an infinite number of times." (MXIX,1066) He goes on to add:

And since between every combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to take place, and each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series, a circular movement of absolutely identical series is thus demonstrated: the world is a circular movement that has already repeated itself infinitely often and plays its game *in infinitum*. (MXIX,1066)

Thus each moment (combination) of power as becoming is repeated *in infinitum*. That is, every form of life has always proceeded toward transformations which have occurred an infinite number of times and will be repeated again into infinity. Consequently, each moment of becoming is the past and future since any particular combination of power is "the entire sequence of combinations in the same series" (MXIX,1066) preceding it *including* those occurring after it was realized in the last cycle. Each form of life at any particular moment is what it has always been as be-

coming throughout infinity and what it will always become throughout the same. Everything returns in exactly the same way and at each particular moment it is the infinity of all that it has been prior to that moment as well as what it must become.

In the end, the "scientific" idea of Recurrence is more appropriately a *cosmological* conception.¹³² It attempts to articulate the essence of becoming as the ebb and flow of a *finite* quantity of power within infinite time. The grand multiplicity of combinations of power are transformed within a power quantum which is constant and repeats itself into infinity.¹³³ The destruction and creation of various combinations of power, i.e, all organic and inorganic structures, never increases or decreases the cosmos as power. It is a reservoir of power remaining the same throughout all of its transformations. We have seen that will to power as a constant becoming is the being of all things. With Recurrence Nietzsche attempts to articulate the identity of all things as *the same* throughout all possible transformations. In short, he attempts to speak of the being of all things as "at the same time one and many." (MXIX,1067)¹³⁴

This "proof" as a "scientific" one is particularly troublesome since, aside from its being "invalid,"¹³⁵ it presupposes arguments Nietzsche "actually did not believe."¹³⁶ That is, we have seen him disparage the idea that "logic" and scientific interpretations of the universe are fixed and eternal "Truths." These interpretations are subject to "spirit" and hence are simply the deceptions necessary for the preservation and growth of that form of life which is man. But in the "scientific" fragments, Nietzsche speaks of Recurrence in terms of the "law of the conservation of energy" (MXIX,1063)¹³⁷ and the "shape of space...[as] the cause of eternal movement." (MXIX,1064)

Presumably the events of nature *and* their scientific interpretation are subject to Recurrence. But Nietzsche

utilizes these to explain the *cosmological dynamics of power*¹³⁸ which, as becoming, constitute both the being of all entities and the foundation for all interpretations "scientific" or otherwise. Jaspers says that in doing this, Nietzsche was adapting "himself to the scientific atmosphere of his time."¹³⁹ Thus Nietzsche attempts to do precisely what he himself has claimed is fool-hardy. That is, he attempts to talk about the being of becoming with his conception of Recurrence. As Howey puts it "the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence becomes a surrogate for a doctrine of Being."¹⁴⁰ Through Recurrence Nietzsche sought to render becoming comprehensible; but this would mean standing outside of becoming such that he may say what it is. Hence "this doctrine was a rejection of the most basic groundwork of Nietzsche's metaphysics."¹⁴¹ In so far as Nietzsche was aware of this it may explain the absence of "scientific" proofs of Recurrence in Nietzsche's published works.¹⁴²

Nietzsche's "proofs" for Recurrence leave us cold. As Kathleen Higgins says: "Even if the theory of time it proposes were true, nothing in our lives would be any different. Zarathustra may be right that time is cyclical, but if he is--so what?"¹⁴³ If Nietzsche's cosmological description of Recurrence is true, my embracing it means little since this has already happened an infinite number of times and will be repeated infinitely. If it is untrue, it means even less. My having lived in exactly the same way an infinite number of times, and destiny to repeat it into infinity renders my existence "a matter of complete indifference."¹⁴⁴

The significance of Recurrence lies not in its quasi-scientific proof, but rather in the psychological impact it has on the individual who takes it to heart. It is, as we said above, simple enough to grasp:

'This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or

great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence.' (V²,6S,341)

As "a *physico-cosmological hypothesis*,"¹⁴⁵ Recurrence fails to inspire an affirmation of life unto eternity. But we get access to its genuine significance to Nietzsche when he asks us to

think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness This is the most extreme form of nihilism: the nothing ('the meaningless'), eternally! (MXVIII,55)

The thought of Recurrence "in its most terrible form" is the hopelessly absurd repetition of everything again and again without any purpose or meaning whatsoever. For those who despair at this absence of *apriori* meaning and value to existence, Recurrence will appear as "the most extreme form of nihilism." Nietzsche thought the effect of Recurrence on our decadent culture would be despair and "a longing for the end." (MXIX,1055) Recurrence enhances the despair arising from the advent of nihilism; it is *meant* to intensify that despair until the death-wish inherent to the values of the last two thousand years is irresistible. And, in this case, when "one *does away with oneself* one does the most estimable thing possible: one thereby almost deserves to live." (VI³,7:X,36)¹⁴⁶

Recurrence plays the destructive role of the Revaluation since it is meant to destroy those incapable of facing nihilism.¹⁴⁷ Those who despise life for having no *apriori* meaning or value are too weak to affirm its innocence. This is the sickness of nihilism and Nietzsche, having gone through it, now wants to force this on Western culture. Just as a plague works its way into a population sparing some and destroying many, Recurrence is meant to have a similar effect. The "races that cannot bear it," says Nietzsche, "stand condemned; those who find it the greatest benefit are chosen to rule." (MXIX,1053)

Recurrence is "a cosmic therapy,"¹⁴⁸ through which our physician attempts to separate the weak from the strong. The former "shall perish" (VI³,A,2) and the latter must be preserved. Nietzsche, convinced of the debilitating physiological effects of two thousand years of decadent values, concluded that modern man was incapable of withstanding the disease of nihilism. Hence Recurrence, which magnifies "the nothing (the 'meaningless'), eternally," (MXVIII,55) is meant as a potent draft of poison for those incapable of affirming life. As we have seen, life as becoming is neither meaningful nor meaningless in itself. Indeed this constitutes its innocence and, in this "time of extensive inner decay and disintegration," (MXVIII,57) those who see their innocence within Recurrence "are chosen to rule." (MXIX, 1053) For Nietzsche the problem was how to bring those "chosen to rule" into the foreground. This is why Recurrence is "a doctrine that sifts men--driving the weak to decisions, and the strong as well." (MXVIII,56)

The doctrine provides no consolation for those crushed, as Nietzsche was, by the death of God, nor any promise of meaning and value independent of life. And he hoped Recurrence would actually lead people to say, "'death alone is a physician here.'" (VI³,7:III,12) This is one of the hoped for psychological effects of Recurrence on the weak--suicide. In this vein, he speaks of the necessity to create a new responsibility, that of the physician, in all cases in which the highest interest of life, of *ascending* life, demands the most ruthless suppression and sequestration of degenerating life--for example in determining the right to reproduce, the right to be born, the right to live. (VI³,7:X,36)

Who are the degenerate that must be isolated from the healthy? Those who hate life for lacking a transcendent meaning or value and take their revenge through suicide. These are precisely the ones who cannot endure the innocence of life and who must be "helped" in every way to destroy themselves. Hence Recurrence has a role within the "first

principle of *our* philanthropy." (VI³,A,2) This first principle is the "weak and ill-constituted shall perish" (VI³,A,2) and the physician "shall help them to do so." (VI³,A,2)

Who, on the other hand, are the healthy? To Nietzsche's mind, the *highest specimens* of health were virtually non-existent in his "age of decay and declining vitality." (MXVIII,58) Hence it became a question of determining those capable of enduring "the most extreme nihilism: the nothing (the 'meaningless') eternally." (MXVIII,55) The healthiest type is, of course, the Overman. He is the one bred out of the "pieces and fragments of man" (MXIX,881) as he is today. That is he will be the offspring of those initially capable of enduring Recurrence. The "real issue," said Nietzsche, "is the production of the synthetic man." (MXIX,881) Recurrence is therefore not only intimately woven into that of the Overman, it is a tool for the project of the Revaluation. The latter, as we said, is a two-fold philosophical project; destruction of the sick and construction of the possibility for a renewed faith in life. But if this faith is to be restored, a "doctrine is needed powerful enough to work as a breeding agent: strengthening the strong, paralyzing and destructive for the world-weary." (MXIX,862) Recurrence is this doctrine and it is inextricably linked to the Revaluation as a physiological concern with the

uncanny preconditions of cultural growth...[and] the extremely questionable relation between what's called 'improvement' of mankind...and the *elevation* of the species Man.¹⁴⁹

Our investigation into the physiological dynamics of cultural growth and decline revealed these "preconditions." Therein we saw that the possibility for "the elevation of the species Man" are those "individuals...[who] carry the seeds of the future." (V²,GS,23) The Overman must be considered the type of such an individual. Nietzsche's conception of the Overman, as well as his preoccupation with the condi-

tions making this highest type possible go back to his earliest days.¹⁵⁰ Who is the Overman? Above all, a creator. But before we can speak of him as such, there is a curiosity about Recurrence which deserves mention.

Recurrence is meant to effect the preconditions of cultural growth whereby, like a sifting process, the weak and strong are separated. And the latter are, as we have seen, an essential pre-condition for "a genuine culture."¹⁵¹ But this brings us to another peculiarity of Recurrence. If the process of creating a gulf between the strong and the weak is to be successful, then Recurrence would have to be a doctrine compelling *belief*. But why, for example, would the sick and decadent be attracted to a doctrine which has to strike them as repulsive? Recurrence undermines precisely the values essential to the preservation of "the underprivileged" (MXVIII,55) hence they would hardly find this doctrine attractive. Yet, it would have to be taken very seriously by the sick if their "perishing takes the form of self-destruction." (MXVIII,55) And if the Overman is to be the progeny of the semi-healthy, why would his presumably barbaric ancestors embrace Recurrence?

Since there is no compelling reason why Recurrence should be adopted, does this explain Nietzsche's search for a "scientific" confirmation of the doctrine? Yes, but it is easy to get caught up in the failure of Recurrence as a "scientific" conception. It is ridiculous to hold that the importance of Recurrence for Nietzsche lay in its being scientifically feasible.¹⁵² The failure of the doctrine as such and Nietzsche's saying it is "the most *scientific* of all possible hypotheses" (MXVIII,55) obscures the motive behind it. The motive is Nietzsche's passionate desire to provide a vision of Innocence and Eternity which "compels a faith in 'eternal recurrence.'" (MXVIII,55) The doctrine had to be taken to heart and held with the same fervent devotion as any Christian ever believed in God. It is a medicine the

efficacy of which Nietzsche was convinced; it was only a matter of getting his patient to swallow it. The "scientific" conception of Recurrence is the sugar-coating of a bitter pill.

That "pied piper of Athens," (V²,GS,340) Socrates, was persuasive in getting his culture to take his "cure." After all, from Nietzsche's standpoint, Socrates promised a "happiness" which boiled down to a moral justification for weakness and cowardice. Nietzsche, on the other hand, had to deal with the physiological consequences of this morality in the form of his sick contemporaries. He had the problem of seducing them into a *creative* vision that allows for what Nietzsche called the "Formula of my happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*." (VI³,T:II,44) Recurrence was supposed to constitute this vision but Nietzsche never had Socrates' success in having it capture the hearts and minds of his fellow decadents. He knew that the inspiring and seductive value of the "scientific" conception of Recurrence was so minimal that his expressions of it as such were never published.¹⁵³ In *Zarathustra* it is expressed mytho-poetically and this, for the most part, is how we find it in his published works. In the end he wanted to lure his epoch into the possibility of a new life-affirming faith and we can see that in this he failed.

Despite this failure, we must take Nietzsche seriously when he says: "In place of 'metaphysics' and religion, the theory of eternal recurrence." (MXVIII,462) It was to be the myth of the future the belief in which "will split the history of mankind into two halves."¹⁵⁴ Recurrence was to have its "place in history as a *midpoint*" (MXIX,1057) just as metaphysics and Christianity were midpoints dividing two "spiritual" epochs within their respective cultures. The new myth was actually "a new weapon" (MXIX,1054) in the "*greatest of struggles*" (MXIX,1054) to purge Western culture of

decadence "for a new order of life." (MXIX,1055) If Recurrence were to be embraced, much

that has been subject to debate will no longer be an open question; thanks to decisions of the first importance concerning values, our reigning idea of 'tolerance' will be exposed as sheer cowardice and weakness of character. Being Christian, to name just one result, will from then on be *indecent*.¹⁵⁵

Though Nietzsche claimed much "is already astir in this most radical revolution that mankind has ever known,"¹⁵⁶ he admitted to his friend Overbeck: "people are simply deaf to anything I say; consequently there is no *for* or *against*."¹⁵⁷

He believed Recurrence "makes everything *break open*" (MXIX,1057) bringing forth a "period of catastrophe" (MXVIII,56) "strengthening the strong and destructive for the world-weary." (MXIX,862) These were the "consequences of its being *believed*." (MXIX,1057) But it had to be taken to heart if these consequences were to occur. It is incredible to think of the magnitude of such "an immeasurably difficult and decisive task."¹⁵⁸ To actually try altering the course of human history with this doctrine is the result of having lived "lucidly within the dark age of which he so creatively despaired."¹⁵⁹ With his "physiological turn of mind"¹⁶⁰ he saw man "spiritually" debilitated as a result of the profound effects of Christianity. For Nietzsche, the word "human" was almost synonymous with that of "sickness."

To see how Recurrence is meant as a counter-doctrine (MXIX,862) to the decadent "spirituality" of the West, we must recall that "spirit" is that capacity to create the deceptions necessary for life. For Nietzsche, no *human being* could endure Recurrence especially after Christianity reduced the "human" to the status of a "diseased animal."¹⁶¹ In many respects Nietzsche saw the sickness of Western man so advanced that here "the physician says 'incurable.'" (VI³,A, 47) Hence, as we said above, the "human" as defined within the old deceptions of decadent "spirituality" has to be destroyed. Or at least the "physiologist demands *excision*

of the degenerating part." (VI³,E:D,2) Recurrence is meant to destroy the old deceptions and, presumably, those who cleave to them. For what does it affirm? The cycle of becoming without aim or purpose: "the most extreme form of nihilism." (MXVIII,55) Who could endure this? "'Nobody yet has had this strength!'" (V²,GS,285)

B. The Survivors

Recurrence articulates the *truth* of life as becoming. It gives no quarter to those seeking consolation in the "virtues" of believing in God, a rational telos within history, or any other *transcendent* value or meaning to existence. The flux and recurrence of all things is life as will to power and Nietzsche proposes his doctrine in the manner of a kind of scorched earth policy. Now the question becomes: "How much truth can a spirit *endure*, how much truth does a spirit *dare*? More and more," says Nietzsche, "that became for me the real measure of value." (VI³,E:Preface,3) Who can endure the vision of Recurrence as the most extreme nihilism? Who dares to look into this abyss without being nauseated at life? Who can stare into the void affirming its innocence as becoming and inspired to *love and reverence* for it? Those who can endure it remain and those who cannot shall perish.

"Live in such a way that you desire nothing more than to live this very same life again and again!"¹⁶² For Nietzsche, this new faith is meant to force the issue of nihilism on Western culture. Since nihilism is inevitable as "the ultimate logical consequence of our great values and ideals," (MXVIII:Preface,4) Recurrence brings it to a head. It intensifies the sickness within the culture as a vaccine; destroying "the degenerating part" (VI³,E:D,2) and forcing whatever strength is left in the organism to come to the fore. This is typical of the clinical standpoint we have seen throughout our investigation. Life as will to power

needs resistance, (MXIX,656) and it is only under the threat of destruction that an organism draws on whatever resources it has in order to meet it. Recurrence is meant to trigger these resources which, *if successful*, will bring about a transformation of the culture as a whole.

This success will be realized if the strongest most dangerous individuals come to the fore. Who are these individuals? Thoroughgoing nihilists. We find more about them when Nietzsche speculates on the seduction of nihilists to the idea of Recurrence. He divides them into two types. The first is fundamentally overwhelmed at the destruction of the foundation of the old morality and cannot fail to find death attractive. This type is an expression of "passive nihilism." (MXVIII,22) The second type is essentially enraged at the destruction mentioned above. And here we find a "maximum of relative strength as a violent force of destruction--as active nihilism." (MXVIII,23) It is in this "relative strength" that Nietzsche sees a certain glimmer of hope.

The passive nihilist constitutes a "recession of the power of the spirit." (MXVIII,22) The active nihilist indicates at least "a sign of increased power of the spirit." (MXVIII,22) The "spiritual" strength of the former is so depleted that the capacity to create the deceptions necessary for life are minimal. That is, here is a "lack of strength to posit for oneself, productively, a goal, a why, a *faith*." (MXVIII,23)¹⁴³ The active nihilist, on the other hand, has the "spiritual" capacity to create a deception which sustains him. His "faith" rests in acting on the rage he feels. He wants revenge on life precisely because the old "convictions, [and] articles of faith" (MXVIII,23) are no more and his *faith* is in destruction pure and simple. In this latter case, nihilism does not only contemplate the 'in vain!' nor is it merely the belief that everything deserves to perish: one helps to destroy.--This is, if you will, illogical; but the nihilist

does not believe that one needs to be logical.... [Such] spirits...do not find it possible to stop with the No of 'judgement': their nature demands the No of the deed. The reduction to nothing by judgement is seconded by the reduction to nothing by hand. (MXVIII,24)

If nothing else, the active nihilist is at least still capable of deeds though these are rooted in the intoxication of destruction. But what if the *rage and strength* to destroy everything that bespeaks of life could be harnessed? Recurrence is meant to do this in so far as it appeals to the active nihilists. And this because A) it affirms that the old faith is dead, and B) it sanctions the destruction of everything reminiscent of the old "spiritual" paradigm within which this faith flourished. At the same time it appeals to the active nihilist's craving for "'everything perfect, divine, eternal'" (MXVIII,55) the negation of which motivates his desire for revenge.

Nietzsche did not find the health typical of the pre-decadent Greek and Hebrew cultures in his own age. Hence he speaks of the "ripeness of man" (MXIX,1058) for Recurrence. He had to work with whatever "healthy" human material was left and the active nihilist constitutes this material. In this sense he asks: "where are the *barbarians* of the twentieth century?" (MXIX,868) The active nihilists are these barbarians. They are decadent, but precisely the desire for revenge inherent to decadence is something our physician wants to exploit. He wants to channel the strength for destruction in such a way as to give it direction.

This means our physician has to somehow tap into the strength within these nihilists. He has to bring about a physiological reversal such that the power of destruction they possess can be detonated as a *creative force*. This power is essential to the task of the Revaluation "to establish *order of rank*." (MXIX,854) How, then, is the "relative strength" (MXVIII,23) of active nihilism channelled in this

direction? After all, these individuals hardly strike us as concerned with cultivating "higher culture."

If we are to understand how this reversal is to take place, we have to recall some of the basic physiology considered in the first two chapters. We have seen that preservation is not the goal of life as will to power. We also saw that any organism dominated by this drive is debilitated since the life affirming instincts are undermined. Without the affects of the ascending instincts exhaustion sets in to the point where death is the goal. Nietzsche's interpretation of the history of the West is a physiological portrait of the advance of cultural decadence. A degenerate instinct of preservation in alliance with the weakest instincts, undermined the cultural strength of the Greeks. It is this same drive through which the poisonous affects of Christian *ressentiment* and spread into the Western cultural organism.

Recurrence is meant to counteract the affect of the degenerate instinct of preservation dominating the Western cultural organism. It is the expression of the *preservation* of the individual's existence down to the minutest detail for eternity. The doctrine naturally appeals to the perspective of the instinct of preservation in so far as it is guaranteed unto eternity. This doctrine, however, though not destructive to this instinct, is radically opposed to the deceptions it has fostered. That is to say it has "spiritualized" in such a way as "to preserve all that was sick." (VI²,B,62) In this it has turned "man into a *sublime miscarriage*." (VI²,B,62) Recurrence appeals to the *natural* function of this instinct but the deceptions, i.e., "Truths," that deny the instincts of life are undermined and revealed as no longer valid.

Since preservation has dominated the cultural organism for so long, the possibility of growth has been virtually suspended. Growth is only possible when the organism

is dominated by the ascending instincts of life. But for Nietzsche, the passion to destroy which marks the active nihilist reveals a tremendous source of power. This power is the very passion for destruction that becomes manifest when the "Truths" of modernity have finally devaluated themselves. Now once again a great "time of corruption" (V²,GS, 23) occurs wherein all the old virtues are scorned. In short the old order of rank is falling apart and all the drives in the organism make their bid for power. This is the physiological reversal Recurrence is meant to bring about.

In healthy antiquity, the times "of corruption" (V²,GS,23) were those wherein the old values of a warlike aristocracy were caving in. Recurrence is meant to undermine the values of the sick and decadent which have come to prevail in the West. It reveals these values as meaningless while *preserving* the culture within a vision of becoming as the law of all life. If it is *believed*, the virtues of preservation of the sick become pointless since one is condemned to the cycles of Recurrence "escape is impossible." (MXIX,1058) Now the instinct of preservation is rendered almost superfluous. Yet as will to power, it is manifest in the *affirmation of itself* unto eternity. Thus Recurrence by no means destroys this instinct of preservation. The doctrine is meant to be irresistible to the totally self-centered perspective of self-preservation in the form of a guarantee of its eternal *power*.

With this, the negative energy of hatred and destruction exploited for so long by the instinct of preservation can no longer find an outlet in fictions antagonistic to life. These must now be radically altered toward the affirmation of life as becoming. But this is precisely what this drive cannot do. It seeks stability, this is its perspective. At first we would think that the power of negation it has exploited for the preservation of the sick can be utilized toward their Recurrence unto eternity. But the fic-

tions required for this have been rendered invalid by the very idea of Recurrence which negates the fiction of that "other world" so typical of decadence. Here the power of the decadent instincts turns against them. The instinct of preservation around which they rallied, and with which they allied to combat the instincts of life, now has to allow this power new forms of expression. Forms of expression which must be deceptions favorable to it first and foremost.

Since the best interest of the perspective of preservation now resides in the *Recurrence* of its power, the deceptions appropriate to Recurrence are essential. Its own perspective is completely static. As "the first instinct of spirituality," (VI³, T:IX,2) it provides the initial deception upon which the other instincts can determine the fictions appropriate to themselves. The cumulative power of the decadent instincts led to a "spiritualization" of the world which negated life in this world. But, in that Recurrence is an affirmation of life in *this* world, only life-affirming instincts have the perspective appropriate to it. The weakest and most decadent instincts of a culture are not capable of affirming what is now in the best interest of the instinct of preservation. Only the most dangerous instincts, those most willing to sacrifice everything and risk destruction of the whole culture are capable of Recurrence. Just as the instinct of preservation exploited the power of decadence to maintain its perspective, it now is compelled strictly out of self-interest to ally itself with the most dangerous drives once again. This, of course, means that it will no longer dominate but in so far as it is seduced into an eternal guarantee of its power, it is seduced into life. And with this the old order of rank within the organism crumbles and the *power* of negation is dispersed throughout. Now the old instincts of life have access to a power which precisely they are most adept at exploiting--that of destruction.

Naturally, this physiological revaluation is only possible if Recurrence is believed. Aside from this problem, Nietzsche probably had something like this revaluation in mind as a function of Recurrence. He was concerned with establishing a new order of rank as the foundation for the culture of the future. But the order of rank of the drives of a culture are represented by that of the individuals which compose it. As we have seen, each individual "transports the order of which he is the physiological representative into his relations with other human beings and things." (VI³,7:VII,2) Presumably, if this new order of rank was going to be established, it would first have to be manifest in the individuals within it. Hence some kind of physiological revaluation was necessary because the decadent type which Nietzsche found contemporary was hardly the one he had in mind for this new order.

Recurrence was to serve as the myth through which human material would be "sifted" for its strongest specimens. The physiological revaluation suggested above showed how the most dangerous and warlike drives get access to an extraordinary destructive power. The active nihilists are the physiological representatives of these extremely dangerous drives within the cultural organism. Once the deceptions allowing belief in Recurrence become necessary, "a violent force of destruction--as active nihilism" (MXVIII,23) emerges. Nietzsche says Recurrence functions "as a selective principle, in the service of strength (and barbarism!!)." (MXIX,1058) Why barbarism? Because Nietzsche never abandoned the idea "*that the destiny of humanity depends upon the attainment of its highest type.*" (MXIX,987) However, the "highest type" is the product of a genuine culture. And every such culture "can grow up only out of terrible and violent beginnings." (MXIX,868) In short, here we find "barbarians in every terrible sense of the word." (VI²,8,257)

The question now is; how does Recurrence serve as a life-affirming faith for these neo-barbarians? In asking this question we move from the destructive to the creative function of Recurrence. If it is *believed*, the first creative element to be realized is the establishment of an order of rank among these nihilists. And this is parallel to that initiated in the physiological revaluation described above. Initially "they will experience the belief in eternal recurrence as a curse, struck by which one no longer shrinks from any action...to extinguish everything that is...meaningless." (MXVIII,55) These individuals delight in destruction and in particular that of whatever is even remotely characteristic of the old morality. Nietzsche is quite serious in seeing them as "a violent force of destruction" (MXVIII,23) feeding on a hatred of everything cherished for the last two millennia. All they have in common is their hatred and the "blind rage at the insight that everything has been for eternities—even this moment of nihilism and lust for destruction." (MXVIII,55)

We should pause here just long enough to note that there is something familiar about these nihilists. They remind us of "the Greeks, the most humane men of ancient times" who possessed that "tigerish lust to annihilate... throughout their whole history and mythology."¹⁴⁴ Again recall that genuine cultures "can grow up only out of terrible and violent beginnings." (MXIX,868) This has been the path through which "every higher culture on earth has so far begun." (VI²B,257) And just as the barbarians of antiquity originally established an order of rank through the ability to inspire terror, Recurrence has the same effect. The new "children of Night"¹⁴⁵ may be the harbingers of a "period of catastrophe" (MXVIII,56) and impending dark ages, but "the value of such a crisis [is] that it purifies." (MXVIII,55)¹⁴⁶ We should not be surprised by what Nietzsche means by this purification. He explains: "it pushes together

related elements to perish of each other,...it assigns common tasks to men who have opposite ways of thinking." (MXVIII,55) In short, it "brings to light the weaker and less secure among them and thus promotes an *order of rank* according to strength." (MXVIII,55)¹⁴⁷

We will not repeat the contents of chapter two concerning the barbaric origins of cultures. But in so far as Recurrence is meant to engender the physiological foundation of a new culture, we are not surprised at how a dark age of barbarism is a precondition. Predictably, here we find the fundamental foundation for the physiological dynamics of culture. And this is what belief in Recurrence is meant to effect; once again a ruthlessly violent type emerges and, through terror, a rudimentary order of rank is established. Those most capable of terror and violence naturally stand in the higher ranks. Again the attraction to "everything underlying existence that is frightful, evil, a riddle, destructive, fatal" (III¹,BT:S,4) emerges. Again cruelty, the delight in "making suffer," becomes "an enchantment of the first order." (VI²,G:II,7) Those capable of enduring great pain as well as gladly inflicting it are *distinguished* above others. (V¹,D,30) This "distinction" is the mark of those who will enslave and exploit the weak to their own ends. Among the modern "children of Night"¹⁴⁸ those "who command are recognized as those who command, those who obey as those who obey. Of course, outside every existing social order." (MXVIII,55)

But why should this primitive order of rank even hold together? After all, we are speaking of individuals who have a hatred of the utter futility of life within Recurrence. The only sign of rank among them is the extent to which they will go in cruelty and destruction. They have nothing to lose not even their lives since Recurrence guarantees life no matter what. But precisely this guarantee which is most horrible is, at the same time, most inspiring.

Horrible to the extent that one returns eternally as a slave and inspiring in that one *must* take oneself in hand at each moment to maintain a position of power. One becomes responsible for oneself unto eternity. One need not be concerned with "self-preservation," that is guaranteed through faith in Recurrence. One must *now create* oneself unto eternity.

Once again, as we saw with the origins of the Greek and Hebrew cultures, this is a world of smoldering violence. One cannot help but imagine it to be something like that depicted in futuristic novels and films populated by brutal and ruthlessly violent factions constantly at each other's throats. Be that as it may, violence and cruelty permeate this dark age. But just as this was only half the story in the creation of the Greek and Hebrew cultures, the other half, the "spiritualization of cruelty," (VI²,B,229) will also be found. This "spiritualization" will be quite different from that exhibited by the Greeks and Hebrews. And this for the reason that unlike them, the barbarians of the future will realize their "spiritual" capacity from within the abyss of nihilism.

The Greeks and Hebrews could stare into the vortex of becoming but only with eyes dazzled by the morning of the world. They always managed to shield themselves from a vision of existence as hopelessly absurd. But for the neo-barbarians of the future, such a vision constitutes their "spiritual" point of departure. When we looked at the power of Greek "spirituality" we saw its intimacy with the experience of cruelty and horror. Among them, it was the strongest who had the spiritual capacity to create the deceptions necessary for enduring cruelty and suffering. In short they created the values necessary to the survival of the culture. Finally, we saw their art of tragedy as a deception essential to surviving the terrible idea that an existence devoted to victory and war might be devoid of meaning.

The "spiritualizations" with which the Greeks kept horror and the suffering of horror at bay ultimately allowed them to affirm the dark faces of life. In this they not only "preserved" themselves, but grew in power as a culture. But "for the generation that is now coming up," (VI²,B,55) Nietzsche saw a kind of horror beyond that experienced by the Greeks. For, unlike the Greeks whose "attitude towards life is naive,"¹⁶⁷ nihilism has revealed that the "Truths" essential to the preservation and growth of the ancient cultures were "fabricated solely from psychological needs." (MXVIII,12) Here is a source of suffering never experienced by the Greeks or Hebrews. Could the Greeks of the tragic age or the Hebrews in their most powerful epoch accept the art of tragedy or Yaweh as mere self-deceptions? Could they have agreed that these are the lies they tell themselves in order to endure the fact that they are as significant as the smallest cloud in the sky?

If such a thing had taken place among the Greeks and Hebrews, their cultures would never have seen the light of day. However, the barbarians who form the order of rank for the culture of the future are confronted with the necessity of deception as a condition of life. In this situation, that "lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence." (MXIX,853) Thus it is no longer a case of affirming life's inherent cruelty and destruction. It is now essential to say "yes" to how all we create as means to affirming life as such are, at bottom, "*anthropomorphic illusions.*"¹⁷⁰ This is the meaning of our saying above that the "spiritual" strength of future culture will be realized within the abyss of nihilism. The physiological upheaval of the meaninglessness of the old "spiritual" paradigm and the hatred with which it is annihilated, is permeated with nihilistic insight. Now one sees with a terrifying lucidity that "lies

are necessary in order to live" (MXIX,853) and now "[o]ne must even *will illusion*."¹⁷¹

Cruelty and suffering are inherent to the formation of any culture and simultaneous to this is the "spiritualization" of these. For Nietzsche, the suffering and cruelty "reserved for the generation that is now coming" (VI²,B,55) is beyond that of former epochs. It must take sides against everything within itself that seeks to undermine the lucidity of nihilism. It is a generation scorched by a passionate desire for "Truth" while having to carve out of itself anything that would take such "Truths" seriously. In short it finds itself having to create "Truth" while steadfastly holding that "there is no 'truth.'" (MXIX,616)

It must be remembered that "all the enhancements of man so far" are the result of the "discipline of suffering, of *great suffering*." (VI²,B,225) Within the furnace of nihilism Nietzsche saw the possibility of cultivating a strength which would forge out a new "spirituality." That is, a vision which no longer recoils from the circle of becoming but, somehow, allows one to embrace it as something deserving love and reverence. But the path leading out of neo-barbarism to the culture wherein one craves "*nothing more fervently than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal*" (V²,GS,341) is not travelled overnight.

The physiological transformation necessary for such a culture is embodied in the idea of the Overman. He is the individual capable of uniting within himself the dilemma inherent to nihilism. That is, he would find, perhaps as something holy, precisely what his barbarian ancestors found hideous; that destruction is essential to creation. Nihilism, though an event marking the death of all "Truth," is also the confrontation with the law of life as overcoming. The experience of nihilism is the revelation of how life requires deception; that is, the *creation* of "Truths" allowing for preservation and growth. But in so far as one is con-

scious of this function of life, the seeds of *destruction* are contained within any "Truth."

The inherited decadence of the Overman's primitive ancestors makes this essential feature of life a thing of horror. Their inherited antagonism to life naturally renders the law of life repulsive. But the Overman would find this law within himself as something he *instinctively affirms*. Thus "in order to shape the man of the future," then "the annihilation of millions of failures" (MXIX,964) must come about. "Not 'mankind' but *overman* is the goal!" (MXIX,1001) The process of sifting and weeding out the sick inherent to Recurrence is the eradication of what has gone by the name of "human." The human is for Nietzsche simply not equal to the task of affirming the law of all life. Confronted with the task of creating in the face of the necessity for the destruction of all that is created Nietzsche says, "Nobody has yet ever had such strength." (V²,GS,285)

The "maximum of relative strength as a violent force of destruction--as active nihilism" (MXVIII,23) is only the most primitive and fledgling beginning of the task to bring about the Overman. Thus in regard to Recurrence: "Let us guard against teaching such a doctrine like a religion that springs up suddenly! It must enter slowly.... The mightiest thought requires many thousands of years."¹⁷² Thus Recurrence is the doctrine which is meant to cultivate man from the human to the superhuman over a span of thousands of years. Nietzsche's descriptions of the Overman take on prophetic dimensions. And this is appropriate since Recurrence, as the doctrine essential to the possibility of the Overman, is itself referred to as "a prophesy." (MXIX, 1057)

C. The Redeemer

Nietzsche expresses doubt concerning how the ancestors of the Overman would "even think of eternal recur-

rence." (MXVIII,55) In regard to their progeny, far into the future, Nietzsche says, "my metaphor for this type is, as one knows, the word 'overman.'" (MXIX,866) The name "overman" is an appellation for a type of man Nietzsche characterized in multiple ways. We will not entertain them all but will, rather, concentrate on one giving us the widest scope. In, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, we find the following:

...some day, in a stronger age than this decaying, self-doubting present, he must yet come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit whose compelling strength will not let him rest in any aloofness or any beyond, whose isolation is misunderstood by the people as if it were *flight* from reality--while it is only his absorption, immersion, penetration *into* reality, so that, when he one day emerges again into the light, he may bring home the *redemption* of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the hitherto reigning ideal has laid upon it. This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism; this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this Anti-christ and anti-nihilist; this victor over God and nothingness--*he must come one day.* (VI²,G:II,24)

Thousands of years ago, man, a form of life as will to power emerged on the face of the earth. In him there was "fragment, excess, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos." (VI²,B,225) But there was "also creator, formgiver, hammer hardness, spectator divinity, and seventh day." (VI²,B,225) Thus, as Nietzsche says, in man "*creature* and *creator* are united." (VI²,B,225) His instincts, united as they were with the law of life, gradually found expression in a multiplicity of types. Not only the warrior but the highest "spiritual" types saw the light of day and in this we saw how, for Nietzsche "the highest types hitherto [e.g., the Greeks] were reared." (MXIX,979)¹⁷³ But when the experiment of life manifest in their culture was on the verge of transformation, "the sole statue in which we might have recognized the...purpose of that great creative preparatory exercise" (IV²,HH:I,261) was smashed.

Then the lesser powers of that culture came forward in the guise of Socrates whose influence "spread over posterity like a shadow...growing in the evening sun." (III²,B7,15) His "spiritual" power resided in that of decadence and, combined with the "spiritual" power of *ressentiment*, so profoundly exploited by Christianity, our age is the physiological heir of an ancient hatred of life. We know the story. We have looked at his clinical standpoint and its application in his diagnosis of that sickness of the age he called nihilism. Our physician spoke of Recurrence as a kind of vaccine through which this physiological degeneration might be reversed. The effect of the medicine "requires many thousands of years"¹⁷⁴ before the physiological reversal to health shall be realized. This reversal will be manifest in the type of man whose nature Nietzsche expresses with "my metaphor...`overman.`" (MXIX,866)

In the description of the Overman above, he is immersed in reality as creator, Anti-christ, antinihilist and liberator. But dominating these characteristics, is that of "the *redeeming man*." (VI²,G:II,24) The highest, healthiest, most powerful culture which ever existed on earth strove but failed to realize transformation. This failure, united with the disease of Christianity, has led man further and further astray from the goal of life. The Overman will redeem and thereby justify this whole tragedy. How so? This can be described if we recall a basic feature of the clinical standpoint, which is that the "will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it." (MXIX,656) And we have seen that sickness serves the role of resistance very well. All healthy organisms require the *threat* of sickness as a means to health in so far as it is called upon to draw on whatever resources of strength it has to fight and exploit sickness to its advantage.

Nihilism is an illness of profound dimensions and it is certain that as far as Nietzsche was concerned, constituted the greatest threat to the health of culture. Recurrence forces the organism to come to terms and, as we said, forces it into the furnace of nihilism. Here the organism confronts its illness. Given the magnitude of the disease, the process of convalescence is subject to vast stretches of time. The hoped for result of which would be, "a stronger species." (MXIX,866) The Overman stands at the pinnacle of this strength as the heir to the strength cultivated over thousands of years in the battle against nihilism. In this, he constitutes not only the redemption from the illness of nihilism, he even *justifies* the necessity of nihilism in the first place.

In him, life as will to power is affirmed as the creation made possible through precisely what all creation presupposes--*destruction*. "And life itself told me this secret: 'Behold,' it said, 'I am that *which must overcome itself again and again.*'" (VI¹,Z:II,12) Now the terrible "'in vain'" (MXVIII,55) of everything reminiscent of the "human" is overcome. The horrible truth of nihilism and Recurrence as a confrontation with the hopelessness of any other worldly justification of existence is overcome. The Overman is the name for *victory* over nihilism and every moment in the history of mankind which made nihilism the consequence of "everything men have heretofore respected and loved."¹⁷⁹ The "human" is appalled at the void into which he is catapulted with the collapse of his other worldly existential justification. The Overman finds precisely *this* a source of inspiration. For Nietzsche, this kind of health is something the like of which has never existed on earth. It is the strength to create while happily anticipating the destruction of all that is created and knowing that it will *return*.

The "*redemption* of this reality" is only possible for the Overman. He constitutes an *instinctive* affirmation of the innocence of all life, standing in perfect accord therein. What will "culture" mean to him? What powers of "spirit," that is, deceptions will be necessary for him? What orders of rank will he construct in accord with the innocence of all life? And, above all, what will life as will to power *threaten him* with as the means to overcoming itself in him? These are the questions reserved for the philosophical "spirits" of the future. And one really has to wait for the advent of a new species of philosophers, such as have somehow another and converse taste and propensity from those we have known so far--philosophers of the most dangerous 'maybe' in every sense. And in all seriousness: I see such new philosophers coming up. (VI²,B,2)

D. Dionysus

What will serve as the most profound symbol of the innocence of all life as becoming for this "new species of philosophers?" Nietzsche answers this question in saying, "I am a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus." (VI³,E:Preface, 2) What does this "god of darkness" (VI³,E:6) represent to Nietzsche?

...an urge to unity, a reaching out beyond personality, the everyday, society, reality, across the abyss of transitoriness: a passionate overflowing into darker, fuller, more floating states; an ecstatic affirmation of the total character of life as that which remains the same, just as powerful, just as blissful, through all change; a great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness, to recurrence; the feeling of the necessary unity of all creation and destruction. (MXIX,1050)

In short, Dionysus represents the *unity* of all life within the creation and destruction of any of its forms. This is the god intoxicated with overcoming. In him, the "*necessary unity of all creation and destruction*" (MXIX, 1050)¹⁷⁶ as Life is affirmed throughout the eternities of

Recurrence and this unity is *never* denied. His significance to the philosophers of the future resides in how he is destroyed for the sake of life. The philosophers who will emerge within and after the dark ages Nietzsche envisioned will have to acknowledge this element of life as becoming. They must indeed affirm the necessity of their own destruction for the sake of the generations to come and know that, like Dionysus, they "will be eternally reborn and return again from destruction." (MXIX,1052) In this they stand in unity with the law of life in affirming that the Overman "*shall be the meaning of the earth.*" (VI¹,Z:Prologue,3)

As long as the philosophers continually take sides against whatever is degenerate and remain steadfast in their determination to destroy it, they will maintain a "*moral code for physicians.*" (VI³,T:X,36) Here is the example of how destruction is essential to creation. And in this there can be no sympathy "for the ill-constituted and weak." (VI³,A,2) Pity in this case is symptomatic of the disease one attempts to cure. Symptomatic, that is, of Christianity which did all in its power to *preserve* precisely the sick. The battle against pitying what must be destroyed will be fought in the hearts and minds of the philosophers of the future. They are confronted with the task of not perishing "of the suffering one creates." (MXIX,964)

Thus Dionysus stands in marked contrast to the "god on the cross." (MXIX,1052) The former "*redeems the contradictions and questionable aspects of existence,*" (MXIX,1052) the latter constitutes an objection to it "as a formula for its condemnation." (MXIX,1052) As Nietzsche puts it: Dionysus versus the 'crucified': there you have the anti-thesis. It is *not* a difference in regard to their martyrdom --it is a difference in the meaning of it.... The god on the cross is a curse on life, a signpost to seek redemption from life; Dionysus cut to pieces is a *promise* of life: it will be eternally reborn and return again from destruction. (MXIX,1052)

For the philosophers of the future, Dionysus is the promise of all things past and future, redeemed in the innocence of the task of creating.

With these observations we bring this chapter to a close. In our concluding remarks we will consider what the "cure" of Recurrence tells us about our physician and consider a critical appraisal of his clinical standpoint.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER V

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Tragedy of Faust*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 109. The German text is, *Goethe, Werke*. Hamburger Ausgabe, III, p. 26.
2. Letter to Franz Overbeck, Oct. 18, 1888. *BKG*. III³, p. 453 / *SPL*. p. 126.
3. This is from a discarded draft for section 3 of "Why I Write Such Good Books" in, *Ecce Homo. Friedrich Nietzsche's Werke des Zusammenbruchs*, ed. Eric F. Podach (Heidelberg: Wolfgang Rothe, 1961), pp. 215f.
4. Erich Heller, "Nietzsche's Terrors: Time and the Inarticulate". From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 180.
5. *MVI*, PAC, p. 68 / *PT*, p. 72.
6. *MVII*, PH, p. 26 / *PT*, p. 115.
7. Letter to his mother, around July 9, 1881. *BKG*. III⁴, p. 103. The translation is from, *Nietzsche: Unpublished Letters*, ed. and trans. Karl F. Leidecker (London: Peter Owen Ltd., 1960), p. 83.
8. There is no doubt that Nietzsche was an atheist. But by now it should be clear that his attack on Christianity is not necessarily indicative of his attitude toward religion. Discourse on religion, morality, ethics--in short, values--is, for Nietzsche, a waste of time unless it is within the context of their rank on the scale of life. He held the religions of the pre-Christian Hebrew and Greek cultures in very high esteem. His condemnation of Christianity rests essentially on its being *symptomatic of physiological decadence* and hence antagonistic to life. Indeed, Nietzsche laments that, thanks to Christianity, European culture has "failed to create a God! Almost two millennia and not a single new God!" (*VI²,A,19*)
9. See note 10 below.
10. Nietzsche's perceptions of Plato, i.e., his aristocratic naivety, (*VI²,B,191*) his capacity to found a new religion, (*V²,GS,149*) his "spiritual" tyranny, (*IV²,HH:I,261*) etc., are striking in many ways. But to pursue them would, for the most part, only refine points already made. But it is worth

making a few observations here given what follows below.

With Plato philosophy is transformed into a desire for a world of the "good" as the "real" world from which *this* world and *this* life become merely apparent. "Result: this world is good for nothing, it is not the 'real world.'" (MXVIII,461) In the attempt to live within the "real world," we find an expression of exhaustion and a desire for death in the face of an incapacity to endure the suffering that life requires. This death-wish lies in the heart of what Nietzsche called "metaphysics." It is Socrates' suicide transformed into a moral imperative.

According to Nietzsche,

Plato said: The more 'Idea,' the more being. He reversed the concept 'reality' and said: 'What you take for real is an error, and the nearer we approach the 'Idea,' the nearer we approach 'truth.'" (MXIX,572)

Thus Plato drifted into his "intelligible world" (MXVIII, 436) as the "real world" in *opposition* to this one of mere "appearance." Metaphysics is "the greatest seduction to make oneself abstract: i.e., to detach oneself." (MXVIII,428) This "mischief...reached its climax in Plato" (MXVIII,429) who, "provided the example of the most complete severance of the instincts from the past. He is profound, passionate in everything anti-Hellenic." (MXVIII,435)

In this Plato was one of "the most powerful promoters of decadence." (MXVIII,435) When he opted for his "intelligible world" (MXVIII,436) as the "good" and "real world," as a transcendent reality only revealed by means of reason, Socrates' negation of *this* world and desire to leave this world behind takes on a sublime expression.

These observations may give the impression that Plato is Nietzsche's whipping-boy: this is false. On the contrary he sees Plato as having naively "honored and deified" (MXVIII,431) rationality while Socrates had already seen through it. In this we get an inkling of the malice Nietzsche attributed to Socrates in taking advantage of the enthusiasm and devotion of his disciple.

Plato seems to be the one who in all sincerity took up reason as the path to truth. As we said, Nietzsche held that Socrates "had seen through the irrational element in moral judgments." (VI²,B,191) That is, Socrates saw that there is no rational justification for existence or morality while Plato, "more innocent...and lacking the craftiness of the plebeian," (VI²,B,191) believed in such a justification. In this light Nietzsche says there

is something in the morality of Plato that does not really belong to Plato...namely, the Socratism for which he was really too noble.... Plato did everything he could in order to read something refined and noble into the propo-

sition of his teacher. (VI²,B,190)

Herein lies the significance of Nietzsche's observation that Plato "was seduced by the roturier Socrates." (MXVIII, 435) When Plato took up the proposition that "reason=virtue=happiness," (MXVIII,433) he did not see it as an inherent desire for revenge rooted in weariness and a desire for death. On the contrary, he embraced it "with all the ardent devotion of his enthusiastic soul." (III¹,BT,13) In taking his life, Socrates takes revenge by pronouncing "his ultimate judgement" (V²,GS,340) against life. "This was the real falseness of that great ironic, so rich in secrets." (VI²,B, 191) But through Plato the death-wish and revenge of Socrates is promoted and, as metaphysics, "has spread over posterity like a shadow that keeps growing in the evening sun." (III¹,BT,14)

Nietzsche refers to Plato as "Europe's greatest misfortune," (BKG. III², p. 9 / SPL. p. 106) but this must be seen in two ways. The first is how Plato enables Christianity to "make itself possible philosophically." (MXVIII,195) Through him Christianity takes on "Greek refinement in word and form." (MXVIII,195) The transcendent world of the "Good" affirmed by Plato becomes the "other-worldly" God of Christianity and in this Plato is a "great viaduct of corruption." (MXVIII,202) The second way Plato must be understood as "Europe's greatest misfortune" lies in how Nietzsche saw him as "the most beautiful growth of antiquity" (VI²,B:Preface) having "the greatest strength any philosopher so far has had at his disposal." (VI²,B,191) Nietzsche laments that such philosophical power (evidenced in Plato's influence on Western philosophy), was squandered on the Socratic program and wonders "whether Plato, if he had stayed free of the Socratic spell, might not have found an even higher type of the philosophical man, now lost to us forever." (IV²,HH:I,261) The sickness Nietzsche identified in Plato's thought has its origins in Socrates, hence "as a physician one might ask: How could...Plato...contract such a disease?" (VI²,B:Preface) Nietzsche goes on to answer this question with rhetorical ones: "Did the wicked Socrates corrupt him after all? Could Socrates have been a corrupter of youth after all? And did he deserve his hemlock?" (VI²,B: Preface)

11.MVI, SSW, p.104 / PT, p. 133.

12.Ibid.

13.Letter to Jakob Burckhardt, Sept. 22, 1886. BKG. III², p. 254 / SPL. p. 96.

14.Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. BKG. III², p. 248 / SPL. p. 106.

15. Nietzsche recognizes Socrates as a physician battling sickness within the Greek culture. His own war on decadence is an echo of how he understood the "Socratic" task. From Nietzsche's standpoint the history of Western philosophy as metaphysics is infected with the "Socratic equation reason= virtue=happiness." (VI²,7:III,10) To the extent that this tradition has swallowed "this absurdity of a doctrine of identity," (MXVIII,432) "Socrates was a misunderstanding: *the entire morality of improvement, the Christian included, has been a misunderstanding.*" (VI²,7:III,11) But in so far as Nietzsche takes up the task of fighting decadence and nihilism within Western culture, he took up the spirit of the Socratic project with the same enthusiasm he recognized in Plato. (III¹,87,13)

16. MIV, PTA, p. 160, (2).

17. "Plato, more innocent in such matters," (VI²,8,191) did not see this clue. On the contrary, the "*dying Socrates* became the new ideal, never seen before, of noble Greek youths...above all...Plato, prostrated himself before this image with all the ardent devotion of his enthusiastic soul." (III¹,87,13) We are left to conclude that Nietzsche believed he understood Socrates better than Plato at least in so far as Nietzsche held he had more in common with Socrates since they were both decadents. He says that in decadence Socrates could say to his fellow Athenians: "'Don't dissemble in front of me! Here--we are equal.'" (VI²,8,212) One wonders how many times Nietzsche said the same thing in his heart to Socrates, not to mention his contemporaries.

18. See Gadamer's essay, "The Drama of Zarathustra," trans. Zygmunt Adamczewski, in *The Great Year Of Zarathustra (1881-1981)*. Ed. David Goicoechea, (Lanham: University press of America, 1983), p. 343. Also, Gadamer's, *Truth and Method*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1982), p. 488.

19. It is necessarily opposed to an order of rank determined by the law of life because, as we saw in the fourth chapter, it is the expression of the *ressentiment* typical of the instincts of decadence.

20. MVI, SSW, p. 102 / PT, p. 131.

21. The influence of Nietzsche on the work of Thomas Mann is well known and one cannot help wondering if the physiology of inherited decadence Nietzsche describes is utilized in, for example, *The Buddenbrooks: Decline of a Family*.

As regards the negative affects of the instinct of preservation, Hans Castorp, the protagonist of *The Magic Mountain*, reminds us of the spiral into exhaustion and sickness. In reference to Castorp, Mann speaks of how the "unfa-

avourable influence exerted upon a man's personal life by the times in which he lives may even extend to his physical organism." The age Mann has in mind here is the dawn of the twentieth century; "an age that affords no satisfying answer to the eternal question of 'Why?' 'To what end?'" As the product of such an age, Hans Castorp "must be considered mediocre," and this in the physical and spiritual sense. Physically, Hans is neither healthy nor ill but somewhere in between. He is "a little anaemic," but "notwithstanding his thin-bloodedness...[he] clung to the grosser pleasures of life as a greedy suckling to its mother's breast." He is in a state of hiatus typical of the self-preservative type. Physical exertion "was something to which he was quite definitely disinclined." He preferred the somnolence and stupor of a medically prescribed "glass of porter" he found "soothing to his spirits and encouraging to a propensity of his...sitting staring into space, with his jaw dropped and his thoughts fixed on just nothing at all." Mann develops this state of affairs within the spiritual dimension of his protagonist "who prolonged a situation he was used to, in which no definite decisions had to be taken, and in which he had further time to think matters over and decide what he really wanted to do, which he was far from knowing."

Eventually, Hans goes to a health spa where he rapidly "settles in" to the routine of the "cure." Throughout the novel, Mann weaves the physical inferiority of Hans with that of his spiritual life. The more Hans devotes himself to regaining his health, the more it remains the same or deteriorates along with his spiritual torpor and incapacity to make a commitment to anything at all. Indeed, his only commitment is to "getting better," but Mann allows us to see this as a self-deception in so far as his "resolve" is a means to "further time to think matters over and decide what he really wanted to do." Hans persevered in his commitment for seven years during which time he ate and slept very well.

All the passages quoted above are from:
Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter,
(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), pp. 29-34.

22. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. *BKG*.
III², p. 248 / *SPL*. p. 106.

23. *WKG*, III², HC, p. 279 / *PN*. p. 35.

24. *WKG*, III², HC, p. 279 / *PN*. p. 34.

25. *WKG*, III², HC, p. 279 / *PN*. p. 334-35.

26. It is important to note here that Nietzsche did not think we are *absolutely* incapable of creating the fictions essential to faith in the future. And, as we will see, the project of a "revaluation of all values" hinges upon a slim possibility.

27. For purposes of clarity, we will use the term "Truth" (in quotation marks) in reference to the decadent fictions inherent to Greek metaphysics and Christianity. In using the term "truth" (in italics and without quotation marks), we are referring to that Nietzsche embraced as will to power and hence the absurd as described above.

28. This casts some light on Nietzsche's antagonism to "pity." Life as will to power has no pity on the weak and helpless. Consequently, a warrior class which revered and identified with the violence inherent to life as "good" would find the idea of pity alien. To have pity on the weak and helpless would indicate a lack of strength before a brutal fact of life, i.e., that one *must* be strong or be destroyed. This, as we saw, is the code of a warrior elite which echoes a natural order of rank determined by life as will to power. It is in this sense that Nietzsche sees pity as a life-denying conception only appropriate to slave morality.

29. Even the strongest cultures which serve as the foundation for Western culture could not affirm life in the face of the absurd. As we will see, Nietzsche envisioned a future for Western culture which could do precisely this.

30. Greek metaphysics, embodied in the figure of Socrates, marked the beginning of "the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of logic, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it." (III¹, 87, 15)

Socrates saw the irrational within himself and in the world. (VI², B, 191) But as a *decadent* he opts for the "Real" and "True" world of reason and thereby the moral imperative to affirm that "this world, in which we live, is an error." (MXIX, 585) Here was Socrates' "expedient, his cure, his personal art of self-preservation." (VI³, 7:III, 9) He became "master of himself" (VI³, 7:III, 9) through inferring "the essential perversity and reprehensibility of what exists." (III¹, 87, 13) In short, the fictions of reason, determined by the instinct of preservation, protected (at least for a while) "this shrewdest of all self-deceivers" (VI³, 7:III, 12) from the *truth* that existence is absurd. In Greek metaphysics "reason" and "truth" are equivocal terms and failure to heed the voice of reason is to reject "virtue." At bottom, Nietzsche sees this "virtue" to consist in saying, "this world of ours ought not to exist." (MXIX, 585)

31. With Christianity we find the morality of *ressentiment* which, as we saw, is the "spirit's" "creative deed" (VI²,G:I,10) of saying no to life on earth. The only way the man of *ressentiment* endures life is through denying his own weakness and cowardice. His secret desire for self-destruction is turned "outward" (VI²,G:I,10) against the world and those not harassed by self-hate.

The fiction of an "imaginary revenge" (VI²,G:I,10) is realized by judging as "evil" this world and everything well-constituted, i.e., healthy, while the condition of weakness and sickness is considered "good" and "holy." Of course this reversal is not acknowledged, since this is prohibited by an instinct of preservation dissuading such scrutiny. This drive constantly channels self-hate outward to the world through the maintenance of the *illusion* of holiness and goodness. The man of *ressentiment* believes in truth; that is, he is perfectly willing to acknowledge his weakness, ugliness and folly. But in so doing derives his revenge through feeling superior to the strong, beautiful and wise in the knowledge that he is at a *higher rank* in the eyes of God.

32. See note 27 above.

33. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. *BKG*. III^o, p. 248 / *SPL*. p. 106.

34. My italics.

35. Erich Heller, "The Importance of Nietzsche." From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 6.

36. "Improvement" understood here as making man "virtuous." The belief that the "Truth" is the path to happiness, wisdom, and salvation.

37. That is, man sees how from the standpoint of life as will to power, he is not an end in himself; he is merely another facet of the experiment of life as power.

38. *MIV*, PTA, p. 158, (1).

39. *Ibid*.

40. In this it is significant that Nietzsche says of the pre-Socratics: "Their attitude towards life is *naive*." (*MIV*, p. 243 / *PT*. p. 152) It seems that ultimately, the possibility for faith in life exhibited in pre-Socratic thought and culture rested on a certain naivety. As if it was inconceivable that existence is fundamentally absurd. For them, the fictions they embraced were by no means

"illusions." Yet the promise of power inherent to the fictions upon which a healthy Greek culture flourished, had an intoxicating effect and were, at bottom, irresistible.

41. This is from a discarded draft for section 3 of "Why I Write Such Good Books" in, *Ecce Homo. Friedrich Nietzsche's Werke des Zusammenbruchs*, ed. Eric F. Podach (Heidelberg: Wolfgang Rothe, 1961), pp. 215f.

42. Marianne Cowan, in her "Introduction" to, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1962), p. 17.

43. Erich Heller, "Nietzsche's Terrors: Time and the Inarticulate". From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 180.

44. Letter to Overbeck, Sept. 1882. BKG. III¹, p. 254 / SPL. p. 67.

45. MVII, PH, p. 31 / PT, p. 121.

46. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 44.

47. Hans-Georg Gadamer said "Heidegger may have realized... only later" that Nietzsche was his "true predecessor" in "going contrary to the whole direction of Western metaphysics." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth And Method*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1982), p. 228.

Richard L. Howey indicates other instances of Nietzsche foreshadowing Heidegger in his, *Heidegger and Jaspers on Nietzsche: A Critical Examination of Heidegger's and Jaspers' Interpretations of Nietzsche*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), pp. 189-195.

48. Marianne Cowan, in her "Introduction" to, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1962), p. 3.

49. Howey, p. 32.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

51. Letter to his mother, around July 9, 1881. BKG. III¹, p. 104. The translation is from, *Nietzsche: Unpublished Letters*, ed. and trans. Karl F. Leidecker (London: Peter Owen Ltd., 1960), p. 83.

52. Lev Shestov, "The Good in the Teaching of Tolstoy and Nietzsche: Philosophy and Preaching." *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy And Nietzsche*, trans. Bernard Martin and Spencer Roberts (United States: Ohio University Press, 1969), p. 81.

53. Letter to Dr. Otto Eiser Jan. 1880. BKG. III¹, p. 3. The translation is found in Jaspers' *Nietzsche*, p. 90.

54. Jaspers, p. 90.

55. The significance of Nietzsche's illness is profound and indeed, predisposed him to the themes of sickness, health, and the physiological interpretations he adopted toward almost everything. On the other hand, the importance of ascertaining whether or not Nietzsche was syphilitic, epileptic or otherwise escapes me. Given the prodigious amount of literature dealing with the nature of Nietzsche's illness as well as its influence on his work, the following is by no means an exhaustive list:

P. J. Möbius, *Über das Pathologische bei Nietzsche*. 2nd ed. in Vol. V. of Möbius, *Ausgewählte Werke*. Leipzig, Barth, 1904.

K. Hildebrandt, *Gesundheit und Krankheit in Nietzsche's Leben und Werke*. Berlin, Karger, 1926.

E. F. Podach, *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*. Heidelberg, Kampmann, 1930. Transl. by F. A. Voigt, *The Madness of Nietzsche*, New York, Putnam, 1931.

K. Jaspers, *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*. Berlin and Leipzig, De Gruyter, 1936. Transl. by Charles F. Walraff and Frederick J. Schmitz, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity*. Tuscon, University of Arizona Press, 1965.

W. Lange-Eichbaum, *Nietzsche: Krankheit und Wirkung*. Hamburg, Lettenbauer, 1946.

F. A. Lea, *The Tragic Philosopher: A Study of Friedrich Nietzsche*. New York, Philosophical Library, 1957.

R. J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy*. Kingsport, Kingsport Press Inc., 1965.

W. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. New York, Vintage Books, 1968.

R. L. Howey, *Heidegger And Jaspers On Nietzsche: A Critical Examination of Heidegger's and Jaspers' Interpretations of Nietzsche*. The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1973.

R. Hayman, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life*. New York, Penquin Books, 1982.

56. Jaspers, p. 89.

57. Shestov, p. 81.

58. Letter to Hans von Bülow, Dec. 1882. *BKG.* III¹, p. 290 / *SPL.* p. 69.

59. Nietzsche's experience as a medical orderly exposed him to the administration of various pain-killers. This may have led to his experimentation with "all sorts of medicaments... [including] considerable quantities of chloral hydrate." Jaspers, p. 109. Nietzsche is known to have consulted over thirty physicians and physiologists in his life time (*SPL.*, p. 52f) and is said to have experimented with various combinations of drugs from 1875 on in an attempt to treat himself. (Jaspers, p. 109)

He also became convinced that atmospheric conditions played a significant role in his maladies. In a letter to Franz Overbeck (Sept. 18, 1881) he said:

What months, what a summer I've had! My physical agonies were as many and various as the changes I have seen in the sky. In every cloud there is some form of electric charge which grips me suddenly and reduces me to complete misery. Five times I have called Doctor Death, and yesterday I hoped it was the end--in vain. *BKG.* III¹, p. 128-29 / *SLN.* p. 179.

Again to Overbeck (Feb. 10, 1883) he refers to himself as "the victim of a terrestrial and climatic disturbance, to which Europe is exposed. How can I help having an extra sense organ and a new, terrible source of suffering!" *BKG.* III¹, p. 325 / *SLN.* p. 206.

60. Letter to Peter Gast July 25, 1882. *BKG.* III¹, p. 230 / *SPL.* p. 64.

61. Letter to Franz Overbeck, Aug. 5, 1886. *BKG.* III³, p. 223 / *SPL.* p. 90.

62. Letter to Reinhardt von Sedlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. *BKG.* III³, p. 249 / *SPL.* p. 107.

63. Howey, p. 24.

64. Letter to Franz Overbeck, Mar. 22, 1883. *BKG.* p. 348 / *SPL.* p. 73.

He said this to Overbeck while he was waiting for the publication of Book I of *Zarathustra*. He goes on to mention being "inexpressibly conscious of having bungled and botched my whole creative life." His prodigious creative powers would finally flame out almost six years later after writing: Books II, III, and IV of *Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Book V of *The Gay Science*, *The Genealogy of Morals*, *The Case of Wagner*, *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Antichrist*, *Ecce Homo*,

Nietzsche Contra Wagner, as well as a huge quantity of notes (1883-1888) never meant for publication but subsequently published by his sister under the title, "The Will To Power."

65. Letter to Franz Overbeck, Feb. 10, 1883. BKG. III¹, p. 326 / SLN. p. 206.

66. Howey, p. 26.

67. Ronald Hayman, suggests that Nietzsche did, in a manner of speaking, commit suicide to the extent that he actually chose to go insane. See Hayman's, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life*, (New York: Penquin Books, 1984).

68. MVI, SSW, p. 117 / PT. p. 144.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *Ibid.*

71. Letter to his sister, May 7, 1885. BKG. III², p. 48. My translation.

72. This is reminiscent of Socrates who, according to Nietzsche, "saw *behind* his aristocratic Athenians; he grasped that his case, the idiosyncrasy of his case, was already no longer exceptional." (VI², 7: III, 9) Nietzsche, like Socrates, perceived in himself symptoms of a decline of faith in life which were concealed from his contemporaries.

73. Nietzsche's influence upon philosophy and literature is well known, not to mention the field of psychoanalysis. Freud saw Nietzsche as a precursor of his and Jung tells us he

had the great advantage over both Freud and Adler of not having grown up within the narrow confines of a psychology of the neuroses; rather, I approached from the side of psychiatry, well prepared for modern psychology by Nietzsche. Carl Gustave Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, Vol. VII of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: The Bollingen Foundation, Pantheon Books, Inc., 1953), pp. 115-16.

Nietzsche's influence upon contemporary sociology is given expression in, *Nietzsche's Dance: Resentment, Reciprocity and Resistance in Social Life*, Georg Stauth and Bryan S. Turner New York: Basil Blackwood, 1988.

74. In this vein, and like many others, Richard Howey says that it was his "extraordinary ability to analyze his own personality in depth" which lead Nietzsche "to his penetrat-

ing insights into the psychological and value structures of modern society as manifested in his own life-world." Howey, p. 16.

75. Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 65.

76. Gabriel Marcel is one of many who believe Nietzsche accurately perceived "what is coming." (MXVIII:Preface,2) He spoke of a humanity feeling "betrayed by its own creations, by the exaggerated development of global technology which can only lead to emptiness. And this emptiness, as Nietzsche distinctly saw in the moment of his greatest lucidity, is nihilism." Gabriel Marcel, *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*, trans. Stephen Jolin and Peter McCormick (Evanston: North Western University Press, 1973), pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

Nietzsche was by no means unaware that his philosophy would find very few with "ears listening today." (VI³,A: Preface) "My ideas," he said, "are so indescribably strange and dangerous that only much later (not before 1901) will anybody be ready for them." Letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, May 12, 1887. BKG. III³, p. 70 / SPL. p. 99. This, coming from Nietzsche, is a fairly conservative estimate. Elsewhere he says, "it may yet happen that one day whole millennia will make their most solemn vows in my name...". Letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, May 1884. BKG. III¹, p. 510 / SPL. p. 81.

These statements, with all their pomp, betray Nietzsche's loneliness more than insecurity as to his significance in the history of Western philosophy. I suspect that at times loneliness led him to make pronouncements like the above in an attempt to make his solitude bearable. He said, "a philosophy like mine is like a tomb--it seals one off from the living." Letter to Georg Brandes, Dec. 14, 1887. BKG. III³, p. 207 / SPL. p. 104. His thought rendered him

something of a burrow, something hidden, which you could no longer find even if you were to go out to look for it. But of course no one does. Confidentially, it is not impossible that I am the foremost philosopher of this era, and perhaps even a little more, something decisive and ominous standing between two millennia. One is constantly made to pay for such a singular position--with an ever growing, ever more glacial, ever more piercing seclusion. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12 1888. BKG. III³, p. 248 / SPL. pp.106-107.

One way or the other, I do not think Nietzsche ever felt any serious doubt as to his place in the ranks of the great philosophers of the West. And, given the interest in his thought in the last two or three decades, he was not too far off the mark in saying he wrote for future generations.

77. Camus, p. 66.

78. Howey, p. 32.

79. Camus, p. 66.

80. We do not wish to reduce Nietzsche's philosophy to biography or to the manifestation of certain "psychological dynamics." The very impact of his thought beyond his own age is not explicable solely in terms of his illness, loneliness and the psychological ramifications thereof. Though Nietzsche would be the first to say these factors are inherent to any great philosophy, the fact remains that his is graced with the capacity to excavate the intellectual traditions which precede it and determine the questions of the future.

"What," he asked,

does a philosopher demand of himself first and last? To overcome his time in himself, to become 'timeless.' With what must he therefore engage in the hardest combat? With whatever marks him as a child of his time. (VI³, C: Preface)

Biographical and psychological explanations of Nietzsche's thought may well be at home in describing *why* he sought to "overcome his time in himself," but these are limited in coming to terms with his success in being "simple and honest in thought and life, that is to say untimely, that word understood in the profoundest sense." (III¹, U: S, 2)

81. Letter to Franz Overbeck, Feb. 10, 1883. BKG. III¹, p. 326 / SLN. p. 206.

82. Ill-fated in the sense that this "gospel of the future" (MXVIII: Preface, 4) was never completed in a finished text. There is even some suggestion that it was never actually begun. Nietzsche's joy in writing outlines for works never written has led to some confusion. In a "Preface" (written between Nov. 1887 and March 1888) for, *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*, he refers to this projected work as a "countermovement" (MXVIII: Preface, 4) to nihilism. In the fall of 1888, Nietzsche planned a work comprised of four "books" entitled, "Revaluation Of All Values." Book I he called, "The AntiChrist: Attempt At A Critique Of Christianity"; book II, "The Free Spirit: Critique Of Philosophy As A Nihilistic Movement"; book III, "The Immoralist: Critique Of The Most Fatal Kind Of Ignorance, Morality"; and Book IV, "Dionysus: Philosophy Of Eternal Recurrence". Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, AntiChrist* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), pp. 113-114. (See MXVIII, p. 358) In a sketch for a letter to Overbeck (Feb. 3, 1888) he said "The first draft of my 'Re-

valuation of all Values' is finished." *SLN*. p. 282f. Elsewhere, he refers to *The AntiChrist*, as "the first volume of *Revaluation of all Values*." Letter to Overbeck, Oct. 18, 1888. *BKG*. III³, p. 453 / *SPL*. p. 126. Kaufmann regards *The Antichrist* as "the first and only finished part of the *Revaluation*." Kaufmann, p. 114. Others have said that Nietzsche's "frequently modified plans" during the fall of 1888 "cast doubt on the relationship of... [*The Antichrist*] to a larger project." *SPL*. p. 126f. But, if the plan above, and his correspondence, is any indicator, it seems only book I was written.

83. Letter to Jakob Burckhardt, Sept. 22, 1886. *BKG*. III³, p. 255 / *SPL*. p. 91.

84. See V², GS, 370.

85. Letter to Franz Overbeck, March 24, 1887. *BKG* III³, p. 49 / *SLN*., pp. 264-265.

86. See note 82 above.

87. Letter to Jacob Burckhardt, Sept. 22, 1886. *BKG*. III³, p. 254 / *SPL*. p. 91.

88. Hereafter referred to as "Revaluation."

89. See VI³, C: Epilogue.

90. See *SLN*. p. 282f.

91. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. *BKG*. p. 248 / *SPL*. p. 106.

92. Camus, p. 66.

93. Lev Shestov, p. 82.

94. Erich Heller, "Burckhardt and Nietzsche". From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 51.

95. *Ibid*.

96. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 574.

97. Erich Heller, "Burckhardt and Nietzsche". From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 49.

98. Letter to Jakob Burckhardt, Sept. 22, 1886. *BKG.* III^s, p. 254 / *SPL.* p. 91.

99. Letter to Georg Brandes, May 23, 1888. *BKG.* III^s, p. 318 / *SPL.* p. 118.

100. *MVII*, PH, p. 26 / *PT.* p. 115.

101. In this we are reminded of Albert Camus's statement: "For me the sole datum is the absurd." Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), p. 34. Camus works reveal this datum as a "confrontation and unceasing struggle." (*Ibid.*) Henri Peyre says of Camus: "The thinker to whom he owed most of his early training, and even unto the last, was Nietzsche." Henri Peyre, "Presence of Camus," in *Critical Essays on Albert Camus*, ed. Bettina L. Knapp, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), p. 24. And, in his confrontation with the absurd, "Camus's choice is for Nietzsche's everlasting 'yes.'" (Peyre, p. 27)

102. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. *BKG.* p. 248 / *SPL.* p. 106.

103. See chapter 1, p. 31; chapter 2, p. 87; chapter 3, pp. 101-102; chapter 4, p. 170.

104. Jaspers, p. 151.

105. See chapter three, p. 140.

106. Letter to Franz Overbeck, Feb. 22, 1883. *BKG.* III¹, p. 337 / *SPL.* p. 72.

107. Hereafter referred to simply as "Recurrence."

108. *WKG.* VII¹, p. 139. The translation is from Erich Heller's, "Zarathustra's Three Metamorphoses: Facets of Nietzsche's Intellectual Biography and the Apotheosis of Innocence" in his, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 78.

109. Erich Heller, "Zarathustra's Three Metamorphoses: Facets of Nietzsche's Intellectual Biography and the Apotheosis of Innocence" in his, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 78.

110. Letter to Paul Rée, end of January, 1880. *BKG.* III¹, p. 7 / *SPL.* p. 52.

111. Letter to Peter Gast, August 20, 1880. *BKG.* III¹, p. 37 / *SPL.* pp. 53-54.

112. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1888. *BKG.* III^o, p. 246 / *SPL.* p. 106.
113. Section 4 of Nietzsche's "Preface" written in 1886 for the second edition of *Human, All Too Human*. *WKG.* IV/^o, p. 7. The translation is Erich Heller's in "Zarathustra's Three Metamorphoses: Facets of Nietzsche's Intellectual Biography and the Apotheosis of Innocence" from *The Importance Of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 72.
114. Letter to Georg Brandes, December 2, 1887. *BKG.* III^o, p. 207 / *SPL.* p. 104.
115. Letter to Carl Von Gersdorff, December 20, 1887. *BKG.* III^o, p. 214 / *SPL.* p. 106.
116. Letter to Franz Overbeck, August 5, 1886. *BKG.* III^o, p. 223 / *SLN.* p. 254.
117. Letter to Peter Gast, August 20, 1880. *BKG.* III^o, p. 37 / *SPL.* p. 54.
118. See *SLN.* p. 282f.
119. *WKG.* VII¹, p. 139. The translation is from Erich Heller's, "Zarathustra's Three Metamorphoses: Facets of Nietzsche's Intellectual Biography and the Apotheosis of Innocence" in his, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 78.
120. *Ibid.*
121. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. David Magarshack (London: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 767.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 758.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 765.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 763.
125. Letter to Carl Von Gersdorff, June 28, 1883. *BKG.* III¹, p. 386 / *SPL.* p. 74.
126. Letter to Peter Gast, late August, 1883. *BKG.* III¹, p. 443 / *SPL.* p. 76.
127. Letter to Peter Gast, September 2, 1884. *BKG.* III¹, p. 525 / *SPL.* p. 82.
128. *Ibid.*

129. *Ibid.*

130. See note 82 above.

131. For example, he refers to it as "the triumphant idea ...[through] which all other modes of thought will perish." (MXIX,1053)

132. The idea that "everything recurs" (MXIX,617) is the attempt to undermine the traditional dichotomy between two historically disparate conceptions dividing "pre-Socratic thinking in two halves." [MIV, PTA, p. 189, (9)] This dichotomy is the "metaphysical opposition and struggle between the eternally opposed perspectives of Heraclitus and Parmenides." Howey, p. 87. The unification of these two standpoints resides in how the Being of Becoming is the circularity of everlasting becoming. Thus within Recurrence the Parmenidean "doctrine of Being" [MIV, PTA, p. 189, (9)] is affirmed. On the other hand, since the cycle presupposes all the transformations of power which constitute any of its particular points, Heraclitus' doctrine of becoming is affirmed. In this vein Nietzsche says: "That everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being." (MXIX,617)

Alexander Nehamas points out legitimate suspicions of Recurrence as a cosmological doctrine. Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life As Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 142-154. These hinge on A) the difficulty of finding "clear references to cosmology in Nietzsche's published discussions of the recurrence" (Nehamas, p. 145) and B) the significance of Recurrence does not reside in its cosmological character. There can be no doubt as to both of these points, nevertheless, they are not compelling enough to force Nehamas to abandon the idea of Recurrence as such. At bottom, its cosmological expression is so fragmentary that it certainly cannot be considered something Nietzsche was satisfied with. As we will see shortly, the importance of Recurrence does not depend on its cosmological expression.

So why did Nietzsche concentrate on giving it this kind of expression? In answer to this we can only speculate. For example, we have seen that will to power as becoming is the cosmological law of all things. Recurrence, on the other hand, is the attempt to articulate the horizon within which all possible transformations of power occur. In trying to speak of this horizon as the circle of becoming, perhaps Nietzsche is driven into cosmology in so far as he attempts to enhance what was already a cosmological conception: the will to power. Thus, to a certain extent, he had to look at Recurrence cosmologically given its intimacy with the conception of becoming.

133. Nietzsche attempts to articulate all possible transformations of power taking place within a quantum of power that remains constant. In so doing, he resorted to interpretations of the law of the conservation of energy popular in his own time. (MXIX,1063) For the compatibility of Nietzsche's "scientific" explanation of Recurrence with the law of the conservation of energy, see *SLN*. p. 182f and 244f. See also, Ofelia Schutte, *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche without Masks*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 65f.

134. It is interesting that despite Nietzsche's having said the idea of Recurrence "came to me" (VI³,E:Z,1) in August of 1881, we nevertheless find fledgling expressions of it eight years earlier in "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks." Rather than using the term "becoming," he uses that of "motion" and this in relation to a passage introducing "Anaxagoras' teaching." [MIV, PTA, p. 207, (14)] Therein we read:

About each and every moment of this world, even if we choose moments that lie millennium apart, one would have to be able to say: all true essences contained in the world are existent simultaneously, unchanged, undiminished, without increase, without decrease...a millenia later exactly the same holds true; nothing has meanwhile changed. If, in spite of this, the world looks totally different from time to time...this...is the consequence of everlasting motion. True being is moved sometimes this way, sometimes that way, together asunder, upwardly downward...in all directions [within]. [MIV, PTA, p. 206-07, (14)]

In developing the Anaxagorean concept of chaos, Nietzsche speaks of *nous* as one possessing "its grandeur... in... deriv[ing]...the entire cosmos of 'becoming' from the moving circle." [MIV, PTA, p. 223, (17)] He also mentions the "embarrassments" involved in "the unbelievably troublesome proof of a certain definite number of elemental substances." [MIV, PTA, p. 212, (15)] These substances constitute chaos prior to *nous* which, as we have just seen, ultimately allows for the creation of the cosmos out of chaos "from the moving circle." What is of interest here is the "unbelievably troublesome proof" Nietzsche gets into when he attempts to speak of a definite and consistent quantum of power through which the becoming of all things is endlessly repeated *in infinitum*.

Just as Nietzsche saw the empirical problems in Anaxagoras' attempt to articulate "the entire cosmos of 'becoming' from the moving circle," [MIV, PTA, p. 223, (17)] fifteen years later he finds himself moving in a similar realm of difficulty. His conceptions of becoming and Recur-

rence are *not* found in the cosmology of Anaxagoras. Yet just as the latter asserted a definite quantum "of elemental substances," subject to "the moving circle," Nietzsche posits a definite quantum of power realizing multiplicity within the circle of Recurrence. Given this parallel, the suggestion that Nietzsche's interest in certain contemporary scientific treatises influenced his conception of Recurrence seems a little suspect. On the contrary, this interest may indicate that he was already aware of the difficulties of trying to articulate, as it were, the limits (Being) of becoming through the concept of circularity.

135. See Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life As Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 143. See also Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche As Philosopher: An Original Study*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 203-209.

136. Jaspers, p. 355.

137. See note 133 above.

138. See chapter one, "The Will To Power As Cosmological Doctrine" as well as notes 132 and 134 above.

139. Jaspers, p. 355. For the influence of contemporary scientific treatises on Recurrence, see Hayman, p. 234; and Ofelia Schutte, *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche without Masks*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 65f. See also notes 131 and 132 above.

140. Howey, p. 87.

141. *Ibid.*

142. We find echoes of "scientific" expressions of Recurrence in *Zarathustra*, for example in Part III in the section entitled, "Of the Vision and the Riddle." But this work "is poetry, and not a collection of aphorisms," (BKG. III¹, p. 324 / SLN. p. 207) hence the "scientific hypothesis" of Recurrence remained in notes which (unlike many others) did not find expression *after Zarathustra*.

143. Kathleen M. Higgins, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), pp. 163-164.

144. Ivan Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence" in, *Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Solomon (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 339. Jaspers makes the same observation in his *Nietzsche*, pp. 363-364.

145. Jaspers, p. 363.

146. Again, one cannot help thinking of Socrates here. For Nietzsche, his suicide is the only act of nobility open to a decadent. This is why Nietzsche speaks of "the wisdom of his courage for death." (VI³, 7:III, 12) But this makes Nietzsche's situation of interest to us as well. After all, Nietzsche refers to himself as a decadent. Hence his statement: "when physicians are required most...they are also most in peril," (III¹, U:S, 2) is appropriate to both himself and Socrates. The difference is that Nietzsche sees Socrates' suicide as the latter's judgement on life; that is, as act of revenge. Nietzsche acknowledges there is no meaning and value to existence, and we have seen that suicide was at times a temptation. But unlike Socrates, Nietzsche persevered in affirming life in the attempt to avoid hatred and bitterness because meaning and value are lacking. Indeed, through avoiding the desire for revenge on life Nietzsche acquires his legitimacy as the physician of culture.

147. As we shall see shortly, it also has its constructive role as well. In this it functions within both the destructive and constructive features of the Revaluation.

148. Erich Heller, "Nietzsche's Terrors: Time and the Inarticulate". From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 185.

149. Letter to Jakob Burckhardt, Sept. 22, 1886. BKG. III³, p. 254 / SPL. p. 91.

150. For example, in 1873 he wrote: "individuals are subordinated to the welfare of the highest individuals, to the welfare of the highest specimens." [MVII, HP, p. 30-31 / PT, p. 120] For the preconditions making the "highest specimens" possible see III¹, U:S and notes from the year 1872 in MVI, P, p. 5 / PT, p. 6.

151. MIV, PTA, p. 159, (1).

152. As we saw above, Nietzsche seriously sought some kind of "scientific" explanation for the doctrine, and, though its inadequacies have been pointed out, one should remember none of them ever found their way into his published works. In this vein, Nehamas points out that one may argue "the style in which *Zarathustra* is written does not tolerate an attempt at a scientific proof of the theory." Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life As Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 143. He then proceeds to point out however, that *Twilight of the Idols*, which differs from *Zarathustra* in "style and force" and wherein Nietzsche still claims "himself as the teacher of eternal recurrence...could

easily tolerate a rigorous proof of the cosmological doctrine; nevertheless, Nietzsche chose not to include such a proof in that text either." Nehamas, p. 143.

153. See note 152 above.

154. Letter to Paul Deussen, September 14, 1888. *BKG*. III^o, p. 426 / *SPL*. p. 124.

155. *Ibid.*

156. *Ibid.*

157. Letter to Franz Overbeck, October 18, 1888. *BKG*. III^o, p. 454 / *SLN*. p. 315.

158. Letter to Paul Deussen, September 14, 1888. *BKG*. III^o, p. 426 / *SPL*. p. 124.

159. Erich Heller, "The Importance of Nietzsche". From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 17.

160. Letter to Franz Overbeck, February 11, 1883. *BKG*. III⁺, p. 325 / *SPL*. p. 70.

161. Erich Heller, "The Importance of Nietzsche". From Heller's, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 14.

162. This is from a note written while Nietzsche was working on *Zarathustra*. *MXIV*, p. 173f. The translation is Erich Heller's in, "The Importance of Nietzsche."

163. My italics.

164. *WKG*, III², HC, p. 277 / *PN*. pp. 32-33.

165. *WKG*, III², HC, p. 279 / *PN*. p. 34.

166. This process of purification is parallel again to what we saw in our look at the physiological revaluation referred to above. Presumably once the most dangerous drives start to utilize the power of destruction which has fallen to their lot, the battle for supremacy typical of the drives begins. This would entail the destruction of the "spiritual" affects of the drives characteristic of exhaustion, decadence and sickness. In short the power of destruction is initially utilized to purge the remnants of the "old regime." This naturally involves the enslavement of the weaker drives within the perspective of these more powerful ones toward re-establishing a healthy order of rank.

167. My italics.

168. *WKG*, III², HC, p. 279 / *PN*. p. 34.

169. This is from a "plan" written in the summer of 1872. *MIV*, p. 243 / *PT*. p. 152.

170. This is from a "plan" written between the winter of 1872 and spring of 1873. *PT*. p. 154. (For source of the German text see *PT*. p. lxi).

171. *MVI*, P, p. 12 / *PT*. p. 12.

172. Friedrich Nietzsche, as quoted in Jaspers, p. 363.

173. The square brackets are Nietzsche's.

174. Friedrich Nietzsche, as quoted in Jaspers, p. 363.

175. Letter to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Feb. 12, 1988. *BKG*. III², p. 248 / *SPL*. p. 106.

176. My italics.

*Even now my whole philosophy wavers
after an hour's friendly conversation
with a total stranger.¹*

Nietzsche

CONCLUSION

What in the end can we "conclude" in regard to the forgoing? Does Nietzsche give us a nightmare from which we struggle to awake? Or, given his influence on contemporary literature and philosophy, is his clinical standpoint an unfortunate, even embarrassing factor deserving little if any attention? To consider the last question first, the clinical standpoint deserves attention for the access it allows to virtually every facet of his thought. The determination of health and sickness is the standard permeating Nietzsche's philosophy. And our investigation has succeeded in showing the dynamics underlying this standard.

Our look at Nietzsche has, at times moved us into the realms of violence, suffering and terror. And we may well ask where is the "sunny-side" of his thought; his ideas of "dance," "laughter" and "play?" Have we taken the clinical standpoint so "seriously" that these have been obscured from our view? After all, Nietzsche tells us that staying cheerful when involved in a gloomy and exceedingly responsible business is no inconsiderable art: yet what could be more necessary than cheerfulness? Nothing succeeds in which high spirits play no part. (VI³,T:Preface)

Yet, after saying this, he goes on:

*A revaluation of all values, this question mark so black, so huge it casts a shadow over him who sets it up--such a destiny...compels one...to run out into the sunshine...to shake off a seriousness grown all too oppressive. Every expedient for doing so is justified.... Above all, war. War has always been the grand sagacity of every spirit...grown too inward, too profound; its curative power lies even in the wounds one receives. A maxim...has long been my motto: *increscunt animi, virescit vulnere virtus.* (VI³,T:Preface)*

The themes of dance, laughter and play presuppose the character of the "agon." (VI³,T:III,8) The dance is that of an

exuberant warrior along the edge of the abyss; his laughter echoes the thrilling intoxication of potential destruction; and his play is a test of courage to *risk* one's life in the affirmation of life and its innocence.

These themes are "Homeric" in character, a "run out into the sunshine to shake off" (VI³,7:Preface) the seriousness of grim battle. The play consists of making war itself a game and this is appropriate to those who "dare to undertake projects that would take thousands of years for their completion." (V²,65,356) We do not deny the "sunny-side" of Nietzsche's thought; but his genuine desire to play, dance, laugh and sing hinges on his sincerity in taking up a task that requires "thousands of years" to complete.

His clinical standpoint also reveals a lot about himself. He was deeply suspicious not only of his own motives but those of others. And in this his rigor equals the severest discipline of a cloistered monk. The latter listens for the faintest echo of failure to follow the way of the Cross, the former, for the failure to embrace and affirm life. How each perceives "corruption" is not something learned by rote and "taking courses," but rather through exacting, ruthless self-examination. They are both quite adept at marking within themselves precisely the point where they mask their own weakness and cowardice on the path they have chosen. For the monk, deception is deception and, having caught himself in the act, he seeks forgiveness and Grace. For Nietzsche, deception is necessary for life and it becomes a question of whether it is symptomatic of health or sickness. If its creator is healthy, the deception somehow affirms life. If the affirmation is lacking, its creator is ill.

These observations with regard to deception bring up interesting questions. For example, since, for Nietzsche, deception is essential to life as power, then is not

Nietzsche's philosophy itself a deception? Nietzsche would answer yes to our question but would surely add, "That does not mean I am a liar!" And he would be right. After all, "deception," has, as we have seen, a meaning for Nietzsche which is beyond "good and evil." It is the manifestation of what he calls man's "spiritual" ability. That capacity to fictionalize the world in order to endure it and ourselves therein. And, as we saw, this is how we must understand Nietzsche's statement that untruth is a condition of life.

What we have called our "Truths" for the last two thousand years are the fictions with which we have sheltered ourselves from the chaos of becoming. Nietzsche does not shirk from confronting this chaos, his vision of the cosmos bereft of gods, "Truth," reason and *telos*. Yes, his philosophy is a deception not only as a means for him to endure "the death of God," but, he hoped, would also be embraced by future generations. He set for himself the curious task of cultivating faith in life because he saw the collapse of the old *deceptions* of Western culture, i.e., metaphysics and Christianity. The doctrine of Recurrence is the most obvious instance of this as the new myth for the future of Western man.

We have been speaking of deception above within the confines of the clinical standpoint. Hence the question, "is not Nietzsche's philosophy itself a deception?" is answered in terms of the physiological necessity for deception as a condition of life. But what of the "physiology" itself? Does it stand beyond the suspicion of being yet another deception? Does Nietzsche believe that his "physiological turn of mind"² confers upon us the absolute interpretation of the absolute Truth? Of course not. As we said in the last chapter, the "physiology" is not to be understood in terms of how Nietzsche wanted to reduce all possible phenomena to it.³ Its significance is derived from his desire to create at least the possibility for a new "spiritual" paradigm for

the future. But if this is the case, can we reduce Nietzsche's philosophy to the physiology? Again, we have to say no because Nietzsche's philosophy demands that we regard it as a deception. That is to say, with the destruction of "Truth" Nietzsche saw how all interpretations, including his own, are condemned to destruction.

Every interpretation is an act of creation and since, for Nietzsche, its "value for life is ultimately decisive," (MXIX,493) then its "truth" or "falsehood" is no longer a question. Rather, the determination of the value of such creations is made in terms of whether they say "Yes" or "No" to life. Consequently, the "physiology" and indeed Nietzsche's entire philosophy must be judged according to this criterion. In 1873 he wrote:

What is truth? A movable host of metaphors...and anthropomorphisms.... Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins that have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins."⁴

Then, in 1886 he reiterates:

Alas, what are you after all, my written and painted thoughts! It was not long ago that you were still colorful, young, and malicious...and now? You have already taken off your novelty, and...are ready, I fear, to become truths: they already look so immortal, so pathetically decent, so dull!...but nobody will guess...how you looked in your morning, you sudden sparks and wonders of my solitude.... (VI², B,296)

Given these observations, that extraordinary creation which goes by the name of "Nietzsche's philosophy" cannot be regarded as something he believed to be the "Truth."

Is this philosophy and the "physiology" we have pursued throughout our investigation a deception which Nietzsche was aware of as such? Yes. But again he would add, "That does not mean I am a liar!" He saw that man must impose interpretation on the cosmos, fictionalize for himself a "world" within which he can flourish. The more functional these deceptions are, the more "truth" they possess. This is

the fundamental fact of "spirit" and he saw all philosophy as "this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the 'creation of the world,' to the *causa prima*." (VI²,B,9) These creations constituted the "spiritual" frontiers for the cultures wherein they emerged. And we have seen how Nietzsche was convinced not only of the inadequacy of the last two millennia of Western "spirituality," but also of the necessity for the creation of a new frontier. He attempted to articulate the "spirit" of the future under the rubric, Revaluation of all Values. It became a question of restoring man's faith in life in order to clear the way for a culture, indeed, an *Überkultur* for the future.

Did Nietzsche believe that the physiological interpretation of man as a form of will to power was the only possible way to cultivate this faith? No. But that this faith had to be restored was something he doubted no less than he did the necessity of the Revaluation. In the end it is not a question of whether or not man is "will to power," is subject to "Recurrence" or is to be defined in terms of the "physiology." These themes must be judged according to their "value for life." (MXIX,493) If these deceptions could be exploited toward the creation of a renewal of faith in life, then they are "True"--if not, then abandon them. In this sense, Nietzsche's philosophy and its inherent "physiology" is an *experiment*. It seeks to seduce us back into life in the same way a Socrates would seduce us into "philosophy." Yes, his philosophy is a deception and the physiology likewise, but if they could serve as the path to the creation of a life-affirming culture in the future, then why not? This experiment is not the idle pastime of a coy, self-satisfied aesthete captivated with his own cleverness. Nietzsche had no illusions concerning the "Truth" of his philosophy "for there is no 'truth.'" (MXIX,616) yet he staked everything on it as a deception essential to life.

Is the violence and terror we saw inherent to the Revaluation a deception as well? Again, "the value for life" (MXIX,493) is the bottom line and in this Nietzsche is unbending. His philosophy is a deception shot "like an arrow" (III¹,U:S,7) into mankind, and he certainly hoped "the arrow will stick somewhere." (III¹,U:S,7) If this deception worked, that is, serve as a blueprint for the future of a genuine and healthy culture, then Nietzsche would, with trepidation and terror, stand by its most nightmarish aspects.

In spite of his conviction that deception is essential to life, Nietzsche had convictions that rendered him virtually dogmatic. He was convinced of the sickness permeating modern culture and the necessity of "physicians for modern mankind who...stand firmly...on their feet...to support others and lead them by the hand." (III¹,U:S,2) He was convinced of "the doctrines of sovereign becoming" (III¹,U:HL,9) as "doctrines...I take to be true but deadly." (III¹,U:HL,9) He was convinced the Revaluation was essential if man was ever to confront the *truth* of these doctrines which articulate what he found most horrifying: the law of madness permeating the cosmos. Hence he said: "My task is enormous, my determination no less so.... This much is certain: I wish to force mankind to decisions which will determine its entire future."⁹ Nietzsche had the courage of his convictions and we would underestimate him if we thought he did not mean what he said in speaking of the suffering that may be required to force mankind to these decisions.

Nietzsche was no lover violence; he hated it. But he despised this about himself. His antagonism to "pity" is what he felt within because it would compromise his convictions. With spell-binding lucidity our physician leaves little to the imagination in saying the "weak and ill-constituted shall perish." (VI³,A,2) Yet the mask of the physician cracks:

my entire philosophy wavers after an hour's friendly conversation with a total stranger. It seems so silly to want to be right at the expense of love--and at the same time to be unable to impart what's most valuable in oneself for fear of destroying affection.⁶

This tension moves throughout Nietzsche's texts. Ultimately, he saw his desire for affection as cowardice before the task of his philosophy--imparting what was "most valuable" in himself. Hence, in his confrontation with Nietzsche, Kazantzakis says, "I could feel his heart ripping in two."⁷

Certainly Nietzsche had occasion to doubt his philosophy, but at bottom he remained convinced of his "destiny." The tough talk inherent to the physiological language of the physician is a mask concealing a man "all too human." Nevertheless, Nietzsche saw the definition of the "human" permeated with illness and, in order to go into the future, dehumanization was necessary. He systematically carried out the experiment of this dehumanization upon himself first and foremost.

Shall we follow him? After all, "it is a painful and dangerous undertaking...to tunnel into oneself and to force one's way down into the shaft of one's being by the nearest path." (III¹,U:5,1) At what point do *we* set up the fictions *we* require to endure a lucid perception of the limits of our honesty? These questions can seduce us into a certain idolatry of Nietzsche's bravery as a model for proving our own. That is, we can rush headlong into an "affirmation" of the necessity of self-destruction with an eye to self "re-creation." But "Beware," says Zarathustra, "lest a statue slays you." (VI¹,Z:I,22) In the end we must ask ourselves whether or not Nietzsche really is the epitome of courage. Is he the model for us? Can we recognize ourselves in him to the extent that we affirm his convictions and thereby make his risks our own? In short, is he yet another idol before which we do homage? No. To do such a thing, would be to betray him.

It is all well and good and to talk of Nietzsche "the explorer" and "experimenter" but we can be seduced by these heroic terms. Exploration for the sake of exploration and experiment for the sake of experiment would nauseate our physician. The exploratory and experimental elements of his philosophy take on heroic dimensions in so far as he genuinely sought a path to a restoration of faith in life. When this faith is abandoned by a people,

then let no one be surprised if...[it] perishes of pettiness and misery, of ossification and selfishness...and ceases to be a people: it may then perhaps be replaced in the arena of the future by systems of individual egoism, fellowships intent on the rapacious exploitation of non-fellows and similar creations of utilitarian vulgarity. (III¹,U:HL,9)

Nietzsche believed "the next two centuries" (MXVIII:Preface,2) would see mankind coming to terms with the death of everything that sustained its faith in life. With his eye resting beyond the next few centuries, he attempted to provide a means to keeping faith and loving the earth. And, like Kierkegaard, he was just as concerned with keeping the reader from identifying the possibility for "faith" with himself. For Nietzsche, then, exploration and experiment are what Rilke called "heart-work,"⁸ that of creating light within the darkness of a world without hope of "redemption," a final "purpose," or cosmic payoff after death but which should never be hated or allowed to twist us into bitterness at our lot. This "work" lies at the center of Nietzsche's philosophical project. "I speak only of what I have lived through,"⁹ he said, and we believe him. His dedication and courage in "heart's work" is an example of what we must do for ourselves. He gives us an example of "a painful and dangerous undertaking," (III¹,U:S, 1) providing no "Truths."

But we draw the line at his vision of the future precisely because we no longer recognize ourselves in it. This vision presupposes that the "human" has been left behind. He may charge us with cowardice in our unwillingness

to go "over" man, but we maintain that Nietzsche's desire to do so reveals the limits of his own courage. This is not to condemn him; we all have our limits. In this vein, the words of an old sailor are worth noting:

One is always afraid. One may talk but.... I have known brave men...I say each of them, if he were an honest man... would confess...there is somewhere a point when you let everything go.... And even for those who do not believe this truth there is fear all the same--the fear of themselves.... Trust me.... At my age one knows what one is talking about--*que diable!* Man is born a coward (*L'homme est né poltron*). It is a difficulty--*parbleu!* It would be too easy otherwise.¹⁰

It was not easy for Nietzsche and we see his bravery in confronting a world devoid of a transcendent meaning or value. But in the end we find that he "let everything go." He pushed himself to the limits of his strength and found he was not able to affirm man's capacity to endure a world eternally subject to the law of madness. "No human being has yet had this strength," (V²,65,285) he says. Only someone "over" man could endure; someone beyond all the old definitions of the "human" can have faith where faith is impossible, love life in the face of its sublime indifference to love and endure the knowledge of the death of God. When Nietzsche says his "entire philosophy wavers after an hour's friendly conversation with a total stranger,"¹¹ it is the confession of a brave and honest man. He acknowledges his fear that *perhaps* the "total stranger," for all his limits, weakness and cowardice, may possess the courage to accept life on Nietzschean terms. At such moments he would naturally wonder, "is man so depraved that the process of dehumanization is necessary? Must I carve from myself every vestige of the 'human' so that the Overman 'shall be the meaning of the earth?'" (VI¹,2:Prologue,3) In the end Nietzsche would not allow for this possibility. He simply did not believe that man as he is, a born coward, would be

capable of saying "Yes" to life devoid of a transcendent meaning.

Ultimately we have to ask ourselves is Nietzsche's "cure" any more effective than that of the Socratic one he despised? We have to grant Nietzsche the point that without some faith in the future man is doomed. A lack of faith is always the prerequisite for suicide. Unless we have something to suffer *for*, or, as he put it, "a goal," then we will degenerate into "self-seeking cattle and mob." (MXIX, 752) On the other hand, Nietzsche's conviction that the human race is incapable of dealing with the death of God/faith is naive. He was so terrified at his own incapacity to believe in anything that when he contemplated a race of individuals with the same incapacity he panicked (and with good reason). But why should he have been so quick to extrapolate his condition over to all men? Granted, one must at times look hard to find something noble about human beings, but Nietzsche seems to have despaired entirely.

In a letter to Overbeck (1882) he said that he had seen nobody like himself who could glean so "many *objective insights* from personal experience."¹² This ability of his was, no doubt, prodigious, but it was not infallible. Just because *he* could not endure existence without faith this does not mean A) that nobody else could, or B) that faith was necessarily dead. When Nietzsche saw his incapacity for faith, he lost his faith in his fellow human beings. He decided the only way to preserve man was to go "over" him and create the conditions necessary to cultivating a type who would seduce us to life as the tragic poets of Greece seduced their culture.

Undermining nihilism through a renewed vision of man is a great and daring project, but why are we *compelled* to create this saviour/redeemer? Are there not many people living average, everyday lives who are capable of faith in the face of a world that allows us few illusions. They are

not by any means world-historical thinkers, but in the face of the bitterest adversity and violence are still capable of standing on the side of courage, generosity and justice. Man, as Dostoevsky saw long ago, has a rebel spirit. There will always be those who refuse to be molded, shaped and pushed around according grand schemes promising greatness in the future.

Nietzsche underestimates the tenacity of men; their capacity for generosity and courage. He believed these would eventually be undermined, so he "jumped ship," went AWOL on mankind. He preferred to throw in his chips with some ideal man who would save us if only we go to work now and tear out of ourselves "everything men have heretofore respected and loved."¹³ It is a genuinely human experience to find the foundations of one's faith lying in ruins. The suffering inherent to the destruction of everything is not uncommon. When Nietzsche experienced this he was overwhelmed. He could not find in himself the strength to say yes to this pain--the only way he managed to hold himself together was to dream of life in a transfigured state.

This is Nietzsche's "No" to life--he could only say "yes" to a life wherein the possibility of faith would be restored in the future. He could not see himself rising above the pain of his shattered faith in *this* existence. He dreamt of his Overman with the same passion he said Christ possessed in dreaming of "his rainbow and ladder to heaven." (V²,GS,137) Nietzsche is a virtuoso in his self-analysis of faith destroyed. This experience is the source of the passion and suffering that permeates his work. He transforms his experience of the death of faith into his prophesy for the next few centuries. In this, we owe him a great deal: what artist or philosopher today does not have a debt to Nietzsche? But in trying to cope with the death of God, he turns his back on men; not only does he extrapolate his experience of the lack of faith to other men, he goes fur-

ther and extrapolates his own weakness over to other men. Was it so inconceivable to Nietzsche that there are people who could experience the death of God and still not degenerate into haters of men and the earth. Why should we even speak of the "death of God?" Are there not individuals around us everywhere who are crushed by the loss of everything they ever loved and who still manage to rise again? This kind of courage is around us if we only look. Did Nietzsche look? How many times a day all over the world do the most horrible events take place? Nietzsche speaks of the ugly faces of existence, there are many; mothers watching their children raped and murdered before their eyes; prison guards lining up "politicals" before firing-squads; the list is endless. Nietzsche is correct, if we ever lose faith in the future then these horrors would no longer touch us; but they do touch us and among those who suffer are profound examples of courage, compassion and love for the earth. Here we find that rebel-spirit which, confronted with personal disaster, says, "I will not give up, I'll find some way to go on! I'll have the last laugh!" Was Nietzsche's Europe so bereft of examples of courage in the face of great suffering? No: one may rest assured that men, being men, have everywhere and at all times created hell on earth.

Did he think men of the future would be entirely incapable of enduring the disaster of having their faith shattered again and again? Yes. And so he wanted to cultivate the type of man who could endure. Nietzsche did not look around at his fellow men enough: perhaps he was a little too self-absorbed with his "task." He did not seem to see the examples of courage and heroism that take place everyday around us. Courage and heroism here understood as being able to endure the greatest suffering without ending up hating other men and life on this earth. Nietzsche could only say "Yes" to a humanity transformed after millennia; he could not say it to the men around him. No wonder he felt so

horribly alone; no wonder he went on and on about his "task" and his concern for the future of man while implying all along how much courage it took to face this kind of solitude. Perhaps, in the end, Nietzsche was the coward--he couldn't stand beside men; feel any solidarity with men and only felt secure when contemplating the man of the future. He speaks about how he feels "no solidarity with anyone living or dead"¹⁴ he asks for love, compassion and understanding (his letters are full of such requests), yet he cut himself off from his own kind---precisely the source of love, compassion and understanding.

This timid and shy man only felt at ease with people through the distance of letters, or when his "task" was acknowledged. He seems to have been happy once; when he was a *part* of the warmth and daily routine of the Wagner household. He never exposed himself to the pain of love, never made himself vulnerable through trusting someone in love and only experienced the suffering of the absence of genuine human contact.¹⁵ We can find places where Nietzsche acknowledges these deficiencies in himself and we do not doubt his sincerity, only his courage to *rebel* against his own perception of man's irredeemable cowardice.

So we draw the line at a vision of the future which, in presupposing man's cowardice, demands that we make war on "everything men have heretofore respected and loved."¹⁶ Nietzsche is quite right to point out how much cowardice may lie in these, but we prefer to look ourselves in the face and see both our beauty and ugliness; without recourse to visions of future perfection. Nietzsche broke solidarity with men when he sought to go "over" man. Here is the limit of his courage but, as was said above, we all have our limits. He pushed himself to his limits and we would break faith with him if we fail to do the same for ourselves. Nietzsche demands the rare honesty to admit that our truths may very well be our most precious lies. That we need

lies is natural, it is a question of whether or not we have the courage to be responsible for them.

ENDNOTES: CONCLUSION

1. Letter to Peter Gast, August 20, 1880. *BKG.* III¹, p. 37 / *SPL.* p. 54.
2. Letter to Franz Overbeck, February 10, 1883. *BKG.* III¹, p. 325 / *SPL.* pp. 70-71.
3. See the "Introduction," chapter V.
4. *MVI*, TL, p. 81 / *PT.* p. 84.
5. Letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, June 1884. *BKG.* III¹, p. 509-10 / *SPL.* p. 81.
6. Letter to Peter Gast, August 20, 1880. *BKG.* III¹, p. 37 / *SPL.* p. 54.
7. Nikos Kazantzakis, *Report To Greco*, trans. P.A. Bein (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 318.
8. Rainer Maria Rilke, "Turning-Point," from *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell. (New York: Random House, 1982), p. 133.
9. This is from a discarded draft for section 3 of "Why I Write Such Good Books" in, *Ecce Homo. Friedrich Nietzsche's Werke des Zusammenbruchs*, ed. Eric F. Podach (Heidelberg: Wolfgang Rothe, 1961), pp. 215f.
10. Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*, (New York: The Modern Library, 1931), pp. 146-47.
11. Letter to Peter Gast, August 20, 1880. *BKG.* III¹, p. 37 / *SPL.* p. 54.
12. Letter to Overbeck, Sept. 1882. *BKG.* III¹, p. 254 / *SPL.* p. 67.
13. Letter to Reinhart von Seydlitz, February 12, 1888. *BKG.* III², p. 248 / *SPL.* p. 106.
14. Letter to Franz Overbeck, August 5, 1886. *BKG.* III², p. 223 / *SPL.* p. 90.
15. At this point Nietzsche's alleged marriage proposal to Lou Salomé comes to mind. If one depends on Salomé or Nietzsche's sister Elizabeth for the facts of the case there are problems because both have been discredited as reliable sources. But whether or not the "proposal" was as serious as

Salomé took it to be, the fact remains that Nietzsche was, if not in love with her, then certainly quite infatuated. His connection to her is fraught with the barriers imposed by Nietzsche's shyness, his sister, Paul Reé, and Salomé herself. In short, the whole thing collapsed into a vicious circle of squabbles, attempts at reconciliation and further misunderstandings on all sides.

In the end however, we have to say that at least this once Nietzsche did follow his heart and made himself vulnerable in trying to capture the heart of another. In a letter to Salomé (July 2, 1882), he says,

But from now on, when you advise me, I'll be in good hands and need have no fear.... I don't want to be lonely any more and wish to rediscover how to be human. *This is a lesson I'll have to learn almost from scratch!....* [BKG. III², p. 217 / SPL: p. 62.]

Unfortunately for Nietzsche, Lou Salomé had other plans. Nietzsche never took such a risk again and in this we are reminded of Stefan George's Poem, "Nietzsche" wherein the poet suggests Nietzsche failed to enter "in to the ring enclosed by love." Stefan George, *Sämtliche Werke in 18 Bänden*. Vol. VI/VII. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986. The translation is Zygmunt Adamczewski's in his translation of Hans-Georg Gadamer's, "The Drama Of Zarathustra," in *The Great Year Of Zarathustra (1881-1981)*. Edited by David Goicoechea. Lanham: University Press of America, 1983.

For a detailed look at the reliability of Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche's and Lou Salomé's account of the Nietzsche-Salomé "affair," see Kaufmann, p. 49, Ronald Hayman's, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 244 and Rudolph Binion's, *Frau Lou: Nietzsche's Wayward Disciple*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

16. Letter to Reinhart von Seydlitz, February 12, 1888. BKG. III², p. 248 / SPL. p. 106.

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