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JESUS AND DIONYSUS

A Study of Nietzsche's Ethics and Psychology of the Body

by

Ronald A. Carson

SUMMARY

In the Introduction we attempt to set the stage, as it were, by redressing the still predominantly negative balance of who Nietzsche was (Chapter One), and by establishing a few signposts on which we may be able to take our bearings for an accurate reading of what he was about (Chapter Two). We claim that Nietzsche is a sensitive moralist, in the sense of one who asks and attempts to answer questions of value, ethical questions; and we review briefly his own attitude to the answers to such questions provided by five of his predecessors: Pascal, Goethe, Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer.

Part I is intended as an extended analysis of the starting point of Nietzsche's work--the death of God. We begin by taking a critical look at several interpretations of Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God, before attempting our own theological interpretation (Chapter Three). We then endeavor to show that he assumed God's death, rather than trying to prove it; that it was, for

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him, not a question of metaphysics, but a cultural, historical event. Nietzsche is concerned, not with the existence or non-existence of God, but with his life and death--and the consequences of his death (Chapter Four).

Part II is designed to lay bare what is perhaps the most important of these consequences, namely the problematic nature of morality. We see Nietzsche struggling both aesthetically and psychologically with Schopenhauer's question--Has existence any meaning at all?--a question which now, after the death of the old "answer," had to be raised (and answered) anew. In Chapter Five we discover that morality was understood by Nietzsche as having a double significance: every moral demand system can serve both as a guide to the passions men consider most powerful, and as a means of controlling and harnessing those passions. We also get our first glimpse of what will develop into the most fundamental concept of Nietzsche's philosophy, his will to power monism. Chapter Six sets out from an exposition of Nietzsche's typology of morality, continues through what is undoubtedly his single most important discovery in the realm of values, namely, the instinct of conscience, and culminates in his plea for a remissive conscience, that is, a conscience based on and aimed toward fulfillment rather than continence.

In Part III we try to be more explicit about how Nietzsche envisaged the creation of this remissive conscience. After pointing out that his doctrine of the body provides the clue to a synthesis of the best in both biblical monism and classical dualism in his own (diatomic) Dionysian monism, we make a case for Nietzsche's recommendation that we again begin to take our senses seriously, not as a final court of appeal but, at the very least, as a regulative hypothesis in questions of value (Chapter Seven). We then move from the body to the earth to dwell in detail upon Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence both as a "scientific" and as a "religious" hypothesis, and conclude that in its latter form, it is not unlike Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom of God in the Sermon on the Mount. The correlate of eternal recurrence, amor fati, leads us to a further consideration of Nietzsche's diatomic monism, with its conception of creation arising out of agon, in this case the creation of a remissive conscience based on the body and the earth, and directed toward affirmation, fulfillment and responsibility. (Chapter Eight).

In the penultimate chapter (Chapter Nine) we begin to draw together what has gone before by analyzing the formula, "Dionysus versus the Crucified." We discover that "the

Crucified" was understood by Nietzsche as the embodiment of ressentiment, envious, rancorous aggression, and intended by him to symbolize the negation of life from which ascetic morality draws its strength. On the other hand, we find that "Dionysus" is the symbol of Nietzsche's matured, affirmative will to power monism which contains within itself its own "control mechanism"--the instinct of conscience. Outside the realm of the symbolic and in that of ethics, Dionysus is the Übermensch, a humanly realizable ethical ideal--but only for the few. We end this chapter by criticizing Nietzsche for this elitist ethic which derives, not from his own doctrine of man (which is thoroughly "democratic") but from his Greek (Platonic) theory of society; in short, from his unexamined aristocratic bias, which conceives of human relationships as resting on principles of domination and respect, but which cannot account for human goodness. Not that Nietzsche does not acknowledge human goodness, mercy, and love. He does, but only "outside" his own schema, namely, in Jesus. Nietzsche is interested in Jesus as a man and in his way of life, and it is this way of life that he defends as being Christian. We look at Dostoevsky's Prince Myshkin and at the original use of the word "idiot" in an attempt to ascertain the sense in which

Nietzsche was referring to Jesus as an idiot. Our conclusion is twofold: that Nietzsche was pointing to pity as the peculiarly Christian expression of love; and that, for him, Christianity is possible only in private. We are thus constrained to reject Nietzsche's otherwise very able and sympathetic portrayal of Jesus as incompatible with the Jesus of the New Testament, whose way of life is conspicuous neither for its pity nor for its privacy (Chapter Ten).

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Prepared under the supervision of Professor Gregor Smith
and submitted to the Faculty of Divinity of the University
of Glasgow for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

PREFATORY NOTE

As a source for Nietzsche's works I have used, with few exceptions, the most recent German edition, edited by Karl Schlechtha: Nietzsches Werke in drei Bänden (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954-56). In the few instances in which an unpublished note of Nietzsche's is not included in Schlechtha's selective Nachlass, references are made to older editions.

Unless otherwise stated in the notes, and except for quotations from Twilight of the Idols, The Anti-christ, Nietzsche contra Wagner and Thus Spoke Zarathustra and assorted notes and aphorisms, for which I have relied on Walter Kaufmann's The Portable Nietzsche (New York: Viking Press, 1954), the translations of both primary and secondary source material are my own.

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I have at all times written with
my whole body and my whole life.
I do not know what purely intel-
lectual problems are.

--Nietzsche

Introduction. Placing Nietzsche.

1. On handling dynamite

I am a bringer of glad tidings....

I am not a man; I am dynamite.¹

--Nietzsche

I

Norman O. Brown has written, "Nietzsche is not systematic nor even consistent; and still he is the best point of departure."² What Brown says is true. And yet it must be added that Nietzsche is still little more than an enigma, even to those who read him and draw upon his wealth of insights into just about everything of interest to intelligent men and women today. Nietzsche is "in" again; the new wave of his popularity has yet to reach its crest. Recent studies of Nietzsche have been more cautious than their predecessors, and because of them. And they are, on the whole, positive in their approach to Nietzsche. We may take as the symbolic beginning of the new wave of popularity Thomas Mann's address, "Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Contemporary Events,"³ which he delivered in Washington, D. C. on April 29, 1947. Whether or not we share Mann's view of Nietzsche as the aesthete par excellence,⁴ we can surely agree with his claim that Nietzsche "must accept being called a humanist..."

When Nietzsche proclaims: "God is dead"--a decision which for him meant the hardest of all sacrifices--in whose honor, in whose exaltation did he do so other than of man? If he was, if he was able to be, an atheist, then he was one, no matter how pastoral and sentimental the word sounds, because of his love for humankind.⁵

It is in this spirit that all that follows here is written.

As the two brief quotations which stand at the head of these introductory remarks suggest, Nietzsche's glad tidings are dynamite, which is to say, not necessarily destructive but definitely highly explosive. Men have not always understood this fact, as witness the uses to which Nietzsche was put in the half-century from his "discovery" in the mid-1890's to the beginning of this, his third bid for understanding. We cannot allow ourselves space for a detailed look at the changing attitudes to Nietzsche in those turbulent years, but it may be beneficial here at the outset to say a word about the reception of Nietzsche's works in Britain and America.

II

The first of Nietzsche's writings to appear in English was Thus Spoke Zarathustra. It was translated, though poorly, by Alexander Tille, a German professor in the University of Glasgow, and published in London in 1896. In the same year a second volume⁶ appeared in a good translation by a Scot, an independent scholar, Thomas Common. These were followed, at first rather sporadically,

by translations of several other of Nietzsche's works,⁷ until in the years 1909-11 the first full translation of all of Nietzsche's writings into English appeared under the personal supervision and at the financial expense of a London physician, Oscar Levy.⁸

But many English and American readers had their minds made up for them about Nietzsche before Tille's translation was ever published. In 1895 there appeared in New York the English version of a book by Max Nordau, a prolific physician-cum-writer whose books were rapidly translated into several languages and who enjoyed a large popular audience. This particular effort, Degeneration, was devoured by his English-speaking audience (it went through several editions within a few months of its first printing on February 22, 1895), and thus the legend of Nietzsche as the mad philosopher was launched. Before concluding that Nietzsche was "obviously insane from birth,"⁹ Nordau invokes what can only be called sham psychology, which should have been an insult to readers even in 1895, to bolster his assertion that "the real source of Nietzsche's doctrine is Sadism."¹⁰ With these words the English-speaking world was introduced to Nietzsche:

From the first to the last page of Nietzsche's writings the careful reader seems to hear a madman, with flashing eyes, wild gestures and foaming mouth, spouting forth deafening bombast; and

through it all, now breaking out into frenzied laughter, now sputtering expressions of filthy abuse and invective, now skipping about in a giddily agile dance, and now bursting upon the auditors with threatening mien and clenched fists. So far as any meaning at all can be extracted from the endless stream of phrases, it shows, as its fundamental elements, a series of constantly reiterated delirious ideas, having their source in illusions of sense and diseased organic processes....¹¹

In 1897 Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, Professor of Logic in the University of Edinburgh, published an essay which, though by no means full of praise for Nietzsche, set the record straight about who he was and what he had written; it also informed the English-speaking public of Nordau's malicious exaggerations and inventions, and of the existence of a cult surrounding Nietzsche's name in Germany and France. After alluding to the announcement "within the last eighteen months (of) a complete translation of his (Nietzsche's) works,"¹² Pringle-Pattison acknowledges the fact that Nietzsche's name is already being "dropped" by British authors and critics. He continues:

It might be rash, however, to assume that this measure of fame necessarily implied any very exact acquaintance with Nietzsche's ideas, or their relation to the main currents of contemporary thought. An attempt at greater precision is made in the following pages, in the belief that, however preposterous Nietzsche's theories may be, his conclusions and the steps by which he reached them form an instructive chapter in the history of ideas.¹³

Remaining in this almost reluctant mood, Pringle-Pattison goes on to outline Nietzsche's biography and summarize his works very briefly, but responsibly and forthrightly,¹⁴

thus doing much to clear the air of the prejudices against Nietzsche held by those who had been introduced to him by Nordau.

Havelock Ellis's Affirmations, which opens with an essay on Nietzsche, appeared in London in 1898. Ellis wants neither to praise nor to blame Nietzsche, but "to define his personality and influence";¹⁵ Nietzsche is for him "one of the greatest spiritual forces which have appeared since Goethe...."¹⁶

The work he produced between 1877 and 1882 seems to me to represent the maturity of his genius. It includes Menschliches, Allzumenschliches, Morgenröthe, and Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft. In form all these volumes belong to the pensées literature. They deal with art, with religion, with morals and philosophy, with the relation of all these to life. Nietzsche shows himself in these pensées above all a freethinker, emancipated from every law save that of sincerity, wide-ranging, serious, penetrative, often impassioned, and yet always able to follow his own ideal of self-restraint.¹⁷

Though Ellis cannot restrain himself at times from "praising and blaming," from aiming a choice remark here and there at "Nietzscheans," he succeeds admirably on the whole in presenting a balanced picture of Nietzsche. "His Nietzsche is, as he readily admits, the "free-thinker" and "immoralist" Nietzsche; but, as he also points out, this is not all of Nietzsche. Above all, "Nietzsche succeeded in being himself, and it was a finely rare success."¹⁸

One other brief and long-forgotten positive utterance

about Nietzsche appeared in the same year, 1898, in a memorial volume to the moral philosopher and biographer of Schopenhauer, William Wallace. This book, containing in the main the remaining texts of Wallace's Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow in 1893-94, included two short essays, "Nietzsche's Criticism of Morality," and "Thus Spake Zarathustra," the former being the first chapter of a detailed criticism of Nietzsche which was never completed owing to Wallace's sudden death in 1897, the latter a review of Alexander Tille's translation of Nietzsche's book. Again, it is Wallace's tone which distinguishes his treatment of Nietzsche from the prevailing negative approach. Wallace is not uncritical of Nietzsche, but neither does he hide his admiration. He closes his review article with these words:

Some, indeed, may think that these are poisonous opinions and best left in silence and neglect. But to this it may be rejoined that the growth of such opinion is itself a symptom that certain corners in the fields of ethics and religion have been left to an abandonment which favours the upspringing of strange plants, with both weeds and good grain among them. Nietzsche is at least always honest, pure, and thorough.¹⁹

The next full-length popular study of Nietzsche was H. L. Mencken's The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, which appeared simultaneously in London and Boston in 1908. Facing the title page is the now notorious etching of the Nietzsche of the legend, with the swept back hair

and high forehead, veins bulging; the bushy eyebrows, accentuating those penetrating, staring eyes; the full moustache hiding the mouth; and, finally, the sage's toga draped about the shoulders. Mr. Mencken has decided that "It is time for the race of Darwin and Huxley to know Nietzsche better," and he, in his usual modest and unassuming manner, has undertaken this task.

The aim of this book is to translate Nietzsche into terms familiar to everyone--to show the exact bearing of his philosophy upon matters which every man must consider every day.²⁰

Irony aside, it is difficult to conclude that Mencken's "translation" of Nietzsche is anything but an exercise in more or less skillful ventriloquism. Nietzsche is for Mencken "the king of all axiom smashers," "the arch dissenter of the age,"²¹ the blustering and irreverent prophet; in short, the Nietzsche of the etching which prefaces the book, and thus the perfect mouthpiece for Mencken's own unorthodox opinions on those "everyday matters" from Christianity and civilization to women and marriage.²² It is thus not surprising to find him appearing in print only a few years later concluding that Nietzsche is, more specifically than before, a prophet of fascism. In 1914 he wrote, enticed by and toying with the danger of his own words and using them to tickle his readers,

His (Nietzsche's) one great service was that he gathered together the dim, groping concepts behind

the national aspiration and put them into superlative German--the greatest German, indeed, of all time--so that they suddenly rose up, in brilliant clarity, before thousands who had been blundering toward them blindly. In brief, he was like every other philosopher in the catalogue, ancient or modern: not so much a leader of his age as its interpreter, not so much a prophet as a procurator.²³

There is none of the malice of Nordau's diatribes in Mencken's words, but neither are they conducive to an impartial encounter with what Nietzsche in fact wrote. Mencken's book was very popular in the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century. He did much to vulgarize, if not to distort Nietzsche for the English-speaking world.

To counter this vulgarization and a number of other largely uninformed criticisms of Nietzsche arising out of his alleged blameworthiness for World War I, William M. Salter published his Nietzsche the Thinker in New York in 1917. A book which "was in substance written before the ...war," it is intended as "a contribution to the understanding of him (Nietzsche)."²⁴ Salter, who taught at the University of Chicago, had the advantage not only of a good command of the German language but also of being familiar with most of the relevant secondary literature on Nietzsche extant--as his extensive notes testify. Salter's own interests were ethical, and so it is to Nietzsche's view of morality that he devotes the major part of his treatment. If the Nietzsche who emerges from

Salter's book is unconvincingly tame, it must be remembered that it was intended as an antidote to a conception of an equally unconvincingly wild Nietzsche. Salter writes, very near the end of his book, "Nietzsche's fundamental problem was human...";²⁵ and it is a human, if rather too docile Nietzsche who informs Salter's writing.

With the passing of the war and its propaganda, interest in Nietzsche hibernated to await the next historical upheaval which implicated Nietzsche in much the same way as before, the one exception being that the Nazi ideologists openly and systematically claimed him as their own and were thus even more successful than had been their predecessors in convincing themselves and the world that Nietzsche was, indeed, the glorifier of brute force, a Realpolitiker and warmonger.

III

To take up our initial topic again, the new wave of interest in Nietzsche, though more cautious and less obviously grounded in the crude prejudices of the past, has nevertheless not altogether escaped inheriting those prejudices. There are books being published today, written by men too young to have experienced at first hand a Nietzsche-legend in action, which betray gross misconceptions of who Nietzsche was and what he was about.²⁶ And there are survivors of a generation which did see the most

ferocious Nietzsche-legend in action who still enjoy a large following.²⁷

In view of these facts, it surely is not out of place to try to lay these last ghosts by saying briefly just who Nietzsche was before passing on to our main job of asking what he was about. My intention is not to list important dates or to recapitulate biographical data, of which there is already quite enough.²⁸ Instead I have chosen to let some acquaintances and friends of Nietzsche give their impressions of him.

While still a student of the great philologist, Friedrich Ritschl, and upon Ritschl's recommendation, Nietzsche was offered the chair of philology at the University of Basel. He accepted it, not without misgivings, and Ritschl saw to it that he received his doctorate from Leipzig without examination but on the basis of previously published material. He was twenty-four years old. One of his students at Basel recalls:

I didn't expect the professor to storm into the room like Professor Burckhardt, thoroughly absorbed in the tumult of his thought. I also already knew that a writer's challenging tone does not necessarily correspond to his behavior in private. But Nietzsche's modest, even humble, demeanor surprised me nevertheless. Furthermore, he was not of average height, but rather short. His head sat deep in the shoulders of his stocky yet fragile body. The thick opalescent eyeglasses and the drooping mustache deprived his face of that intellectual expression that often lends to short men an air of impressiveness. And yet his

whole personality did not suggest an indifference to outward appearance. It was not a case of the closely cropped hair of Jacob Burckhardt; not his coarse clothing; not the threadbare almost shabby, suit which hung, flapping, on the powerful figure of the laughing stoic. No, Nietzsche had adapted himself to the current mode. He wore light-colored trousers, with a short jacket; around his collar fluttered a daintily-tied cravat which was also of light color. Not that there was anything conspicuous about this attire. Nietzsche probably tried less to simulate the dandy...than to aspire to something artistic in his appearance. This was suggested as well by the long hair which framed his pale face, if not with locks then at least in strands. But how distant from artistic carelessness was everything else which characterized this man! The small, fashionably-shod feet carried him in a heavy, almost tired, gait up to the rostrum. Thereupon the figure of the seated man disappeared, except for the head, behind the dais. The professor removed his glasses and for the first time I saw his eyes--extremely short-sighted, dull, and through some peculiarity, affecting only estrangement. Even though the dark pupils appeared unusually large, they were nevertheless overshadowed by the whites of the eyes up toward the eyelids. This made him appear, in profile, somewhat excited, fierce. The false impression given by photographs of Nietzsche! In reality, the eye of this kind and gentle man never possessed this trait. The Rhine roared to fortissimo, and I became worried about how the voice of the lecturer would be able to rise above it, in spite of the closed windows. But precisely this experience was what captivated and confused me--Nietzsche had a voice! Not the sonorous voice of the public speaker, nor the sharply articulated yet basically ineffective modulation which is characteristic of the pathos of some university teachers. One thing unmistakable about Nietzsche's voice, soft and unaffected as it escaped his lips; it came from his soul! Hence, the strong congenial drawing-power which was imparted to the listener, that irresistible power which brought home to me ideas which, had I merely read them, would have provoked me to vigorous disagreement. The magic of this

voice still holds its power over me! It spreads itself, soothing and moderating the most heterogeneous of its utterances. He who knows not the interpretive melody of Nietzsche's spoken words, only half knows him.²⁹

Franz Overbeck, radical theologian and probably Nietzsche's closest friend, joined the faculty at Basel in 1870 and became, by chance, Nietzsche's fellow-lodger. In the winter of that same year "they got into the habit of taking the evening meal together in Overbeck's downstairs and somewhat more spacious room. This custom lasted throughout the five years during which the two shared the same roof and in spite of all the other obligations which took them their separate ways..."³⁰ After Nietzsche's collapse, Overbeck said of his and Nietzsche's friendship,

We are both scholarly types who want to get beyond themselves; only thus can I explain to myself the intensity of our friendship in the face of our enormously disproportionate talents (on which count I am in no doubt about my own inferiority), as well as the great differences in our temperaments. Given these presuppositions, our friendship was easy for neither of us; and yet it was there from the start and remained stable throughout many years, succumbing only to the power of the circumstances. ...I offer quite simply my experience--and I do not lay much value in striking paradoxes--when I say that our friendship always remained shadowless, regardless of the obstacles which might have obstructed it. And with this, my experience, I believe that I have, in the main, also justly rendered Nietzsche's experience.

My friendship with Nietzsche! I know no other name for our relationship, and I would consider myself mad were I to allow myself to be misled for a moment by the thought of the relation of

teacher to pupil. Of course, there is the question of the difference in age.... I was thirty-three years old when I met Nietzsche, seven years older than he. That a friendship might develop between us was hardly to be expected. And yet it happened.

He was and remained my friend and as such my own possession whom I felt especially obliged to protect from the claims of others. Nietzsche soon became for me the most extraordinary person ever to cross my life's path....³¹

Overbeck married in 1876, and Nietzsche left Basel in 1879 to begin nearly a decade of Wanderjahre characterized by the extremes of ill-health and loneliness, on the one hand, and productiveness, on the other. (It was during these years that he completed the bulk of his writing.) During the first few years after his departure from Basel, he visited Franz and Ida Overbeck occasionally. She recalls,

Unfortunately I could only seldom display my talents as housewife. He preferred to eat alone, though he stayed for hours. The only thing that really agreed with him was a weakly-brewed tea with a few English biscuits. He would then sit on the chaise longue in my husband's study or on a certain chair in the sitting room with his back to the white stove, his glance directed toward my husband, who sat opposite him, and the dark curtains. He spoke softly and with few gestures, as did we, avoiding all noise inside and outside the doors. Later on, when he stayed with us, he was often ill. If he was bedfast, strong broths were prepared. If he was able to be up, we sat together at the table and enjoyed a good dish. I joined them too for short walks out to the Neubad or to the Heinrichsgarten in the Binningerstrasse where Nietzsche

stayed in extremely modest lodgings and was on good terms with the common people in the house. In those two tiny rooms he suffered so much that we became thoroughly frightened. ...Nietzsche expressed himself in his letters to my husband very little about his ideas. That was still done by word of mouth. They talked a great deal. All of his moralizing was done in the Eulerstrasse where we lived; his desire to reconstruct good and evil on the basis of a new estimate of life, views about Christianity and writers--even I know plenty, and I was involved in only a very limited way. Nietzsche hardly was in the room before he set off talking and relishing the conversation.³²

By summer 1881 Nietzsche had discovered Sils-Maria, the village in the Upper Engadine where the climate was most suitable to a man of such delicate health. He would alternate between Sils in summer and various outposts farther south in winter. Stefan Zweig has painted a prose portrait of the Nietzsche of these Wanderjahre. And though it is a fiction, it is by no means false, as can be seen by comparing it to the letters and memoirs of Nietzsche himself and of the few people who knew him during this time or who visited him in Sils.

The shabby dining room of a six-franc hotel in the Alps or at the Ligurian Sea. Indifferent guests, mostly elderly ladies engaged in small talk. The gong has just sounded three times, announcing lunch. Over the threshold comes a slightly bent, unsteady figure with drooping shoulders. The "nearly blind one" always gropes into strange territory as though he were emerging from a cavern. His cleanly-brushed clothing is dark, as is his face and his bushy, brown, wavy hair. Dark as well are the eyes behind his almost roundly-ground, thick hospital-glasses. Softly,

even shyly, he approaches, an uncommon silence surrounding him. One senses the presence of a man who lives in the shadows, beyond all chatty sociability, who fears everything loud, all noise, with an almost neurasthenic anxiety. Politely, with exquisitely refined courteousness, he greets the guests; politely, with charming indifference, the others return the compliment to the German professor. Cautiously, the short-sighted man sits down at the table; cautiously, he tests each dish to be sure that the tea is not too strong and the food not too highly seasoned. For every error in diet inflames his sensitive stomach; every slip in the regimen violently upsets his quivering nerves for days. Not one glass of wine, not a glass of beer, no alcohol, no coffee at his place; no cigar, no cigarette after the meal--nothing stimulating, refreshing or relaxing. Only the quick, meager meal and a short, urbane superficial conversation in a subdued voice with whomever happens to be at the table (as one speaks who for years has been unaccustomed to talking and who fears being asked too many questions).

Back up to the small, narrow, modest, coldly furnished Chambre garnie, the table piled high with countless sheets of paper, notes, compositions and proofs, but not a flower, no embellishment, hardly a book and seldom a letter. Back in the corner a heavy, unwieldy wooden coffer, his one possession, containing the two shirts and the spare, worn-out suit. Otherwise only books and manuscripts, and on a tray countless little bottles and tinctures--against the headaches that often make him unconscious for hours, against the stomach cramps, against the spasmodic vomiting, against the sluggishness of the bowels, and especially, the dreadful remedies for insomnia--chloral hydrate and Veronal. A frightful arsenal of poisons and drugs, and yet the only help in the empty stillness of the strange room where he never rests except during short, artificially induced periods of sleep. He sits there packed in his coat and wrapped up in a shawl (the miserable stove throws out no heat, but only smokes) with his thick glasses pressed close to the paper; in haste his hand with its freezing fingers writes

words which his own dim eye can scarcely make out. Hours on end he sits thus and writes until his eyes burn and water. It is a rare stroke of good fortune in his life when some helper pities him and offers to be his scribe for an hour or two. When the weather is fair the solitary one goes out, always alone, always with his thoughts. Never a greeting along the way, never a companion, never an encounter. Gloomy weather, rain and snow, which he hates and which causes his eyes to ache, holds him uncharitably a prisoner in his room. He never ventures down to the others, the people. In the evening just a couple of biscuits and a cup of weak tea before returning immediately to the infinite loneliness with his thoughts. Hour upon hour he sits with the jerking, smoking lamp, and still his severely punished nerves do not slacken into gentle weariness. Then he grabs the chloral hydrate, anything to induce sleep, and finally compels himself to sleep like the others, the thoughtless ones, the ones not driven by a demon.

Sometimes he stays in bed for days. Vomiting and cramps which all but cause him to lose consciousness, grating pain in his temples, almost total blindness. But no one visits him, no one brings him anything, no poultice for his burning forehead, no one to read to him or chat with him or make him laugh.

And this Chambre garnie is the same everywhere. The names of the cities change often; they are called now Sorrento, now Turin, now Venice, now Nice, now Marienbad, but the Chambre garnie stays the same. Always the strange, rented room with cold, old, worn-out furniture, the working-table, the suffering-bed and the unending loneliness. Not once in all those long, nomadic years did he relax in the company of cheerful friends; not one night did he feel the warm body of a woman pressed upon him; never the dawn of fame after the thousand dark, silent nights of work! Oh, how much vaster is Nietzsche's loneliness than the picturesque plateau of Sils-Maria where tourists are now given, between lunch and dinner, to searching out where he lived. His loneliness extends over the whole world, from one end of his life to the other.

Now and then a guest, a stranger, a visitor. But the crust is already too hard, too strong, around the core which yearns for human contact; the solitary one heaves a sigh of relief when the stranger leaves him once again to his loneliness. "Togetherness" has entirely disappeared in fifteen years;³³ conversation tires, exhausts, exasperates this man who consumes himself and yet longs only for himself. Once in a while, for but a moment, a little ray of happiness breaks through --it is music. A production of Carmen in a second-rate theater in Nice, an aria or two in a concert, an hour at the piano. And yet this happiness too becomes overpowering, it "moves him to tears." That from which he has abstained is lost to such an extent that he experiences it as pain--it hurts.

For fifteen years he burrows from Chambre garnie to Chambre garnie, unknown, unrecognized, known only to himself--the horrible journey in the shadow of big cities, through poorly furnished rooms, second-rate hotels, greasy train carriages and many sickrooms, while outside on the surface of the times the bustling life of the arts and sciences shouts itself hoarse in the gay mood of a county fair. Only Dostoevsky's flight in the almost identical years, in identical poverty and identical negligence possesses this same gray, ghostlike aura. In both cases the work of the titan conceals the haggard figure of poor Lazarus who dies daily in his misery and frailty and who is resurrected daily by a redeeming miracle of the creative will. For fifteen years Nietzsche rises thus out of the coffin of his room and goes down again, from suffering to suffering, from death to death, from resurrection to resurrection, until finally his high-strung and overheated brain shatters. Collapsed in the street, the least-known man of his day is found by strangers. Strangers take him up to the strange room in the Via Carlo Alberto in Turin. No one is a witness to the death of his mind, just as no one witnessed its life. Darkness surrounds his downfall, and holy loneliness. Unaccompanied and unknown, the most brilliant intellectual genius plunges into his own night.³⁴

Without wishing to detract from this sensitive and moving portrait, it must be said in all fairness that at the end, Nietzsche was not entirely alone. His friend, Overbeck, was there. He had travelled to Turin to bring Nietzsche home.

The moment I saw Nietzsche again was an especially dreadful moment and totally different from all that followed. I discovered him cowering at the end of his couch reading (as I later found out, the last proofs of Nietzsche contra Wagner) and looking pitifully wasted. He saw me, recognized me, bolted toward me, threw his arms around me, broke into a flood of tears and sank back onto the couch in convulsions. I was so upset that I too was unable to stay on my feet. Did the abyss on whose brink he stood, or rather into which he had fallen, open up in that moment? At any rate, nothing like that happened again. By now the entire Kino family (Nietzsche's landlord) was present. No sooner was Nietzsche lying there moaning and convulsing than he was given the bromine water from the table to drink. Immediately he quieted down and laughingly began to tell me about the big reception which was planned for the evening. With that he had entered the realm of delusions from which he never emerged as long as he was with me, in which, though still always aware of me and others, he was completely shrouded in darkness about his own condition.³⁵

The next eleven and a half years saw Nietzsche's condition deteriorate slowly until in August 1900 he died, shortly before his fifty-sixth birthday.

This, then, is who Nietzsche was. How are we to take him? H. L. Mencken said, "Nietzsche's literalness is the hall mark of his entire philosophy."³⁶ Conversely, Thomas Mann said, "Who takes Nietzsche at face value, takes him literally, who believes him, is lost. With him in truth

it is the same as with Seneca whom he calls a man to whom one should lend his ear, but never "trust and faith."³⁷ Mann is closer to the truth. Nietzsche is not to be taken with grave seriousness nor with tongue-in-cheek; he is not to be swallowed whole nor wholly rejected. It is not a case of either/or. He means what he says, but he is also a jester. He is the provoker par excellence; he wants to be listened to, yes, but more than that he wants sparring partners. What follows in these pages is my attempt to take Nietzsche on at a few of the points at which I find him most provocative.³⁸ It is also, I hope, a contribution to that new, more positive approach to Nietzsche mentioned above.

There are scholars today who are of the opinion that "rehabilitation of Nietzsche can perhaps go too far."³⁹ But, on my view, Albert Camus was probably right: "In the history of the intelligence, with the exception of Marx, Nietzsche's adventure has no equivalent; we shall never finish making reparations for the injustice done to him."⁴⁰ One thing is sure. There is no getting around Nietzsche. Like it or not, we must go through him. "He will disquiet you; he will disturb your dreams; you'll have a lot to swallow; he won't taste good to you; you won't be able to digest him; he won't agree with you. His readers he will change."⁴¹ But, then, there may be healing in him and his "glad tidings."⁴²

NOTES

- 1) Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke in drei Bänden, ed. Karl Schlechtha (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954-56), vol. III, p. 1152. Hereafter, cited thus: Nietzsche, Werke.
- 2) Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, Inc., 1959), p. 266.
- 3) Thomas Mann's Addresses (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1963).
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 98: "Nietzsche...is the most complete and irredeemable aesthete known to the history of the human mind, and his premise containing his Dionysian pessimism, i.e., that life can be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon, is most exactly correct of him, his life, his work as a thinker and a poet...."
- 5) *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- 6) This volume contained The Wagner Case, Nietzsche contra Wagner, Twilight of the Idols and The Antichrist.
- 7) Toward a Genealogy of Morals (1897); Dawn (1903); Thus Spoke Zarathustra (retranslated by Thomas Common and published in parts in 1905, 1907, and 1908); Beyond Good and Evil (1907); Human, All-too-Human (1908).
- 8) Gertrud von Petzold, "Nietzsche in englisch-amerikanischer Beurteilung bis zum Ausgang des Weltkrieges," Anglia. Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie, Band XLI, Heft 1/2 (1929) p. 137: "The editor, Oscar Levy, has a personality all his own. For many years a respected physician in London, as well as a journalist and Nietzsche-enthusiast, he financed the translation with his own resources after the failure of Tille's project. He was well aware of the difficulties involved in such a project, and with humor and toughness he spared no means in arriving at the goal, namely, to create an atmosphere favorable to Nietzsche's philosophy and to gain it recognition."

- 9) Max Nordau, Degeneration (London: William Heinemann, 1895), p. 453.
- 10) Ibid., p. 451.
- 11) Ibid., p. 416.
- 12) Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, "Friedrich Nietzsche: His Life and Works," Blackwood's Magazine, 162 (October 1895), p. 476.
- 13) Ibid.
- 14) To be exact, Beyond Good and Evil, Toward a Genealogy of Morals, Twilight of the Idols, The Wagner Case and The Antichrist get hardly more than a mention. One gets the impression that Pringle-Pattison is hurrying to tie up his essay, consequently the summary of these late works dwindles to a sentence or two apiece. He scolds Nietzsche for his "colossal egotism and self-assurance" (p. 493), especially with reference to some of his more intemperate attacks on Christianity in The Antichrist. At the end of the article Pringle-Pattison very nearly invokes the spirit of "our Puritan forefathers" (p. 493) asking us to see "the just judgment of God in the melancholy fate which overtook him (Nietzsche)." (p. 493) But he reconsiders, and charity wins out over the spirit of judgment.
- 15) Havelock Ellis, Affirmations (London: Walter Scott, Ltd., 1898), p. 1.
- 16) Ibid., p. 2.
- 17) Ibid., p. 35.
- 18) Ibid., p. 83.
- 19) William Wallace, Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics, ed. Edward Caird (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 54.
- 20) Henry L. Mencken, The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908), p. xi.
- 21) Ibid., p. ix.

- 22) These are some of Mencken's chapter headings.
- 23) H. L. Mencken, "The Mailed Fist and Its Prophet," The Atlantic Monthly, 114 (1914), p. 606.
- 24) William Mackintire Salter, Nietzsche the Thinker (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1917), p. v.
- 25) *Ibid.*, p. 470.
- 26) This is not the place for entering into a discussion about whether Nietzsche was, in fact, in any way responsible for Nazism. I personally am convinced that, in a qualified sense, he is a twig or maybe even a branch on the intellectual family tree of Nazism; but definitely not the trunk or the roots. The roots extend deep into Germany's intellectual past, and the tree itself includes just about every major figure in that past, up to and including Hegel. These men were not Nazis in any sense of the word, but it would be absurd to deny that they had a hand in creating the climate in which Nazism could flourish--could flourish, not was bound to come. By their fruits shall ye know them. Not Nietzsche alone, or even most of all, as the grand architect, but he and his intellectual forebears sharing responsibility.
- 27) For example, Georg Lukacs, whose Essays on Thomas Mann, trans. Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1964), though not new, has recently appeared in English translation. One of the essays in the book, "Thomas Mann on the Literary Heritage," first published in 1936, contains this paragraph:

Thomas Mann is right: Nietzsche is indeed the most influential thinker and writer of the last several decades in Germany. The point is, however, which direction does this influence take, who are his consistent and legitimate successors? This is not a question of Nietzsche's intellectual level or stylistic talents. I myself have tried to show that Nietzsche is not to be wished away by a sleight of the hand or a few phrases (Nietzsche as Forerunner of Fascist Aesthetics in Contributions to a History of Aesthetics). But I also show that the nub of Nietzsche's philosophy

is the philosophical argument for barbarism which fascism turned into a terrible political and cultural reality. Nietzsche uses the classical heritage in order to barbarize it at a high intellectual level, to destroy all the bridges between the revolutionary humanism of the classical period of human development and imperialist ideology. Thus by looking to Nietzsche for theoretical support in his humanist endeavors, in his struggle against fascist barbarism, Mann seeks a source which cannot help him. In intellect, culture, talent, insight and honesty Thomas Mann towers above any fascist ideologist--yet fascist consequences will always follow more consistently from Nietzsche than anti-fascist ones. (pp. 156-57)

In addition, selections from Lukacs' Die Zerstörung der Vernunft (Neuwied und Berlin: Herman Luchterhand Verlag, 1962) (the book was completed in 1952), have only recently appeared in a paperback edition under the title Von Nietzsche zu Hitler (Frankfurt a.M. und Hamburg: Fischer Bucherei, 1966). The first third of this new edition is made up of a chapter with the self-explanatory heading, "Nietzsche als Begründer des Irrationalismus der imperialistischen Periode."

- 28) See Richard Blunck, Friedrich Nietzsche. Kindheit und Jugend (Basel, 1953) and Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche. Eine Freundschaft (Jena: Diederichs, 1908), the former being a biography of Nietzsche through 1896, the latter a collection of material, including reminiscences of friends and acquaintances, covering the years 1896-1900. Also useful are Lou Andreas-Salomé, Lebensrückblick, ed. Ernst Pfeiffer (Zurich und Wiesbaden, 1957); Paul Deussen, Erinnerungen an Friedrich Nietzsche (Leipzig, 1901); Erich Podach, Gestalten um Nietzsche (Weimar, 1932). R. J. Hollingdale's Nietzsche. The Man and His Philosophy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) provides perhaps the best introduction in English to Nietzsche's life and thought.
- 29) C. A. Bernoulli, *ibid.*, I, pp. 252-53.

- 30) Ibid., p. 59.
- 31) Ibid., pp. 63, 65-66, 67.
- 32) Ibid., p. 236.
- 33) Zweig errs here and twice again below. Nietzsche led this kind of existence for roughly ten years.
- 34) Stefan Zweig, Baumeister der Welt (Frankfurt a.M: S. Fischer Verlag, 1966), pp. 309-12.
- 35) Bernoulli, op. cit., II, pp. 233-34.
- 36) Mencken, The Philosophy....., p. viii.
- 37) Mann, op. cit., p. 99.
- 38) The challenge to engage Nietzsche rather than concentrating on praising or blaming him was laid down most recently in a perceptive review article by Philippa Foot in The New York Review of Books, "Immoralist," (February 17, 1966), pp. 8 and 10.
- 39) Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Denazification of Nietzsche" New Statesman (19 March 1965), p. 444.
- 40) Albert Camus, The Rebel, trans. Anthony Bower (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1956), p. 75.
- 41) Günther Grass, "Über meinen Lehrer Döblin," Akzente. Zeitschrift für Dichtung, 14. Jahrgang, Heft 4 (1967), p. 309.
- 42) Contra Craine Brinton, whose recently reissued Nietzsche of 1941 (Harper Torchbook paperback ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1965), ends with the words, "There is no healing in him." (p. 250) Even the fine critic, Philip Toynbee, admits:

I have never been able to help concluding that Nietzsche was more a symptom than a physician; that his whole concept of the Superman is a piece of very unpleasant romantic nonsense; that the will to power remains the primal offence against which Christian love is still fighting a good fight;

that the doctrine of eternal recurrence is self-contradictory mumbo-jumbo, and that Nietzsche was a man of brilliant incidental perceptions whose "total philosophy" is a mixture of forced paradox, shrill diabolism and infantile tautology.

The Observer, (April 11, 1965), p. 31.

2. From Pascal to Nietzsche

What he (Goethe) aimed at was totality; he fought against the sundering of reason, sensuality, feeling, will...¹

--Nietzsche

I

It is commonly said of great men that they are ahead of their times. But in the intellectual history of the past one hundred years Nietzsche's untimeliness is surely unequalled. A moral philosopher has recently written that "Nietzsche in fact stands at the point at which all the contradictory influences of the nineteenth century are brought to bear."² Such an appraisal is, if anything, too modest in scope. Trying to ferret out all the possible influences on Nietzsche is much like attempting to pin down "Nietzsche's influence" in the century since he began publishing; it would seem that at nearly every turn his influence can be felt. This by way of warning.

What follows in this section is highly eclectic and deliberately sketchy; it falls also, I hope, into the category of a particular sort of intellectual history. Not in the strict sense of the phrase a history of ideas, but based on the assumption that "an idea has no actuality until a concrete individual somewhere in time and space has produced it from his own mind."³ Which is but another way of expressing what Nietzsche put this way:

Gradually I have become aware what hitherto every great philosophy has been, namely the personal confession of its author, and a kind of involuntary and unnoticed memoir....⁴

Faced with so many "concrete individuals" who made their mark on Nietzsche, we have chosen to set up a few signposts on which we may be able to take our bearings for a clear comprehension of Nietzsche.

II

It is from Nietzsche himself that we take Pascal as a fruitful point of departure. In a letter to Georg Brandes, the shrillness of which betrays the approach of Nietzsche's final collapse which was at the time of this letter only a few short weeks away, two very sane and honest sentences stand out.

I believe your words about Dostoevsky absolutely. I esteem him, on the other hand, as the most valuable psychological material that I know. I am indebted to him in a strange way, however much he may offend my most basic instincts. Roughly my relationship to Pascal, whom I nearly love because he has taught me so infinitely much--the only logical Christian.⁵

Whether Pascal goes against Nietzsche's own basic instincts is extremely doubtful. Probably the opposite is true--that the longer Nietzsche wrestles with Pascal the more convinced he becomes that he and Pascal are brothers. That he considers Pascal his match is abundantly clear from the sparring that goes on between the two from 1881

onward (the time of Dawn when Nietzsche becomes aware that Pascal is much more than merely the most profound of the French moralists).⁶ Nietzsche is torn between his desire for victory over Pascal, which would be for him a victory over Christianity as well,⁷ and his desire for a blessing from his opponent.

It has been said of Pascal that he is "the strongest personality in French literature."⁸

This personality is revealed in the beliefs and in the way they are expressed. It is the essence of every admirer's image of Pascal that he was both a great scientist and a critic of the rationalist philosophy which emerged with the rise of modern science, and that he was also a passionately religious man whose attitude to faith and to skepticism was profoundly affected by his being a scientist and a mathematician. Pascal was not, like Newton, a great scientist who retained his faith in spite of his science; he possessed both faith and the scientific spirit more fully, more passionately, than most men are capable of. He also felt the need to define the place of both in the life of man.⁹

Nietzsche too felt the need to define the place of both faith and the scientific spirit in the life of man; it was Nietzsche's recognition of Pascal as a brother-in-arms in this task that made him seek his blessing. His equally strong desire to defeat Pascal can only be understood historically, that is by taking into account the historical fact of the death of God. As we noticed above, Pascal was not a man of faith first and a man of science only inci-

dentally, not vice versa. It can also be said of Nietzsche, though he was not a man of faith in any traditional sense of that phrase,¹⁰ that he possessed both faith and the scientific spirit in equal measure. The unbridgeable gulf that separated the two men is the death of God. Nor was it Nietzsche's intention to try to bridge the gulf, but 'to accept his (Pascal's) analysis of reality while circumventing his conclusions."¹¹ What were these conclusions?

Lucien Goldmann has claimed that Pascal's was a tragic vision of the world. Following the early Georg Lukacs, Goldmann understands this to mean

the vision of a world where God is no longer present, and yet even in his absence life has to be lived out by the tragic hero with the eye of God upon him. Because God is absent, the hero cannot succeed in the world. Because God, though absent, still regards him, he cannot abandon his task. He is the just man under condemnation....¹²

According to Goldmann, Pascal's doctrine of man can be summed up thus:

...man as we know him is a creature torn apart by different tendencies, made up on every plane of antagonistic elements, each of which is both necessary and inadequate: body and mind, good and evil, justice and power, form and content, the geometrical and the intuitive mind, reason and passion, etc. ...the essence of man lies in the very fact that he can neither choose one of these antagonistic elements nor accept tension and antagonism. His very nature compels him to strive after a synthesis...on all and every plane. But this ideal synthesis can never be achieved on earth, and can come only from a transcendent being, from God.¹³

It is thus obvious that for Pascal the wager is the clue to life. Only by placing one's trust, in spite of the findings of rational science, in a transcendent, hidden God, can man, this bundle of otherwise unbearable tensions, find rest. Such trust and the ensuing synthesis of antagonisms was by no means construed by Pascal as an escape from the world or a flight into asceticism. On the contrary, this was his formula for living in the world. The unbearable tensions were not to be resolved by the wager but sustained and made bearable.

In my view, Pascal's attitude stems from the fact that he carries the idea of the hidden God--or, rather, of the God who hides Himself--to the extreme point where he sees God as preventing man from discovering not only His will but also His existence. It is precisely because, for man in his fallen state, the existence of God has become a hope and a certainty of the heart--that is to say, an uncertain and paradoxical certainty--that man can no longer find a sure and certain refuge by simply withdrawing from the world. It is in the world, or at least in the presence of the world, that man must now express both his rejection of any relative values and his quest for values that shall be authentic and transcendental.¹⁴

Nietzsche's doctrine of man coincides remarkably with that of Pascal. Why, then, was Nietzsche so intent upon circumventing Pascal's conclusions?

It is not, as one might think, that Pascal's conclusions were "too Christian" for Nietzsche; rather, Christian or not, Nietzsche found them inadequate to the task of

binding together faith and the scientific spirit, a task which had become infinitely more complicated and difficult since Pascal owing to the death of God. Whereas Pascal could remain unswervingly scientific in his assurance that his faith was in a living, though hidden, God, Nietzsche was faced with the immeasurably more precarious and unnerving task of remaining rational in the time of the death of God. Thus Pascal became his brother-enemy whom he was bound to love and overcome.

This leads us, if not chronologically then by virtue of the shared dilemma, to Goethe. Erich Heller has written, in a terse sentence packed with significance, "Indeed, Nietzsche knew who Goethe was."¹⁵ And Goethe was, for Nietzsche, the moralist of knowledge.¹⁶ It was, generally speaking, "the notion of a possible sin of the mind" (Heller again) which links Pascal, Goethe and Nietzsche.

For a hint as to how Nietzsche conceived of Goethe's morality of knowledge we must draw attention to the quotation which stands at the head of this section.

What he (Goethe) aimed at was totality; he fought against the sundering of reason, sensuality, feeling, will....¹⁷

It is, then, more specifically, this "sundering of man, this reduction of man to his composite parts, this pigeon-holing of man's various faculties that Goethe fought which makes him Pascal's heir and Nietzsche's ancestor. And

this struggle is rooted in Goethe's belief that there is such a thing as worthless knowledge. Such a statement is easily misconstrued. He was not in any sense of the word anti-intellectual; but he was convinced of the dangers of excessive rationality (the development of man's mind at the expense of his body, the uncritical belief in knowledge for the sake of knowledge). "Truth is what man is meant to know--this is the centre of Goethe's intellectual existence."¹⁸

While perhaps justly being impatient and unsatisfied with this "meant" and believing (probably wrongly) that the boundaries of knowledge were more clearly defined in Goethe's day than in ours, we nevertheless must take notice of what Goethe is saying here, for he has his finger on something immensely important both for our understanding of Nietzsche and for our understanding of ourselves. Although he is unable to give any simple formula for determining what man is "meant" to know, we would do well to take with utmost seriousness "his intuitive certainty that knowledge can only be true as long as it is not in excess of man's feelings,"¹⁹ his "belief that evil arises from any knowing and doing of man that is in excess of his 'being.'"²⁰ The question is whether man's rational faculty is to be developed without regard to man as a totality,

or in conjunction with "sensuality, feeling, will."

Goethe's unequivocal answer to this question is: "everything that sets our minds free without giving us mastery over ourselves is pernicious."²¹

Our subject is not "Nietzsche's view of Goethe," thus we cannot allow ourselves space for a detailed documentation of Nietzsche's conception of his forebear. Nevertheless, it is essential, both for our clear understanding of Goethe as a moralist of knowledge and for our later comprehension of Nietzsche's Übermensch, that we note here the development of Nietzsche's way of viewing Goethe. Suffice it to say that it does develop and change from an early, conventional misconception of Goethe as serene and severe (this is the Goethe-as-Olympian tradition which persists even today) to a conception which makes Goethe's own "self-overcomings" its very center. This development can be thrown into relief by setting three quotations from Nietzsche's works side by side and comparing the first, from 1874, with the last two, from 1886 and 1888, respectively.

Goethe's image of man is...of the contemplative man in great style, who is able to avoid languishing on earth only by gathering together everything which was and still is important and noteworthy and using it to nourish himself, as if life consisted merely of living from one desire to the next. He is not the active man.... The Goethean man is a preserving and conciliatory force....²²

The vital point is that the greatest men may have great virtues, but precisely their opposites as well. I believe that great men arise from the presence of opposites and a consciousness of them --the tautly-spanned bow.²³

Goethe--not a German event, but a European one; a magnificent attempt to overcome the eighteenth century by a return to nature, by an ascent to the naturalness of the Renaissance--a kind of self-overcoming on the part of that century. He bore its strongest instincts within himself.... he did not retire from life, but put himself into the midst of it.... What he wanted was totality; ...he disciplined himself to wholeness, he created himself.²⁴

The movement is from Goethe the contemplative Olympian to Goethe the tautly-spanned bow; the latter being the embodiment in the moralist of knowledge himself of his own struggle against the temptation to give free rein to one part of himself at the expense of his whole self, and his successful combining and balancing of the constantly contending "strongest instincts"--"reason, sensuality, feeling, will...."

With the third "signpost," we move out of the realm of positive influences on Nietzsche to have a look at two men with whom he had to come to terms, simply by virtue of their determinative influence on philosophy in general in the roughly one hundred years which elapsed between 1762-63 when David Hume aroused Kant from his dogmatic slumbers,²⁵ and 1866 when Nietzsche discovered Kant.²⁶

If what Goethe wanted was totality, it was the very separation of "reason, sensuality, feeling, will," which was "preached in the most horrible scholasticism by Kant"-- an undertaking which is responsible for Nietzsche's bestowing upon Kant the highly unendearing title "the antipode of Goethe."²⁷ Not that Nietzsche was unaware of Kant's positive achievement. On the contrary, he even expressed his gratitude to him by reminding the readers of his The Gay Science of

the enormous question mark which Kant wrote on the concept of "causality"--not that he doubted its very right, as did Hume, rather, on the contrary, he began cautiously to fix the boundaries of the realm within which this notion has any meaning at all.... ..as Germans we share Kant's doubt about the ultimate validity of scientific knowledge and, indeed, about everything which can be known causaliter; the know-able as such seems to us of little value.²⁸

It is Kant whom we must thank for this posture of skepticism in the face of knowledge. What made him Goethe's opposite was certainly not this, but rather his "sundering" of man which had its roots in Kant's own unexamined moral prejudice, which, in turn, was grounded in his (again, unexamined) belief in God. This God, though he is no longer conceived of as the giver of commandments, is ultimately there behind the scenes bestowing freedom (without which the rational man who has imposed moral demands upon himself could not do his duty, i.e. fulfill the self-

imposed commands), immortality (when happiness will be the reward of the obedient ones), and happiness itself.

Kant's notion of a categorical imperative rested upon his "discovery" in man of a capacity to make synthetic a priori judgments. This led him to ask, "How are synthetic judgments possible a priori? And what did he answer? By virtue of a virtue."²⁹ And this "virtue," this capacity which Kant "discovered" (Nietzsche remarks that this took place at a time "when it was not yet customary to distinguish between 'discovering' and 'inventing,'" ("finden" und "erfinden")),³⁰ he made the foundation for his new moral demand system. What is more, he went ahead to claim, on the basis of his analysis of man's moral consciousness, that the ethical value of an act depends, not upon its effects, but upon the motives of the actor; in short, nothing is good except the good will. Kant set out to find a moral standpoint which transcended both authority and experience and "discovered" it in man's autonomous will. That men often fail to do the good is not a sign of bad intentions or of questionable motives, but of a failure to do their duty. This, then, is how Kant separated man's will off and elevated it to a position of incorruptibility at the expense of the whole man.

Furthermore, his conception of morality as duty, as

obedience to an ostensibly self-imposed demand (which in reality is nothing more than an empty abstraction)³¹ was so revolting to Nietzsche that he made it the theme of one of his sharpest polemics against Kant.

What could destroy us more quickly than working, thinking, and feeling without any inner necessity, without any deeply personal choice, without pleasure--as an automaton of "duty"? This is the very recipe for decadence, even for idiocy. Kant became an idiot. And this man was a contemporary of Goethe!³²

How are synthetic judgments possible a priori? This was Kant's question.

"By virtue of a virtue," he said, or at least meant. But is that really an answer? An explanation? Is it not rather only a repeating of the question?...It is finally time to replace the Kantian question, "How are synthetic judgments possible a priori?" with another question, "Why is it necessary to believe in such judgments?" It is time for us to comprehend that such judgments must be believed true (false though they may actually be) in order to preserve creatures such as we are. Or to put it more plainly, crudely and to the point, synthetic judgments should not be possible" at all a priori--coming from us they are nothing but false judgments. But it must be remembered that belief in their truth is necessary as a provisional and eye-witness faith that belongs in the perspective-optics of life.³³

The very form of Nietzsche's question makes it so different from Kant's: not "how is it possible" but "why is it necessary." Because he was an unavowed metaphysician and moralist,³⁴ Kant, faced with a non-moral world inhabited by moral men, asked how it is possible, and discovered a

moral (ultimately, religious) capacity in man (ultimately, above man, in God) to account for it. Nietzsche, confronted with the same phenomenon, but being suspicious of metaphysics and morals, asked why is it necessary, and concluded that men have a need for belief in moral demands --a conclusion which led him, as we shall see later on, not to metaphysics but to an analysis of the various moral demand systems men have constructed for themselves and lived by.

Nietzsche's difference from other naturalistic philosophers must be sought first in his profound concern whether universally valid values and a meaningful life are at all possible in a godless world, and secondly in his impassioned scorn for those who simply take for granted the validity of any particular set of values which happens to have the sanction of their religion, class, society, or state. He did not consider it the philosopher's task to develop his ingenuity, or his disingenuousness, in "the finding of bad reasons for what we believe on instinct." Nietzsche himself considered his opposition to rationalization a major point of departure from traditional philosophy; and it is undoubtedly the source of many of his most far-reaching differences with Kant and Hegel.³⁵

This brings us to the second man of major importance in Nietzsche's more immediate philosophical past. Of Hegel, Nietzsche wrote in The Gay Science,

We Germans are Hegelians, even if there had never been a Hegel, insofar as we (in contrast to all Latins) instinctively attribute a much deeper meaning and richer value to becoming, to development, than to what "is"; we hardly believe in the validity of the concept of "being." Also insofar as we are not inclined to concede to our human logic that it is logic as such, the only kind of

logic (we would much rather persuade ourselves that it is only one special case, and perhaps one of the queerest and most stupid, at that).³⁶

By "Hegelian" Nietzsche is referring to Hegel's philosophy only in a most attenuated manner. It is rather much more a certain sensibility which he means to convey by calling himself and his fellow Germans, indeed even his fellow Europeans, "Hegelian." In his polemical essay, The Wagner Case, Nietzsche writes about this sensibility.

Let us recall that Wagner was young at the time when Hegel and Schelling were seducing the intellects; that he divined, that he grasped with his hands that which only a German takes seriously--the "Idea." That is to say, something dark, uncertain, ominous; as clarity is objectionable to Germans, logic negative. ...Hegel is a mood, and not just a German but a European mood as well. A mood which Wagner grasped, which he felt he could match, and which he made eternal! He merely turned it into music; he created for himself a style which "meant eternity." He became "Hegel's heir--music as "Idea."

And how Wagner was understood! The same kind of person who used to rave about Hegel, raves today about Wagner; in his school one even composes Hegelian! Best of all, Wagner was understood by the young German man. Alone the two words "eternal" and "meaning" sufficed; they made him feel inimitably good. It is not music with which Wagner conquered the young men, it is the "Idea"; it is the enigmatic in his art, its playing hide-and-seek behind a hundred symbols, its polychromy of the ideal which beckons and entices these young men to Wagner. It is Wagner's genius for creating clouds, his grasping, rambling, sweeping through the air, his everywhere and nowhere, exactly the same things with which Hegel seduced them. In the midst of Wagner's multiplicity, fullness and caprice they are as though justified in themselves --"redeemed."³⁷

At a time when the European conscience was about to "forbid itself the lie of belief in God"³⁸ in the name of intellectual honesty, Hegel seduced it. Thanks to his unacknowledged Christian morality, he was able to counter this honest atheism and convince his fellow Europeans, for the time being, that they were, after all, "redeemed."

Hegel was its (atheism's) retarder par excellence, in virtue of the gradual attempt he made finally to persuade us, with the help of our sixth sense, the "historical sense," of the divinity of existence.³⁹

R. F. Beerling has summarized Nietzsche's critique of Hegel this way:

When Nietzsche criticizes Hegel for being a "retarder par excellence," he is considering his system the last dam which could still restrain the irresistible atheistic water pressure for awhile. ...According to the famous words with which Hegel closes his treatise on Faith and Knowledge, the unending pain of the soul occasioned by the death of God can only be soothed by perceiving that death as the "instance of the highest Idea" and by giving religion a "philosophical existence" by transposing the empirical suffering of the dying God to the height of a speculative Good Friday.⁴⁰

Nietzsche's disagreement with Hegel is probably clearest in their contrasting attitudes to history. Hegel believed that the aims and goals of various peoples in the many different historical eras could be understood as the relative expressions of their desire for and progress toward freedom. He conceived of the task of philosophy as

the examination and explication of these aims and goals in their various historical settings. In other words, philosophy was for him basically philosophy of history.⁴¹

It has been claimed (notably, by Karl Löwith)⁴² that Hegel's philosophy (read: philosophy of history) is eschatological in nature. This would seem difficult to substantiate in view of the fact that eschatology is concerned primarily with the future and history with the past. Hegel undoubtedly saw himself as the last in a long line of philosophers who always looked back to assess what, in fact, had already come to pass. Indeed, he himself was outspoken in this regard.

To say one word about preaching what the world ought to be like, philosophy always arrives too late for that. As thought of the world, it appears at a time when actuality has completed its developmental process and is finished. ...The owl of Minerva begins its flight while dusk is falling.⁴³

Thus, Hegel places himself squarely in the tradition of those who philosophize as the sun is setting rather than at dawn.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, what at first glance appears to be an impossible claim, turns out, on a closer look, to be quite convincing. History as the thoughtful consideration of things past must be set beside history as the unfolding of freedom in the world, the self-actualization of or

coming-to-consciousness of the spirit (Geist). Hegel writes, in the introduction to the Philosophy of History,

It must be observed at the outset, that the phenomenon we investigate--Universally History-- belongs to the realm of Spirit.⁴⁵

...the essence of Spirit is Freedom. ...Freedom is the sole truth of Spirit. ...Spirit may be defined...as that which has its centre in itself. It has not a unity outside itself, but has already found it; it exists in and with itself. ...Spirit is self-contained existence. Now this is Freedom, exactly.⁴⁶

The principle of Development involves also the existence of a latent germ of being--a capacity or potentiality striving to realize itself. This formal conception finds actual existence in Spirit.⁴⁷

The goal of attainment we determined at the outset: it is Spirit in its Completeness, in its essential nature, i.e. Freedom. This is the fundamental object, and therefore also the leading principle of the development....⁴⁸

In short, the philosophy of history is, to be sure, a discipline "after the fact"; but the investigation of what has been is very different from a mere critical cataloguing of events; for the events which are of prime concern belong to universal history, that is to the realm of Spirit, which is self-contained and in the process of becoming complete in itself, of fulfilling itself. Universal history, the subject of philosophy of history, is "the progress in the consciousness of freedom,"⁴⁹ freedom being both the principle of the progress (Development) and its final goal (Completeness).

This is eschatology. Which is to say that history is judged "on the basis of the final stage...."⁵⁰ It is also a highly dubious invocation of success as the final criterion for judging history. For, according to Hegel, everything that was, was a manifestation of the progressive self-realization of Spirit.

For Nietzsche's response to Hegel on this topic of history, we can do no better than listen to his critique in the second Untimely Meditation.

I believe there has been no dangerous turning point in the progress of German culture in this century that has not been made more dangerous by the enormous and still living influence of this Hegelian philosophy. Truly, the belief that one is a latecomer to the world is harmful and degrading; but such a belief must appear frightful and devastating if one day with a brazen inversion it divinizes this latecomer as the true meaning and object of all past creation and makes his conscious misery the perfection of the world's history. ...History understood in this Hegelian way has been contemptuously called God's sojourn upon earth--though this God was first created by history. He became transparent and intelligible inside Hegelian skulls and climbed up all the dialectically possible steps in his becoming, even up to his self-revelation, so that for Hegel the highest and final stage of the world-process converged in his own Berlin existence. He ought to have said that everything after him was merely to be regarded as the musical coda of the great historical rondo, or rather, as simply superfluous. He did not say that. Instead he has implanted in a generation thoroughly leavened by him a respect for the "power of history" which turns into a naked admiration of success and an idolatry of the factual nearly every moment--into whose service the very mythological and very German expression "taking the facts seriously" has been

drawn. But whoever has once learned to bend his back and bow his head before the "power of history" will in the end nod his "yes" like a Chinese doll to every power, be it a government or public opinion or a numerical majority; his limbs will keep time to whatever "power" pulls the strings.⁵¹

It will not suffice to say that Nietzsche is here merely polemicizing against "the 'influence' of Hegel--less against Hegel's own philosophy."⁵² In the paragraph immediately following the one just cited, Nietzsche writes,

I would say that history emphasizes, "once upon a time"; morality, "you ought not" or "you should not have. Thus history becomes a compendium of actual immorality. How grave an error he would commit who regarded history as the judge of this immorality!⁵³

He who is in error here is, of course, Hegel himself. True, the Young Hegelians did transform Hegel's "metaphysical historicism" which was essentially "retrospective and reminiscent" into a "historical futurism."⁵⁴ But this transformation is not what Nietzsche is criticizing. Rather, he sees Hegel's error as two-fold: on the one hand, in that he conceived of history as the realm of Spirit instead of as a compendium of immorality; on the other, in that he relied completely on this Spirit to be a limiting and correcting agent, to be in fact the only true judge of immorality!

An unpublished note from the time of Beyond Good and Evil reads thus:

Kant: a realm of moral values, withdrawn from us, invisible, real.

Hegel: a demonstrable development, a becoming visible of the moral realm.

We choose to be deceived in neither the Kantian nor the Hegelian manner. We no longer believe, as they, in morality and thus have no need to establish philosophies in order that the validity of morality may be maintained.⁵⁵

Finally, then, Nietzsche traces the considerable positive achievements of both Kant and Hegel to a shared unquestioned belief in morality.

You see, a critique of the ideal itself was never undertaken, rather only a critique of the problem of where the contradiction to the ideal comes from, why the ideal still has not been reached or why it is not demonstrable in the world at hand.⁵⁶

To proceed, as we now must, from Hegel to Schopenhauer would seem quite a giant step, in spite of the fact that the two philosophers were contemporaries. Schopenhauer just does not seem to "fit in nineteenth century German philosophy nor in our introductory survey from Pascal to Nietzsche. Be that as it may, he did exert a major influence on Nietzsche, as well as on two generations of philosophers who came of age between roughly the middle and the end of the nineteenth century. The path from Hegel to Schopenhauer is, to say the least, crooked and fairly difficult to follow. In fact, it has been followed by only a few historians of ideas,⁵⁷ thus leaving

the impression "that nothing significant had taken place between Hegel's death and the revitalization of Kant."⁵⁸ But something very significant indeed had taken place in those years, namely a radical theological-political-philosophical movement which took its impetus from Hegel. It was the failure of this movement, of Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner, of Ludwig Feuerbach and Moses Hess, Arnold Ruge and Karl Marx, to make its various critiques and developments of Hegel head that preceded and perhaps even in some sense caused the revitalization of Kant, whose most popular exponent was Arthur Schopenhauer.

One might legitimately say of Schopenhauer what Nietzsche said of Hegel, that he was a mood. The prevailing sense of alienation and helplessness in the 1850's was, in large measure, the result of the failure of the Young Hegelians, and it was this mood that Schopenhauer had unwittingly captured and embodied in his writings even while young students from all over Europe were flocking to Berlin to sit at the feet of his arch-enemy, Hegel. This mood, along with a thorough-going atheism, was what brought Nietzsche under the spell of Schopenhauer upon his discovery of him as a student in Leipzig in 1865. Nietzsche's personal account of this discovery, though not related in any direct way to the philosophical dead-end referred to above, may give us some insight into the reasons for Schopenhauer's delayed popularity.

It was during this time that I lived in a state of helpless indecision, alone with certain painful experiences and disappointments, without any real principles, without hope and without a single pleasant memory. My sole endeavor from morning till night was to put together a suitable life for myself. Now imagine how the reading of Schopenhauer's chief work must affect a man in such a condition. I found this book one day in old man Rohn's second-hand bookshop, took it in my hand, never having seen it before, and leafed through it. I do not know what demon whispered to me, "Take this book home with you." It happened, at any rate, contrary to my usual habit of avoiding haste when buying books. When I got home, I threw myself on to the couch with my newly-acquired treasure and began to let that energetic and gloomy genius work on me. Here every line cried renunciation, denial, resignation; here I saw a mirror in which I beheld the world, life and my own nature in terrifying grandeur. ..here I saw sickness and health, exile and refuge, hell and heaven.⁵⁹

As a young man Nietzsche's opinion of Schopenhauer changed very little. But by the time Dawn was published (1881), he had become very critical of Schopenhauer's philosophy, though his respect for him as a teacher and a man of intellectual courage never waned. Schopenhauer asked the question, "Has existence any meaning at all"?⁶⁰ And his own answer looked something like this.

Life is blind will, pure and simple. This blind will strives for existence, which is to say it strives toward its goal which is appearance as phenomenon, becoming object. The visible form of life which is will is matter. Being blind, life as will is cruel, taking no thought for what it destroys as it races headlong to

self-fulfillment. In short, life is suffering. Kant was on the right track when he admitted that life is essentially non-moral. But by making law and duty the central notions in his conception of ethics, he cancelled out his own best insight. For no amount of argument could succeed in convincing Schopenhauer that phrases such as "absolute obligation" and "categorical imperative" were anything but useless unless they were grounded, as they had originally been, on divine authority. Kant set out to establish an a priori basis for morality and ended up speaking about conformity to law--doing one's duty.

Everything he wrote on ethical topics was shot through with the ideas of command, reverence, and submission.... Presiding, in fact, over all Kant's theories broods the conception of an oracular legislating Reason, frequently elevated to the status of a hypostatized independent entity hidden in the recesses of the human soul, and forever issuing infallible judgments and decrees.⁶¹

Schopenhauer's alternative is at once aesthetic and ethical. Our sole attitude to life must be, not intellectual, as Kant had thought, but contemplative. All intellectualizing is but a gratuitous attempt to forget what we will be forever reminded of, namely that life is blind will. Only by contemplation, total resignation and a denial of the will to live can we hope to be redeemed from a life of suffering. Asceticism thus becomes, in Schopenhauer's alternative, not an act of self-mortification, but an expression of man's desire, in the face of life as the cruel drive of the World-Will toward self-

realization, to be free.

We shall have more to say later about Nietzsche's critique of Schopenhauer's doctrine of life as blind will.⁶² Let it be said at this point in the interest of brevity that Nietzsche came fairly early to find his teacher's answer as unconvincing as Kant's and Hegel's before him.

Schopenhauer's own answer to this question (Has existence any meaning at all?) was--forgive me--overly hasty and juvenile, merely a compromise, a standing still and getting stuck in just the Christian-ascetic moral perspectives the belief in which had been given notice along with the belief in God.⁶³

We should already be able to discern a recurring pattern in Nietzsche's dissatisfaction with his predecessors. As he delved into their "answers" he found again and again Christian morality and the Christian God. He noted in the early 1880's:

Basic insight: Kant, as well as Hegel, as well as Schopenhauer; the skeptical-epochal approach, as well as the historicizing, as well as the pessimistic, are of moral origin. I saw no one who would have dared a critique of moral value judgments....⁶⁴

Schopenhauer, for all "his unintelligent fury against Hegel"⁶⁵ and his revealing critique of and caution toward Kant, shared their unexamined belief in Christian morality and the God from which it derived its authority. "But he posed the question...."⁶⁶ And that question is what captivated Nietzsche in 1865 and which his entire philosophy is an attempt to answer.

NOTES

- 1) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1024.
- 2) Alasdair MacIntyre, A Short History of Ethics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 222.
- 3) H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1958), p. 24.
- 4) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 571.
- 5) Nietzsche, Werke, III, pp. 1334-35.
- 6) The point is made by W. D. Williams in his Nietzsche and the French (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. xx.
- 7) Pascal was in Nietzsche's eyes the Christian par excellence. "There stands Pascal, in the union of passion, intellect and integrity, the first of all Christians." (Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 1139). It needs emphasizing that Nietzsche's "contest" with Pascal is a more revealing guide to Nietzsche's struggle with Christianity than are his venomous railings against the "priests."
- 8) John Namenatz, "Pascal Our Contemporary," a review article in the New York Review of Books (May 4, 1967), p. 32.
- 9) Ibid.
- 10) By "faith" here I mean what Erich Heller calls, writing of Goethe, "the active realization of certain values in the lives of men." (Erich Heller, The Disinherited Mind (Meridian Books paperback ed.; Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1959), p. 98.)
- 11) Williams, op. cit.
- 12) Alasdair MacIntyre, "Pascal and Marx," Encounter (October 1964), p. 72.
- 13) Lucien Goldmann, The Hidden God, trans. Philip Thody (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 218-19.

- 14) Ibid., p. 284.
- 15) Heller, op. cit., p. 106.
- 16) "Faust's Damnation: The Morality of Knowledge" is the title of an essay by Erich Heller in his The Artist's Journey into the Interior (London: Secker & Warburg, 1956), which, together with "Goethe and the Idea of Scientific Truth" and "Nietzsche and Goethe" (both of which appear in Heller's The Disinherited Mind), succeed in demonstrating the affinity between Goethe and Nietzsche in their approach to the problem of the relation between faith and the scientific spirit.
- 17) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1024.
- 18) Heller, Disinherited..., p. 30
- 19) Ibid., p. 104.
- 20) Heller, Journey..., p. 36
- 21) Quoted by Heller, ibid., p. 36.
- 22) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 316.
- 23) Ibid., III, pp. 449-50.
- 24) Ibid., II, p. 1024.
- 25) This is, of course, conjecture, but Harold Höffding writes, in his A History of Modern Philosophy, (trans. E. E. Meyer (Dover Publications paperback ed., New York, 1955), II, p. 41, that "this awakening may most probably be assigned to the year 1762-63...."
- 26) In his Friederich Nietzsche. Kindheit und Jugend (München-Basel: E. Reinhardt, 1953), p. 158, Richard Blunck writes: "It was here (in F. A. Lange's Geschichte des Materialismus, which Nietzsche read for the first time as a student in Leipzig in the summer of 1866) that he received probably his first impression of Kant's work, which he then completed with Kuno Fischer's two-volume book on Kant."
- 27) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1024.

- 28) Ibid., p. 226.
- 29) Ibid., p. 575.
- 30) Ibid.
- 31) Nietzsche, Werke, p. 1172: "Nothing ruins us more profoundly, more intimately, than every "impersonal" duty, every sacrifice to the Moloch of abstraction."
- 32) Ibid.
- 33) Ibid., p. 576. Freud's later formulation of the question concerning the illusory character of religion approximates Nietzsche's approach here: "Since men are so little amenable to reasonable arguments and are so entirely governed by their instinctual wishes, why should one set out to deprive them of a means for satisfying their instincts and replace it by reasonable arguments? It is true that men are like this; but have you asked yourself whether they need be like this, whether their innermost nature necessitates it?" The Future of an Illusion trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (Anchor Books paperback ed.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 77, (translation altered).
- 34) Ibid., III, p. 564: "To assert that existence as a whole depends on things of which we can know nothing, precisely because it is advantageous to be incapable of knowing anything about them, was Kant's naive, which itself was the result of the echo of Kant's own metaphysical and moral needs."
- 35) Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist Antichrist (Meridian Books paperback ed.; Cleveland & New York: The World Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 86-87.
- 36) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 226-27.
- 37) Ibid., pp. 924-25.
- 38) Ibid., p. 227.
- 39) Ibid.
- 40) R. F. Beerling, "Hegel und Nietzsche," in Hegel-Studien (Bonn: H. Bouvier & Co., 1961), I, p. 235. Compare also Wolf-Dieter Marsch, Gegenwart Christi in der Gesellschaft (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag,

1965), pp. 242-43:

Hegels vielzitierte 'Zweideutigkeit' besteht nun darin, dass für ihn aus jener Erfahrung des unendlichen Schmerzes--an der ungleichzeitigen Situation sowie an der Verborgenheit Gottes--ein 'Moment' des sich selbst entäusernden 'Geistes' geworden ist, dessen Rückgang ins Absolute schon im Hervorgehen aus sich angelegt ist. Im 'Geist des Christentums' hiess es noch: 'Das Herausgehen des Göttlichen ist nur eine Entwicklung, dass es, indem es das Entgegengesetzte aufhebt, sich selbst in der Vereinigung darstellt.' Aus einer solchen Umschreibung der Offenbarung Gottes als einer--geschichtlichen--'Entwicklung' in 'Entgegensetzung' und 'Vereinigung' wird seit 1800 ('Verbindung der Verbindung und der Nichtverbindung') nun zunehmend jener Reflexionsprozess, in dem Gottes 'Entwicklung' nachvollzogen wird. 1802 etwa definiert er Glauben als eine Reflexionsweise, die 'als das Einssein des Subjektiven mit dem Mensch gewordenen Gotte...die Welt' als 'an sich rekonstruiert, erlöst und auf eine ganz andere Weise geheiligt' erfährt. Der Mensch vergegenwärtigt also den unendlichen Schmerz ('der vorher nur in der Bildung geschichtlich und als das Gefühl war...: Gott selbst ist tot') nicht mehr im Erfahren seiner Zeit, sondern im 'reine(n) Begriff,' und dort ist er 'rein als Moment, aber auch nicht als mehr denn als Moment der höchsten Idee.' ...in der dialektischen Reflexion ist also der unendliche Schmerz am Tode Gottes und an der geschichtlichen Situation 'als Moment, aber auch nicht mehr denn als Moment der höchsten Idee' aufgegangen.

- 41) G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. J. Sibree (Dover Publications paperback ed., New York, 1956), p. 8: "The most general definition that can be given, is, that the Philosophy of History means nothing but the thoughtful consideration of it."
- 42) This is one of the main theses of Karl Löwith's From Hegel to Nietzsche, trans. David E. Green (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).
- 43) G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of Hegel, ed. C. J. Friedrich (Modern Library ed.; New York: Random House, 1964), p. 227.
- 44) For a recent attempt to show that Hegel's "dialectic of alienation and reconciliation" need not succumb

to "the danger of apprehending history unhistorically from the outset," see Wolf-Dieter Marsch, op. cit., pp. 252-53; also pp. 269-70:

Hegel fragt in der Reflexion dieses 'Lebens' (Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit, Identität, Glück, Gelungenheit) nach Gott. Gott ausserhalb dieses geschichtlichen Horizonts unmittelbar wahrzunehmen, als 'unendliches Objekt,' vermag er nicht mehr. Gottes 'extra nos' liegt dann aber darin, dass jenes Ganze des 'Lebens' nicht mit gesellschaftlichpolitischen Mitteln 'machbar' ist, sondern eine 'Umkehrung des Bewusstseins' erfordert; Dieses Leben nämlich in seinem Verlust zu erwarten. Wenn das so ist, dann besteht mit seiner--noch nicht logisch verfestigten, sondern historisch offenen--Dialektik von Entzweiung and Versöhnung eine Möglichkeit, nach dem Gott-in-Situation zu fragen: jenseits der Alternative von Transzendenz und Immanenz, Ewigkeit und Zeit, Himmel und Erde Gott in seinem in Christus bezeugten Wirken zu erkennen--als den, von dem die Einlösung jenes Anspruchs auf Emanzipation, Rationalität und Mündigkeit rechtens erwartet werden dann, weil er Christus kreuzigen liess.

- 45) Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 16.
- 46) Ibid., p. 17.
- 47) Ibid., p. 54.
- 48) Ibid., p. 55.
- 49) Hegel, The Philosophy of Hegel, p. 12.
- 50) K. Löwith, op. cit., p. 218.
- 51) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 262-63.
- 52) W. Kaufmann, op. cit., p.127.
- 53) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 264.
- 54) K. Löwith, op. cit., p. 217.
- 55) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 479.
- 56) Ibid., p. 484.

- 57) Notably, Karl Löwith, whose work in this area has done much to fill out the picture of an otherwise lopsided half-century. See especially his From Hegel to Nietzsche, op. cit., and his Die Heideische Linke (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Verlag Friedrich Frohmann, 1962).
- 58) K. Löwith, From Hegel..., p. 120.
- 59) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 133.
- 60) Ibid., II, p. 228.
- 61) Patrick Gardiner, Schopenhauer (Pelican paperback ed.; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963), p. 245.
- 62) See Chapter 5, note 57.
- 63) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 228.
- 64) Ibid., III, p. 486.
- 65) Ibid., II, p. 664.
- 66) Ibid., p. 228.

I. The Death of God.

3. What is it, and what has it meant?

Nietzsche's first step is to accept what he knows. Atheism for him goes without saying and is "constructive and radical." 1

--Camus

I

But with respect to the mortality of beings of the kind, I have heard a tale from a man who is neither a fool nor an idle talker - from that Aemilian the rhetorician, whom some of you know well; Epitherses was his father, a townsman of mine, and a teacher of grammar. This man (the latter) said, that once upon a time he made a voyage to Italy, and embarked on board a ship conveying merchandise and several passengers. When it was now evening, off the Echinad Islands, the wind dropped, and the ship, carried by the current, was come near Paxi; most of the passengers were awake, and many were still drinking after having had supper. All of a sudden, a voice was heard from the Isle of Paxi, of some one calling 'Thamus' with so loud a cry as to fill them with amazement. This Thamus was an Egyptian pilot, known by name to many of those on board. Called twice, he kept silence; but on the third summons he replied to the caller, and the latter, raising yet higher his voice, said, "When thou comest over against Palodes, announce that the great Pan is dead." All, upon hearing this, said Epitherses, were filled with consternation, and debated with themselves whether it were better to do as ordered, or not to make themselves too busy, and to let it alone. So Thamus decided that if there should be a wind he would sail past and hold his tongue; but should there fall a calm and smooth sea off the island, he would proclaim what he had heard. When, therefore, they were come over against Palodes, there being neither wind nor swell of sea, Thamus, looking out from the stern, called out to the land what he had heard, namely, "That the great Pan is dead:" and hardly had he finished speaking than there was a mighty cry, not of one, but of many voices mingled together in wondrous manner. And inasmuch as many

persons were present then, the story got spread about in Rome, and Themis was sent for by Tiberius Caesar; and Tiberius gave so much credence to the tale that he made enquiry and research concerning this Pan; and that the learned men about him, who were numerous, conjectured he was the one that was born of Hermes and Penelope.²

This is a portion of chapter XVII of an essay in Plutarch's Morals, "On the Cessation of Oracles." Plutarch is relating a discussion which took place between two guests of his at Delphi, Demetrius the grammarian and Cleombrotus the Lacedemonian, concerning the reason for the widespread decay and extinction of oracles. The saga of the death of Pan, told originally by the father of the elderly and respected rhetorician referred to by Cleombrotus, is introduced into the discussion as evidence for "the mortality of beings of the kind," and in response to a protest from one of the interlocutors that "to suppose in their case deaths, as if they were mere men, seems...too bold and uncivilized a theory."³

But it is not the response of shock of this young man to the thought that gods too die, but the question itself being discussed by Plutarch's guests which is of interest to us - the possible reasons for the cessation of the oracles, or more loosely, the death of the gods. And more instructive for our purposes than a reiteration of the arguments forwarded in the discussion itself is a passage in Heinrich Heine's essay on Ludwig Börne. Before recalling

the tale from Plutarch's Morals, Heine writes of Jesus,

How sweet, this God-man! How one-sided the hero of the Old Testament appears in comparison with him! Moses loves his people with a touching fervor; like a mother he provides for the future of his people. Christ loves mankind, that sun enveloped the entire earth with the warming rays of its love. What a soothing balm for all the wounds of this world are his words! What a healing spring for all sufferers was the blood which flowed on Golgotha! The white marble Greek gods were spattered with this blood and fell ill with inner dread and could never again recover. Of course, most of them were already being consumed by chronic illness, and the shock only hastened their death. The first to die was Pan.⁴

This image of the death of Jesus hurrying the serene Greek gods to their deaths is captivating - as is so much of Heine. But who is this great Pan? Heine has more to say.

The day is young and in spite of all the melancholy skepticism with which my soul torments itself, curious inklings steal upon me. Something extraordinary is now happening in the world. The sea smells of baking, and the cloud-monks looked so sad last night, so depressed,

I strolled lonesomely along the beach at dusk. A solemn silence reigned all round. The highly arched sky resembled the vault of a Gothic church. Like countless lamps hung the stars therein, but they burned dimly and flutteringly. Like a water-organ thundered the ocean waves; stormy chorales, grievously despairing, and yet occasionally also triumphant. Above me, a gay procession of white cloud formations, which looked like monks, all trailing along with bowed heads and doleful expressions, a sad procession. It nearly looked as though they were following a corpse. Who is being buried? Who has died, I said to myself. Is the great Pan dead?⁵

Is this Pan still one of the "white, marble, Greek gods"? In the midst of images of a Gothic cathedral, an organ, chorales, mourning monks?

Ecstatic with memories of the French Revolution and hopes for a revolution in Germany, Heine relates another of his visions.

I am no longer able to sleep, and the bizarrest night-faces chase through my overexcited mind. Waking dreams which stumble over each other so that the forms blend fantastically and, as in a Chinese shadow-play, shorten themselves, dwarflike, then lengthen themselves again gigantically--it's enough to drive one mad. In this state of mind I sometimes feel as though my limbs stretch immensely and I run from Germany to France and back again, as if with frightfully long legs. Yes, I recall that last night I ran in such a manner through all German provinces and territories and knocked at the doors of my friends and disturbed the sleep of the people. They sometimes stared at me with amazed glassy eyes, so that even I was shocked and did not know immediately what I actually wanted and why I woke them! Many fat philistines who snored repulsively I poked portentously in the ribs, and yawning they asked, "What time is it"? In Paris, dear friends, the cock has crowed, that is all I know. Beyond Augsburg, on the way to Munich, I encountered a number of Gothic cathedrals which seemed to be fleeing. I myself, tired of so much running about, finally began to fly and in this way flew from one star to another. They are not populated worlds, as others dream, but only shining spheres, desolate and infertile. They don't fall, because they know not on what to fall. They hover up there in the greatest embarrassment. I even got into heaven; the gate and the door stood open. Long, high, far-echoing halls with old-fashioned gilding, completely empty, except for an old servant here and there in powdered wig and faded red livery sitting in a velvet armchair, slumbering lightly. In some rooms the doors were removed from their hinges; in other places they were tightly locked and sealed three times with large round official seals besides, as in houses where a bankruptcy or a death has occurred. Finally I came into a room where a thin, old man sat at a desk and rummaged in high stacks of paper. He was dressed black, had snow-white hair and a wrinkled business-face, and he asked me in an undertone what I wanted. In my naivete I thought

him to be the dear Lord God, and I spoke to him confidentially: "Oh, dear Lord God, I would like to learn to thunder; I know how to make lightning, oh, teach me to thunder too!" "Don't speak so loudly," replied the thin old man severely, turning his back on me and continuing to rummage through his papers. "That's the registrar," whispered one of the servants clad in red who rose from his easy-chair yawning and rubbing his eyes.

Pan is dead!

Heine leaves us, one feels, perhaps intentionally, with this ambiguous great Pan. We can be sure that the great Pan is not only the first of the "white marble Greek gods" to die. He is that - and more. Nor is he the Christian God. Perhaps the death of the great Pan can be taken as a paradigm of the death of the Christian God.

Before leaving Heine, we must listen to another provocative passage written some six years before the references to the death of the great Pan.

Our hearts are filled with dreadful pity--it is old Jehovah himself who is preparing to die. We have known him so well, from his cradle on, in Egypt where he was brought up among sacred calves, crocodiles, holy onions, ibises and cats. We have seen him bid adieu to these playmates of his childhood and the obelisks and sphinxes of his native Nile valley and become the little god-king of a poor little shepherd people, with his own temple-palace to live in. We saw later on how he came into contact with the Assyrian-Babylonian civilization and laid aside his all-too-human passions and no longer spewed forth wrath and vengeance, at least no longer thundered at every triviality. We saw him emigrate to Rome, the capital, where he renounced all national prejudices and proclaimed the heavenly equality of all races, and with such fair phrases formed an opposition to old Jupiter and plotted until he reached a position of power and ruled the city and the world, urbem et

orbem, from the Capitol on high. We saw how he became more and more spiritualized, how he moaned meekly, how he became a loving father, a friend of all humanity, a benefactor of the world, a philanthropist--it was all to no avail.

Do you hear that little bell ringing? Kneel down, they are bringing the sacrament to a dying God.⁷

Heine is more specific here. He tells us explicitly that "it is old Jehovah himself who is preparing to die," that is to say the God of deism, deism meaning for Heine the opposite of pantheism and best characterized by the "otherness" of God.⁸

Is this then perhaps what Nietzsche means by the death of God? There can be little doubt that he had read these passages by Heine, whom he greatly admired and with whom he liked to compare himself.⁹ Is it a certain image of God, what Heine calls the God of deism, the otherworldly, distant, condescending God that Nietzsche claims has died? If so, someone might not unjustly complain, he would have done well to soften his language a bit. "Death" is perhaps not the best choice of words to describe the "inaccessibility" of a distant God. We might agree, while feeling that such a counsel of moderation would have fallen on deaf ears in the case of Nietzsche; or we might entertain the possibility that he was fully aware of both the intent and the possible effects of his words and that he meant precisely what he said.

Before looking in detail at what some of Nietzsche's critics and followers say he meant by the death of God, a word of warning is in order. Those who comb Nietzsche's works and notes and letters in search of that one sentence or paragraph which spells out in so many words what "God is dead" means are bound to be disappointed. Not only did Nietzsche have an aversion to spelling things out in this manner, reducing them to their examinable skeletons, skillfully perhaps, and methodically, but without the slightest hint of subtlety or playfulness; he must have also felt that there are some things--experiences, sensibilities--which cannot be expressed skeletally. This must have been the case with the death of God. For though it stands at the basis of his thought, he takes it for granted. He believes it and asserts it, making no attempt to prove it. Two of his references to Schopenhauer are enlightening in this regard.

Schopenhauer was, as philosopher, the first avowed and inflexible atheist we Germans have had.... The non-divinity of existence was regarded by him as something given, tangible, indisputable; he lost his philosopher's composure and flew into a rage every time he saw someone hesitate and beat about the bush on this point. At this point rests his whole integrity: unconditional candid atheism is precisely the preliminary condition for his position...¹⁰

It was atheism that led me to Schopenhauer.¹¹ However, much Nietzsche's atheism differs from Schopenhauer's atheism (and it differs considerably), there can be little doubt

that he saw himself as the direct heir of Schopenhauer's "unconditional candid atheism," and that this was for him as for Schopenhauer "the preliminary condition for his position."

That Nietzsche assumes rather than explains the death of God must not become a justification for our failing to ask what he meant by it. It should serve to remind us, however, that he deemed the working out of the consequences of God's death and the positive requirements for living in the world without God more important than expending time and energy telling his readers what he was certain would become common knowledge and bemoaning the fact that God is dead-- a lesson in priorities which, had it been learned early enough, might have spared us much of the literature and philosophy, art and theology of desperation, crisis, and alienation.

II

The central source for Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God is the extended aphorism in The Gay Science, "The Madman." Although this passage is by now familiar to everyone who has ever heard of Nietzsche, it is magnificent nonetheless.

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly, "I seek God! I seek God!" As many of those who do not believe in God

were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Why, did he get lost? said one. Did he lose his way like a child? said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his glances.

"Whither is God" he cried. "I shall tell you. We have killed him--you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning? Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition?

Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever will be born after us--for the sake of this deed he will be part of a higher history than all history hitherto.

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they too were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke and went out.

"I come too early," he said then; "my time has not come yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering--it has not yet reached the ears of man. Lightning and thunder require time, the light of the stars requires time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars--and yet they have done it themselves."

It has been related further that on that same day the madman entered divers churches and there sang his requiem aeternam deo. Led out and called to account, he is said to have replied each time, "What are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?"¹²

It will be useful, for the sake of comparison, to ask some of Nietzsche's critics and expositors how they read Nietzsche's words, "God is dead." Although there are points at which the various interpretations converge, the points of divergence are by far more numerous. Thus to avoid the inevitable arbitrariness of grouping interpretations, I have simply ordered them chronologically.

Karl Löwith's Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen appeared in 1935 (a revised edition was published in 1956, including an appendix "On the History of Nietzsche-Interpretation 1894-1954," which had not been printed in the original edition because it was considered "intolerable" and "undesirable" in the Germany of 1935).¹³ Though it could not be distributed openly at the time, it appears in retrospect as a breath of fresh air in the midst of an atmosphere saturated with the stale polemics of "official Nazi interpreters."¹⁴ For Löwith, "the doctrine

of eternal recurrence is the key to Nietzsche's philosophy,"¹⁵ and he uses this doctrine to illuminate the connection he sees between the death of God, nihilism, and eternal recurrence. Lowith understands the death of God to mean "the resurrection of the man who is in charge of himself and who commands himself, and whose most extreme freedom is his 'freedom to die.'"¹⁶ The Christian God has died, leaving man free, free, that is, from the moral imperative "thou shalt." But this freedom also has its negative aspect; it is a "desert of freedom" in which man would rather will Nothing than not will at all.¹⁷ It is in this "intermediate state" of freedom to choose, when it seems "as though all gravity has disappeared from things,"¹⁸ that man will will either self-overcoming, through the eternal recurrence of all things (the Übermensch) or self-satisfaction (the "last man").

The dead Christian God, the man facing nothingness, and the will to eternal recurrence characterize Nietzsche's system as a whole as a movement from "thou shalt" to the birth of "I will" and then to the rebirth of "I am" as the 'first movement' of an eternally recurring existence in the midst of the natural world of all living things.¹⁹

Lowith's interpretation of Nietzsche can be illustrated nicely by Zarathustra's speech, "On the three metamorphoses."

Of three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you:
how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a
lion; and the lion, finally, a child.

There is much that is difficult for the spirit, the strong reverent spirit that would bear much: but the difficult and the most difficult are what its strength demands.

What is difficult? asks the spirit that would bear much, and kneels down like a camel wanting to be well loaded. What is most difficult, O heroes, asks the spirit that would bear much, that I may take it upon myself and exult in my strength? Is it not humbling oneself to wound one's haughtiness? Letting one's folly shine to mock one's wisdom?

Or is it this: parting from our cause when it triumphs? Climbing high mountains to tempt the tempter?

Or is it this: feeding on the acorns and grass of knowledge and, for the sake of truth, suffering hunger in one's soul?

Or is it this: being sick and sending home the comforters and making friends with the deaf, who never hear what you want?

Or is it this: stepping into filthy waters when they are the waters of truth, and not repulsing cold frogs and hot toads?

Or is it this: loving those who despise us and offering a hand to the ghost that would frighten us?

All these most difficult things the spirit that would bear much takes upon itself: like the camel that, burdened, speeds into the desert, thus the spirit speeds into its desert.

In the loneliest desert, however, the second metamorphosis occurs: here the spirit becomes a lion who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert. Here he seeks out his last master: he wants to fight him and his last god; for ultimate victory he wants to fight with the great dragon.

Who is the great dragon whom the spirit shall no longer call lord and god? "Thou shalt" is the name of the great dragon. But the spirit of the lion

says, "I will." "Thou shalt" lies in his way, sparkling like gold, an animal covered with scales; and on every scale shines a golden "thou shalt."

Values, thousands of years old, shine on these scales; and thus speaks the mightiest of all dragons: "All value of all things shines on me. All value has long been created, and I am all created value. Verily, there shall be no more 'I will.'" Thus speaks the dragon.

My brothers, why is there a need in the spirit for the lion? Why is not the beast of burden, which renounces and is reverent, enough?

To create new values--that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation--that is within the power of the lion. The creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred "No" even to duty--for that, my brothers, the lion is needed. To assume the right to new values--that is the most terrifying assumption for a reverent spirit that would bear much. Verily, to him it is preying, and a matter for a beast of prey. He once loved "thou shalt" as most sacred: now he must find illusion and caprice even in the most sacred, that freedom from his love may become his prey: the lion is needed for such prey.

But say, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes!" For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world.

Of three metamorphoses of the spirit I have told you: how the spirit became a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child.

Thus spoke Zarathustra. And at that time he so-journed in the town that is called The Motley Cow.²⁰

There is probably no other single passage in all of Nietzsche's writings which could serve better than this one as a precis of what he was trying to say.

In words reminiscent of Augustine's admonition, "Love and then do as you please," Zarathustra laments elsewhere, "Alas, if only you understood my words, 'do whatever you will, but first be capable of willing!'"²¹ It is from the lion that man must learn this lesson--to say "I will," to create freedom for himself for new creation, to assume the right to new values.

Naked, pure "resolution," to one thing as to another, to everything as to nothing characterizes the ability to will as such in the intermediate state of nihilism, which already wants, but as yet does not know what it wants.²²

For the time being, one believes in Nothing, instead of in God.²³

Thus, Löwith. This posture is, however, only transitory; it is impossible to rest here for long. A move must be made, and the choice is between nihilism and "the game of creation," that is, the overcoming of nihilism by willing the eternal recurrence of all things. For Löwith, eternal recurrence is "the new 'gravity' in a fleeting existence; thus a clear connection emerges between the death of God, nihilism, and the eternal recurrence of the same."²⁴

In sum, Löwith sees Nietzsche setting out from the death of God, "a datum whose significance lay less in the fact itself than in its nihilistic consequences,"²⁵ and arriving, in the end, at a proclamation of his theory of eternal recurrence, which for Löwith is "an avowed substitute

for religion...an escape from despair: an attempt to leave 'nothing' and arrive at 'something.'"²⁶

Karl Jaspers' Nietzsche, Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens (1936)²⁷ is a puzzling book. Jaspers wrote in the preface to the first edition something to the effect that we dare not just "read" Nietzsche, i.e. facilely, carelessly, superficially. Nietzsche is more demanding than that; he requires that we live with him, so to speak; read him and then ruminate, then read him again and ruminate again --which is all true, not only of Nietzsche, of course, but perhaps especially of Nietzsche. However, by the time we approach the end of this, at times fascinating but on the whole exceedingly unreliable, treatment, we encounter in so many words what we sensed all along: Jaspers "discounts Nietzsche's ideas as absurdities"; "'philosophy' is given up in favor of 'philosophizing,'"²⁸ that is, Jaspers is interested not in what Nietzsche said, but in "participating in the essence of his life and thought."²⁹

Jaspers sees Nietzsche as "the last of the great philosophers of the past"³⁰ (as does Heidegger, though in a different sense, as we shall see below), the emphasis being on "the past." We are, thinks Jaspers, at a turning point in history, a "reversal in which everything seems destined to vanish as a result of the self-destruction of the will

to truth. This reversal is identical with the self-annulment of morality and the death of God."³¹ Jaspers agrees with Nietzsche that all great things destroy themselves through an act of self-annulment. And it is as such an act that he interprets the waning of the will to truth, the power of morality, and belief in God.

It is significant for our purposes to emphasize that it is the waning of a belief in God that concerns Jaspers, not the death of God. Or, to put it another way, the death of God concerns him only as a psychological phenomenon, as something that happens to the belief, that is, in the soul of the believer, and not to God. In a section obviously influenced by Kierkegaard titled "The Present Age," Jaspers paraphrases Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God with the words, "unbelief has become a reality."³² In answer to the question--why does Nietzsche say that God is dead?--Jaspers can only say, "he speaks in parables."³³ When Nietzsche is not speaking symbolically, his own answer to this question takes the form of an inquiry into the historical origins of contemporary nihilism, and that answer looks something like this, according to Jaspers.

Nietzsche believed that the meaninglessness and fragmentary character of life in his time was "rooted in Christianity's very definite (i.e. moral) interpretation

of the world."³⁴ The Christian religion, along with Platonic philosophy, had served as a sort of stop-gap for men faced with the devastating realization that "becoming serves no purpose and that it is not controlled by an all-pervasive unity."³⁵ Its stop-gap character is best described as a condemnation of the world of becoming as illusory and an invention of a "true" world, the world of being (later, Being) that lies somewhere beyond the flux of this imaginary world. This particular fiction proved quite adequate for some two thousand years. Only in most recent times has this "moral" fiction too been called into question. It is in our own day, Jaspers is saying of Nietzsche, that this way of looking at our world and shaping it (or imagining its being shaped), i.e. Truth, Being, God, has died. What is more, this "reversal" is the result of Christianity's own will to truth at all costs which probes and probes, allowing no illusions, only to discover that its own very foundations were built on the moral fiction that Truth exists, that life has a meaning to be discovered, a goal to be reached, that there is Something or Someone shaping and guiding it all. Now only nothingness remains, and a conviction that one has been deceived.

If this interpretation of Nietzsche sounds a bit too "existentialist," we need but recall that Jaspers is, on his own admission, intentionally philosophizing, not

expounding. But, though Nietzsche is not Kierkegaard, and though Jaspers' tone is much more that of Kierkegaard than of Nietzsche, his account of the failure of the Platonic-Christian Weltanschauung is a faithful rendering of Nietzsche's views on the origins of nihilism. That it considers only part of what Nietzsche means by the death of God, we have already noted. For although Jaspers admitted, as early as 1938, that "Nietzsche intended to diagnose a present reality," and that he did not "limit himself to a psychological statement about the rise of unbelief" but "was observing a fact,"³⁶ Jaspers himself never is able to get the two--the psychological and the historical--realities together. The death of God is only a metaphor useful in pointing to the fact of the rise of unbelief. It would not be true to say, however, that God is dead, i.e. as a statement of fact, therefore unbelief is on the rise. Rather, belief in God is waning, and when it is totally exhausted, God will be dead.

Finally, Jaspers takes the proclamation of the death of God, not as something irrevocable, but as a challenge issued by Nietzsche.

Actually the statement expresses the tension engendered by the realization that it is possible, and also it signifies, like a call in the last hour, an awareness of the uncertain direction that things are taking.

It may also be said that this statement initiates a new and higher human reality conceived as a way of thinking that impels man upward, or it may serve to arouse us to do all the more resolutely anything that will refute it and thus gain the assurance that God is not dead.³⁷

In the end, Jaspers would like it both ways--God is dead, but not quite. But of one thing he is certain; we must become aware of "the uncertain direction that things are taking." We must confront the "void," gaze into the "abyss," in order all the more resolutely to participate in the new upward-directed, higher human reality. This is Jaspers and Existenzphilosophie, not Nietzsche.

Now the third major interpretation of Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God is that of Martin Heidegger.

The saying, "God is dead," means: the transcendental world is without effective power. It is not life-giving. Metaphysics, that is for Nietzsche, western philosophy since Plato, has come to an end. Nietzsche understands his own philosophy as the counter-movement to metaphysics, i.e. for him, Platonism.

Heidegger goes on to say,

As a mere counter-movement it necessarily remains, as does everything "anti" in nature, bound to the essence of that against which it moves, Nietzsche's countermovement against metaphysics remains as the mere inversion of metaphysics, inescapably entangled in metaphysics in such a way that metaphysics constricts itself and is not able to reflect its own essence. Therefore that which takes place in and as metaphysics itself remains hidden from it and through it.³⁸

These two short paragraphs might serve to frame Heidegger's view of Nietzsche. To be sure, he has written and lectured extensively on Nietzsche (his lectures, though published only in 1961, together with discussions composed between 1940 and 1946, were delivered in Freiburg in the years 1936 to 1940), but the only honest conclusion that can be drawn from his later utterances about Nietzsche is that he is only expounding, enlarging, repeating again and again his initial conviction: 1) that with the death of God, Nietzsche was referring to the death of western, i.e. Christian-Platonic, metaphysics; and 2) that though his observation was acute and to the point, he failed to extricate himself from western metaphysics and get beyond his negative judgment to something positive.

According to the literal meaning this title (metaphysics) speaks of nothing other than the knowledge of the Being (Sein) of being (Seiendes), which (Being) is distinguished by its apriority and which was understood by Plato as Idea. With Plato's interpretation of Being as Idea, meta-physics therefore begins. It sets for posterity the pattern of western philosophy. Its history from Plato to Nietzsche is the history of meta-physics. And because metaphysics begins with the interpretation of Being as "Idea" and this interpretation remains determinative, all philosophy since Plato is Idealism in the literal sense of the word, that Being is sought in the Idea, in the realm of ideas and ideals. Seen from Plato's vantage point, it can be said that all western philosophy is Platonism. Metaphysics, Idealism, Platonism mean essentially the same. They remain determinative even where counter-movements and

inversions make themselves felt. Plato becomes the prototype of the philosopher in the history of the west. Nietzsche not only characterized his philosophy as the inversion of Platonism; Nietzsche's thought was and is everywhere only a dialogue with Plato, and often a quite conflicting one.³⁹

To put it as simply as possible, Heidegger sees Nietzsche as having performed a negative task--to which he, Heidegger, sees himself as providing the positive counterpoise.

Nietzsche's gravest error--so, Heidegger--was to respond to the death of western metaphysics with a vision of man as the one who must create whatever value there is in a world now cut loose from its traditional value-bestowing mooring in Platonic-Christian metaphysics. That "we come too late for the gods and too early for Being,"⁴⁰ Heidegger is the first to concede. But--and this is where he and Nietzsche are worlds apart--ours is unquestionably a time of the absence of God and of waiting for Being. Heidegger is emphatic in his insistence that we must wait for the word from Being-itself. He warns us, in a manner reminiscent of the best of the prophets of the theological liberalism and neo-orthodoxy of three decades ago, of the slippery ground of human pride and the tricky underhandedness of the idols. Beware, he seems to be saying, of beginning with man when God is absent. Better to wait in patience and in yearning for God's return. Heidegger's "Being" is what Nietzsche would call a shadow of God.⁴¹

What is more, Heidegger's Being is a shadow in two senses: it is but a vestige of the God of Christianity, lacking in substance, in flesh and blood; and it is dark. For offering us stones for bread, he may be excused; he is not the first and will certainly not be the last. But his invitation to darkness and his celebration of the disclosing power of dread; his conviction that it is only by "press(ing) inquiry into being explicitly to the limits of nothingness" that we can begin to get beyond nothingness;⁴² his glorification of the very old and the very deep,⁴³ and, in this connection, his reliance for authority on "the oracular obscurity of the pre-Socratics,"⁴⁴--all this must be seen for what it is, namely, symptomatic of Heidegger's commitment to the tradition of radical irrationalism, which, in Germany, reaches back to Hölderlin and Novalis at the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁵

And if Heidegger is a theologian in spite of himself, as Walter Kaufmann would have it, he is a theologian of a particularly reactionary kind, (the only kind of theologian Kaufmann will allow). Heidegger does, indeed, bear, as we have already noticed, a certain resemblance to theologians of the not too distant past; but in his repudiation of rationality and his invocation of the pre-Socratics, he reminds one of a kind of latter-day Duns Scotus (on whom

he did his dissertation),⁴⁶ with his appeal, almost in spite of his sharp intellect, to the authority of the church and a univocal concept of being, necessary and contingent, in the face of the unreasonable and improbable. In fact, one suspects that the "medievalness" of Heidegger's thought rests in great measure on his unacknowledged use of the method of analogy--of which, more later.⁴⁷

God is not dead for Heidegger. Nietzsche's words provided a useful tag which Heidegger could "interpret." But his interpretation meant also a taming, a diluting, a re-interpretation of Nietzsche's words into Heidegger's words: "God is dead" became "God is absent"; "we must begin with man as value-creator" became "we must be patient and wait and recall our origins and yearn for the new word to be spoken by Being."

Because we hark back to Nietzsche's saying about the 'death of God,' people take such an enterprise for atheism. For what is more 'logical' than to consider the man who has experienced the 'death of God' as a Godless person.⁴⁸

It is Hölderlin who is Heidegger's "master," not Nietzsche. And although, to my knowledge, Heidegger has never quoted these particular lines of Hölderlin's, he might have, as they stand implicitly at the head of his own thought: "To be sure, the gods do live; but above our heads, up there in another world."⁴⁹ Nietzsche said, 'God is dead.' These two utterances are as different as night and day.⁵⁰

In 1950 there appeared what is considered by many the best treatment of Nietzsche extant, Walter Kaufmann's Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist. It successfully combines erudition and a readability uncommon among Nietzsche interpretations. Despite the fact that Kaufmann's evaluation of Nietzsche is probably a bit too "Apollonian" (the full weight of this judgment will be felt in subsequent chapters wherever Kaufmann's views are taken up; suffice it to say here that he stresses especially Nietzsche's kinship with Socrates and Hegel), this work provides a necessary counterweight to the unquestionably more prevalent view of Nietzsche as irrationalist.

In his experience and proclamation of the death of God, Nietzsche reminds Kaufmann of the Old Testament prophets.

He felt the agony, the suffering, and the misery of a godless world so intensely, at a time when others were yet blind to its tremendous consequence, that he was able to experience in advance, as it were, the fate of a coming generation.⁵¹

In keeping with this comparison, Kaufmann speaks of mankind as having "lost God."⁵² That is to say, "we have destroyed our faith in God. There remains only the void. We are falling. Our dignity is gone. Our values are lost."⁵³ It is true, as Kaufmann says, that "Nietzsche's pronouncement does not at all purport to be a dogmatic statement about a supersensible reality: it is a declaration

of what he takes to be a historical cultural fact." It is "an attempt at a diagnosis of contemporary civilization, not a metaphysical speculation about ultimate reality."⁵⁴ Does Kaufmann ever say what he thinks the outcome of Nietzsche's diagnosis is, what Nietzsche means by the death of God?

What Kaufmann takes Nietzsche to mean is, I think, implicit in the few brief quotations above. To take first his statement about man, mankind has lost God. More, we have not merely lost him in some mysterious, inexplicable way, we have destroyed our faith in God. Though Kaufmann often speaks of both the loss of values and the loss of faith in God, it would be unfair to him and misleading to say that he equates the two. The loss of faith in God definitely precedes (and causes) the loss of values. Nihilism, "this sense of the utter bleakness of life and the 'disvaluation' of all values," follows upon and as a consequence of "the modern loss of faith in God...."⁵⁵ And "to escape nihilism," Kaufmann concludes, "...is Nietzsche's greatest and most persistent problem."⁵⁶

While being in complete sympathy with Kaufmann's evaluation of Nietzsche's efforts as being a positive response to the threats of nihilism, we cannot allow what Kaufmann calls "the modern loss of faith in God" to pass for an adequate definition of Nietzsche's pronouncement

that "God is dead." Nietzsche is speaking of a loss, to be sure; but the loss he describes is a loss by death. Kaufmann's comparison of Nietzsche with the prophets of the Old Testament holds true in a certain sense only (as, indeed, Kaufmann admits, but for very different reasons). For the Old Testament prophets, there was never a question of God's death--he could be hiding himself, he could be silent. The metaphors of absence and silence are very different from that of death. There is a finality in Nietzsche's proclamation which would have been impossible for the prophets. "God is dead. God remains dead."⁵⁷ Kaufmann says, with regard to these words, "this is the language of religion, and particularly of Christianity; the picture is derived from the Gospels.... Nietzsche, of course, infuses a new meaning into this old picture, while yet implying that God once was alive."⁵⁸ Precisely, But to this implication, Kaufmann's subsequent interpretation fails to do justice. We may be forced to conclude that Kaufmann's description of the death of God as "the modern loss of faith" is a religious statement as well as Nietzsche's, though a considerably less bold one. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say Kaufmann's is a psychological statement about man's faith, or lack of it, which, however, ignores the no less important living, or dead, God. While not wishing to engage in metaphysical

speculation about a supersensible reality, we must make it quite clear that Nietzsche, having diagnosed his own civilization, pronounced the death of God, in all its finality. That there was a loss of faith on the part of the men who make up that civilization, was by no means unimportant, but its importance lay in its usefulness as a symptom of something else: the event of the death of God--not the non-existence of God, but his cultural, historical death.

Kaufmann's interpretation brings to mind the more overtly religious, though not altogether dissimilar reformulation of Nietzsche's words by Martin Buber. Although he is not, strictly speaking, a critic of Nietzsche, Buber was fascinated by him from an early age and, as his writings show, he wrestled with Nietzsche all his life. In a collection of lectures published in 1952 under the revealing title, Eclipse of God, Buber wrote that Nietzsche's "decisive utterance is the cry that 'God is dead.'"⁵⁹ But far from being a statement about God, "this proclamation means only that man has become incapable of apprehending a reality absolutely independent of himself and of having a relationship with it..."⁶⁰ The fault is, as with Kaufmann, man's; the blame (and presumably the guilt) rests with man. Man failed on two counts--in his ability to apprehend God and to have a relationship with him. Nietzsche's cry, or as Buber says in a gross overstatement and somewhat derisively

elsewhere,⁶¹ Nietzsche's shout, "God is dead," has nothing whatsoever to do with God. Buber, more thoroughly steeped in the Old Testament than Nietzsche ever was, responds in true prophetic fashion "that the living God is not only a self-revealing but also a self-concealing God,"⁶² for evidence of which he refers the reader to Isaiah 45:15, those words which alternately tormented and comforted Pascal and which doubtless have eased the mind and heart of many a man of faith puzzled by the apparent absence of God. For Buber, the only dignified response to "such a concealment, such a divine silence,"⁶³ is endurance. In the context of a traditional theological warning against making of God an object among other objects, Buber says,

It would be worthier not to explain it to oneself in sensational and incompetent sayings, such as that of the "death" of God, but to endure it as it is and at the same time to move existentially toward a new happening, toward that event in which the word between heaven and earth will again be heard.⁶⁴

Even if one disregards the scornful tone of this proposal and the intolerance it expresses, it remains beyond doubt that Buber is talking about something very different from what Nietzsche meant when he said, "God is dead."

Buber's reformulation of the death of God into the "eclipse of the light of heaven, eclipse of God" is significant; "an eclipse of the sun is something that occurs between the sun and our eyes, not in the sun itself."⁶⁵

"The eclipse of the light of God is no extinction; even tomorrow that which has stepped in between may give way."⁶⁶ This would have been an admirable confession of faith in the past; but today it necessarily leaves us unsatisfied and suspicious--especially when it is coupled with chastising remarks about "the human responsibility for the eclipse" which must be borne by him "who refuses to submit himself to the effective reality of the transcendence as such," which "lives intact behind the wall of darkness."⁶⁷

Eugen Fink, in his Nietzsches Philosophie (1960), interprets Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God as a sifting, not to nihilism, but to the Übermensch.

...after the death of God, the proper language of man is no longer the naming of the gods, the invocation of the holy--it is now the speech of man to man; the invocation of the highest human possibility is the teaching of the Übermensch.⁶⁸

Fink is explicit in his declaration of what he takes Nietzsche to mean by "God." "'God' means for Nietzsche the embodiment of all other-worldly ideality."⁶⁹ Earlier he describes the death of God as "the end of all 'ideality' beyond man, an objective transcendence..."⁷⁰ As for man, he has used and misused the earth for the purpose of adorning his conception of the "other" world. Contrary to this,

the Übermensch, who knows about the death of God, that is, who knows about the end of the idealism which was lost in the beyond, recognizes in the ideal other-worldly only a utopian reflection of

the earth; he gives the earth back what has been borrowed and stolen from it; he renounces all other-worldly dreams and turns to the earth with the same ardor that was previously aimed at the dream-world.⁷¹

There is nothing being said here that has not already been said in previous evaluations of Nietzsche; what is new, however, is Fink's highly original exegesis of Nietzsche's vision of what may happen, of what is possible now that God is dead. Fink sees the parable "On the Three Metamorphoses" culminating in the yea-saying, playing child--the creator of new values.

The actual and original nature of freedom as a scheme of new values and value-worlds is touched upon in the metaphor of play. Playing is the nature of positive freedom. With the death of God, the risky and playful character of human existence is revealed. The creativeness of man is playing. The change of man into Übermensch is not a mutational jump of a biological sort in which a new race of beings suddenly appears above homo sapiens. This change is a metamorphosis of finite freedom, its retrieval out of self-alienation and the free breakthrough of its play-character.⁷²

Man is essentially a creator.⁷³

Despite Fink's inability ever to free himself fully from the negative conception of Nietzsche advanced by Heidegger,⁷⁴ he does offer us a novel treatment of Nietzsche's concept of play which will figure later on in our discussion of Dionysus. He also reminds us of one of Zarathustra's seldom-quoted admonitions, "I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth...!"--which follows his asser-

tion that "the Übermensch is the meaning of the earth."⁷⁵

Nietzsche does not put man in God's place; he does not divinize and idolize finite existence. In God's place, in the place of the Christian God and the Platonic realm of Ideas he puts the earth.⁷⁶

Without a doubt, the most detailed and thorough study of Nietzsche's terse proclamation is Eugen Biser's "Gott ist tot." Nietzsches Destruktion des christlichen Bewusstseins (1962), which sets itself the apparently quite simple task of addressing itself to the "question about the genuine meaning of the saying 'God is dead,'"⁷⁷ and then fulfills its self-appointed task for three hundred ten pages! This is a philological-philosophical-theological treatment done by a Roman Catholic which probes Nietzsche's words from every conceivable angle (one sometimes wonders whether Biser does not, in fact, expect too much from this, admittedly explosive, short sentence), giving equal attention to style, context, content, method, and point of view.

Biser claims that "it is not so much the reality of God" which Nietzsche finds offensive as the "idea of God embodied in Christianity."⁷⁸ The problem of the existence of God is passed over by Nietzsche in two senses.

First of all in a position this side of it, in which only the ideal aspect of God is under discussion, while the question of his existence remains more or less open.⁷⁹

In that the expression, "God is dead," is meant to criticize

the idea of God, it can only be said to be exercising its critique "this side" of the problem of God's existence.

At the same time, however, it denotes the opposite position beyond the problem of the existence of God, which forbids discussion of it as superfluous and antiquated.⁸⁰

In this second sense, the discussion of the problem of God's existence is superfluous owing to Nietzsche's particular genealogical explanation of the origin of belief in God,⁸¹ and antiquated because of his contention that the emergence of such an "explanatory" method signalled the beginning of a new phase in which atheism could for the first time legitimately make a clean sweep of all arguments for the existence of God. As Nietzsche himself put it in Dawn, in an aphorism under the title, "The historical refutation as the final one,"

Formerly one tried to prove that God does not exist; today one shows how the belief that God exists could arise and whereby this belief acquired its gravity and importance. A counter-proof that God does not exist becomes thereby superfluous. Formerly, whenever one had refuted the alleged "proofs for the existence of God," the doubt remained nevertheless whether proofs better than the ones just refuted could not perhaps be found. In those days, the atheists did not know how to make a clean sweep.⁸²

Biser concludes from this, "what alone can be deduced from this with certainty is Nietzsche's peculiar indifference toward religious reality..."⁸³

What is it then exactly that Nietzsche means by the death of God? If it is not the existence but the idea of

God which receives the brunt of his criticism, just what is this idea? According to Biser,

the problem of God poses itself for Nietzsche, not primarily from an ontological point of view, that is, not as a question about the content of being, but rather from a noetic point of view as the problem of the ideal counter-projection to all reality. "God" is for him, as he never tires of emphasizing, above all the deepest "out" that life, sublimated into intellect, inflicts upon itself, the greatest "objection" to a being still at one with itself, and therefore the exponent of a form of thinking aimed toward the separation of knowing and being.⁸⁴

What Nietzsche therefore thinks must be destroyed is

the realm of true thought-forms and irrevocable norms of conscience which are anchored in the idea of God and enforced by its cohesion of meaning and being.⁸⁵

In other words, negatively understood, the death of God means, as Biser's sub-title makes clear, the destruction of Christian consciousness. Taken positively, it means that the God-question can be legitimately and meaningfully asked only beyond, or at least outside, the realm of being.

If the thought of God is still to have any meaning ...it must necessarily be sought beyond "being" and "value," that is, in the realm of "beyond-being." For God begins--in Nietzsche's sense, or at any rate, according to his presuppositions--only where autonomous thinking, and therefore being as being, comes to an end.⁸⁶

With this last giant step from the negative to the positive valuation of the death of God (which is, in itself, a step in the right direction, for which Nietzsche himself set the precedent), Biser has done an about-face which

causes his book to end anticlimactically in that realm which, with its bottomless bag of tricks and its deceptive masks, succeeds in seducing so many otherwise right-headed and good-intentioned interpreters of the death of God. From this point on Biser speaks variously of "a new discovery of God,"⁸⁷ of "the dawn of a new 'God-day,'"⁸⁸ and of the culmination of Anselm's "demonstration in the qualitative leap from the maximum limit...of thought to the only really great God who exists independently of thought."⁸⁹ Biser's God beyond being and thinking is the God beyond the idols and all human conceptions of God. He is a first cousin to both Tillich's God beyond God and the God of Barth's "true religion." Biser is concerned to ask the God-question in a new way. But for Nietzsche, it is precisely this question which has become unaskable.

There appeared in 1962 a monograph which offers a fresh approach to Nietzsche--Hermann Wein's Positives Antichristentum: Nietzsches Christusbild im Brennpunkt nachchristlicher Anthropologie. Wein warns us on the first page of his foreword that what follows is not a "Nietzsche-book," not a new interpretation, but a "search, in Nietzsche the Anti-christ, for the affirmation."⁹⁰ And the assumption underlying this search is that

what Nietzsche failed to achieve with his Zarathustra-image--to portray the ideal of a yea-saying, yea-doing man, in a new sense--he achieved superbly

with his Christ-image, unnoticed by the quarreling interpreters of Nietzsche's anti-Christendom... The counter-image--the Christ-image of the Anti-christ Nietzsche--is the lost key to Nietzsche as a yea-sayer." 91

Furthermore, it is in the atheism peculiar to Nietzsche-- "an intellectual-historical and anthropological atheism"-- 92 that the affirmation is to be found.

Of all the secondary sources considered in this section, Wein's essay stands to suffer most from the necessary consideration of but one of its aspects. Nevertheless, it is the death of God that concerns us here, and so we must look at it out of context. Wein's views of Nietzsche on Jesus are equally intriguing, but of that more later.

Wein suggests that the meaning of the symbolic expression, "God is dead," is "man's re-collection of himself as the revocation of 'the history of God.'" 93 And he explains the phrase, "the history of God," by referring to a beautiful passage from one of Rilke's letters.

Let us be clear about the fact that man has from the earliest times created gods which here and there contained only the dead and threatening and destructive and horrible, violence, anger, impersonal stupefaction, drawn together in a tight, malicious entanglement; the strange, as it were, but in this strangeness an admission to a certain extent that one noticed it, bore it, even acknowledged a certain secret relationship to it and implication in it--one was this as well, but one did not know for the present what to do with this side of one's own experience. It was too big, too dangerous, too many-sided; it grew out over

one's head and took on an excess of meaning. It was impossible always to take along these unwieldy and unencompassible parts beside the many expectations of an existence organized on the basis of supply and demand, and so one agreed to deposit them "out there" for the time being. However, because they were surplus, the strongest--precisely the too strong, the powerful--even violent, the incomprehensible--often monstrous: how could they, taken together at one point, avoid exerting influence, effect, power, and dominance, and that, from beyond?⁹⁴

Understood thus, the greatest of all great deeds, of which the madman spoke, would be, negatively, the murder of God, and, positively, "finally to 'take up' the 'God'-named part of human sensibility--or as Rilke used to say, finally to 'realize' one's own childhood."⁹⁵ This is symbolic poetry, which in Wein's specific use of "symbolic" means it points to something.

But it is also "an event in the history of man,"⁹⁶ in the sense that it marks the overcoming of one half of the Christian-Platonic metaphysical scheme by the other half. Christian-Platonic metaphysics, as we noted above, has always been characterized, according to Nietzsche, by two, until only recently, not incompatible efforts: the effort to make sense of the world and give it a meaning by picturing it as divided into the tangible, changing, illusory world and the eternal, transcendental, true world, and the effort to arrive at the Truth, at all costs.

"Now" the ideal of Truth at all costs gains the upper hand over that other-worldly construction. That is the "event," God is dead! And we have

killed him. That "metaphysical," in truth "moral," imparting of meaning to the prevailing intellectual history is unmasked as illusion, appearance, evasion--and that, in the service of the discovery of truth. The result is, for the sake of intellectual honesty, the nihilistic admission of worthlessness and meaninglessness. The "history of the great separation" is the "consequence." But that is by no means the whole of nihilism. It is the first consequence of the "relentless, thorough, fundamental mistrust" which compels one to "dig into the foundation" on which the edifice of metaphysics was built. Nietzsche calls this foundation "morality."

This digging into one's own foundation exhibits the "logic" of unconditional questioning for the sake of truth. That is, it is the outcome of the cult of knowledge which originally prevailed in the Greek and Christian domain. Nietzsche is thinking of Socrates and Plato, but also of Christ's words, "I am the Truth," as the origin.⁹⁷

There is, finally, another sense in which the death of God is an historical event. It bears only indirectly on Nietzsche's words themselves, but directly on his whole attempt to work out the positive consequences of living in the world after the death of God; and because the clue to this other sense is touched on by Wein, it deserves to be mentioned here.

"God" is the cipher for "higher states" which are not (yet) made human. They are therefore irrational. Through self-estrangement, repression, and projection, they have eluded man and therefore claim power over him--like powers "from beyond." They appear to be superhuman. But an inner expansion of man could reincorporate them.⁹⁸

Or, as Rilke put it,

Sometimes I think to myself how heaven arose,
and death--in that we pushed away from ourselves

what was most precious to us, because there was so much else to be done beforehand and because it wasn't secure with us busy ones. Now time has passed, and we have grown accustomed to less. We no longer recognize what is our own and are amazed at its exceeding greatness. Is that not possible?⁹⁹

The last work to receive our attention is even less a "Nietzsche-book" than the preceding one, dealing, as it does, not directly with Nietzsche at all, but with the Christian doctrine of God. It is Thomas J. J. Altizer's The Gospel of Christian Atheism. (1966). Nevertheless, we are justified in including Altizer here in this context for at least two reasons: his writings are unmistakably informed by Nietzsche, and it is the death of God about which he writes.

To confess the death of God is to speak of an actual and real event, not perhaps an event occurring in a single moment of time or history, but notwithstanding this reservation an event that has actually happened both in a cosmic and in a historical sense. There should be no confusion deriving from the mistaken assumption that such a confession refers to an eclipse of God or a withdrawal of God from either history or the creation. Rather, an authentic language speaking about the death of God must inevitably be speaking about the death of God himself. The radical Christian proclaims that God has actually died in Christ, that his death is both a historical and a cosmic event, and, as such, it is a final and irrevocable event, which cannot be reversed by a subsequent religious or cosmic movement.¹⁰⁰

Altizer speaks of this event variously as "a forward-moving eschatological process of redemption, a process embodying a progressive movement of Spirit into flesh," "a concrete

and actual descent of the sacred into the profane," and as "the forward movement of the Incarnation."¹⁰¹ He does not consider the Incarnation an isolated event in the past which happened once for all, but, along with the Crucifixion, as the primary expression of the death of God, which is to say, "the forward-moving process of salvation."¹⁰²

There are two senses in which the death of God can be understood, according to Altizer; what is more, there is an inevitable correlation between the two--"God's self-revelation and his self-negation or kenosis."

The God who reveals himself in history is the God who empties himself of the plenitude of his primordial Being; thereby he actually and truly becomes manifest in history and finally history becomes not simply the arena of revelation but the very incarnate Body of God. ...indeed, from the Christian point of view, revelation and incarnation are inseparable, being but two faces of a single process, a process wherein God both reveals himself in and becomes incarnate as the very opposite of his original identity.¹⁰³

Although this self-revelation and self-negation of God in history will never "assume a final and definitive form," but will undergo "a continual metamorphosis,"¹⁰⁴ the consequence of this never-ending process is seen to be the dawning of "an all-encompassing but immanent and imminent 'Kingdom of God.'"¹⁰⁵

In his emphasis on the "self-unfolding" of God in the world and the reconciliation of differences in a coincidentia oppositorum, Altizer can perhaps be best understood as a kind of secular Nicholas of Cusa. He is concerned that Christians recover an apocalyptic faith and return to the eschatological ground of early Christianity; indeed, he speaks on one occasion of the Kingdom of God as the "eschatological goal" of the kenotic movement of the death of God (and by "goal," he means not something static, to be arrived at, but rather a "dawning.") In sum, the death of God means that God died in Jesus Christ and dies in history. These are not two deaths, but, as we have seen, two expressions of the simultaneously self-revealing, self-annihilating movement of God into the world.

Instead of taking Altizer's use of the word kenosis at face value, we would do well to ask how he is using it. There are three Christian doctrines (one might include Creation as a fourth) which have commonly been interpreted kenotically in the not too distant theological past. Is it in connection with Incarnation or Atonement or Christology that Altizer is using kenosis? Surely in connection with all three. However, while the kenotic theory was more or less successful (depending on who employed it) in making sense of the doctrines of Incarnation, Atonement, and

Christology in the phase of theological thinking just prior to the Christian affirmation of the death of God, it is doubtful that it can be of value to theological thinking about the death of God.

The gospel of Christian atheism, as Altizer expounds it, contains, indeed, the good news of liberation from the Spirit and for the flesh; but its "eschatological goal" is nevertheless short of the affirmation which Altizer so desperately desires to make. Elsewhere he has written,

today the task of thought is the negation of history, and most particularly the negation of the history created by Western man. But this negation must be dialectical, which means that finally it must be affirmation.¹⁰⁶

He goes on to warn that "the religious danger of our time is Gnosticism," which is based on "a profound hatred of the world and of existence in the world."

Only one attitude to the world is open to the Gnostic: negation. Nor can this world negation be dialectical. It can be nothing less than simple, ruthless, ultimate negation.¹⁰⁷

Being as he is thus so acutely aware of the (admittedly threatening) danger of the negativity of Gnosticism, Altizer wills the death of God with such vehemence that he throws his dialectical negation off balance and topples willy-nilly into a simple, ruthless, ultimate affirmation of the world, which alone cannot liberate us but only lead us to submission and despair.

If ever anyone desired to teach us to accept and affirm the world, it was Nietzsche with his Dionysus. But he was also at pains to find a way of shaping and changing it which would amount to neither submission and endurance, on the one hand, nor denial, on the other. How well Nietzsche succeeded remains to be seen.¹⁰⁸ That Altizer's exposition of the death of God falls short of what even he himself intends can be thrown into relief by setting two apparently similar, yet very different rhetorical questions of his side by side.

What can the Christian fear of darkness, when he knows that Christ has conquered darkness, that God will be all in all?¹⁰⁹

What can the Christian fear of the power of darkness when he can name our darkness as the fulfillment of the self-emptying of God in Christ?¹¹⁰

In the former, the Christian need not fear the power of darkness because the darkness has been conquered by Christ; in the latter, the Christian is invited to affirm even the darkness because it really isn't darkness at all, but a stage in the kenotic metamorphosis of God. The former is informed by Nietzsche, the latter by Blake and Hegel.

NOTES

- 1) Albert Camus, The Rebel, trans. Anthony Bower (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1956), p. 66.
- 2) Plutarch's Morals. Theosophical Essays, trans. C. W. King (London: George Bell and Sons, 1882), pp. 92-93.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 91
- 4) Heinrich Heine, Werke, ed. Martin Greiner (2d ed. rev.; Köln & Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1962), II, p. 714.
- 5) *Ibid.*, p. 718.
- 6) *Ibid.*, pp. 722-23.
- 7) *Ibid.*, pp. 457-58.
- 8) *Ibid.*, p. 436. "The God of the pantheists differs from that of the deists in that he himself is in the world whereas the latter is completely outside or, what amounts to the same thing, above the world. The God of the deist rules the world from above, that is to say, condescendingly, as an establishment distinct from himself."
- 9) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1089. "One day it will be said that Heine and I were by far the first artists of the German language--separated by an incalculable distance from everything that mere Germans did with it."
- 10) *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- 11) *Ibid.*, p. 1114.
- 13) Karl Löwith, Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen
12) *Ibid.*, pp. 120-20.
- 13) Karl Löwith, Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen (2d ed. rev.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1956), p. 242, note 21.
- 14) See especially Alfred Baeumler, Nietzsche, der

- Philosoph und Politiker (Reclam 1931). Baumeier was the official editor and interpreter of Nietzsche's works for the Nazis. See further Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Meridian Books paperback ed.; Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., June 1963), pp. 45, 64-65, 139-40.
- 15) Karl Löwith, Meaning in History (Phoenix Books paperback ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 214.
 - 16) Löwith, Nietzsches Philosophie..., p. 40.
 - 17) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 900. "Man would rather will Nothing than not will at all."
 - 18) Löwith, Nietzsches Philosophie..., p. 46.
 - 19) Ibid., p. 40.
 - 20) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 293-94;
 - 21) Ibid.
 - 22) Löwith, Nietzsches Philosophie..., p. 55.
 - 23) Ibid., p. 57.
 - 24) Ibid., p. 46.
 - 25) Karl Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche, trans. David E. Green (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 370.
 - 26) Ibid., p. 373.
 - 27) Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity, trans. Charles F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmitz (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965).
 - 28) Walter Kaufmann, From Shakespeare to Existentialism (Anchor Books paperback ed.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1960), pp. 23-25.
 - 29) See especially in this regard Book III, "Nietzsche's Way of Thinking, viewed within the entirety of his existence," chapters 1 and 2, "How Nietzsche Understands Himself and His Own Thought," and "How

Nietzsche is to be Understood," as well as the Preface to the Second and Third Editions where Jaspers writes about participating in the essence of Nietzsche's life and thought.

- 30) Kaufmann, From Shakespeare..., p. xiii.
- 31) Ibid., p. 210.
- 32) Ibid., p. 242.
- 33) Ibid.
- 34) Ibid., p. 243.
- 35) Ibid., p. 244.
- 36) Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche and Christianity, trans. A. B. Ashton (Gateway paperback ed.; Henry Regnery Co., 1961), p. 14.
- 37) Jaspers, Nietzsche: An Introduction..., p. 246.
- 38) Martin Heidegger, Holzwege (Frankfurt a.M., 1950), p. 200.
- 39) Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche (Pfullingen: Neske Verlag, 1961), Vol. II, pp. 220-21.
- 40) Heidegger, Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens (1954), p. 17. Quoted in Walter Kaufmann, From Shakespeare ..., p. 344.
- 41) A similar conclusion is reached by Karl Löwith in his devastating critique of Heidegger, "Heideggers Auslegung des Ungesagten in Nietzsches Wort 'Gott ist tot,'" in Die Neue Rundschau (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 53 Jahrgang), pp. 105-37.
- 42) Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 203.
- 43) Günther Grass' The Tin Drum contains a delightful parody of Heidegger's redundant and eccentric language.
- 44) H. J. Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers (Routledge paperback ed.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1961), p. 109.

- 45) In an essay in Encounter ("On the Rim of the Volcano," April, 1964), George Lichteim has made a case for Heidegger's irrationalism, though he sees him, in this sense, being faithful to Nietzsche. Nietzsche must be said to belong to this tradition, along with Schopenhauer and Wagner, Bachofen, Freud, George, Rilke and Thomas Mann. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's commitment to it was balanced by an equally strong commitment to the tradition of rationalism. This cannot be said of Heidegger. Indeed, for Heidegger, the philosopher is akin to the poet, and by "poet," he means Hölderlin the hymnist and Rilke at his most obscure.
- 46) Or did he? According to Walter Kaufmann, "his (Heidegger's) first book was entitled Kategorienlehre des Duns Scotus (1916). It dealt with a work that Heidegger assumed was by Duns Scotus. As a matter of fact, it was not." From Shakespeare..., p. 365.
- 47) See below, Chapter 6, Section III, especially Note 57.
- 48) Heidegger, Letter on Humanism (1947), quoted in William Barrett, Irrational Man (Anchor Books paperback ed.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1962), p. 209.
- 49) Friedrich Hölderlin, "Brod und Wein. An Heinze," Sämtliche Werke, IV (Berlin, 1923), p. 123.
- 50) The first study in English (1939) which attempted "to show Nietzsche's thought in its measure of wholeness" (p. viii) was George A. Morgan's What Nietzsche Means (Harper Torchbook ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1965). In light of the gross misinterpretations of Nietzsche abounding by the end of World War I (not least in the English-speaking world), Morgan intends, not to interpret at all, but to establish what in the light of the evidence he (Nietzsche) probably did mean, quite regardless of why, psychologically or historically, he came to think as he did, what effect his thoughts may have had, or how anyone else may choose to evaluate them." (p. vi) In other words, the task he sets himself is much more modest than that of any of the three interpretations we have looked at above. Although What Nietzsche Means is, by the author's own admission, not strictly speaking an interpretation, it

deserves mention here in view of its implications for Nietzsche's views on the origin and development of conscience which will concern us later on.

Morgan calls Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God "A catastrophic historical experience..." "That is to say, something on which men have lived for centuries has vanished; the heart of Christendom has stopped, and the rest of its body faces death, for the spirit has departed from its members. This is more than a personal experience; it is the knell of a civilization." (p. 37) It is Christianity itself that is responsible for the death of God. Morgan is right in saying that Nietzsche attributed the death of God to Christianity's own insatiable will to truth which, though originally a quest for the Absolute, and satisfied when it came to rest in the Absolute, gradually degenerated into "a restless unmasking of illusions" which was forced to conclude ultimately that "everything is false"--even the Absolute. (p. 47) Furthermore, this religious quest had bred in man a new need, "a need to have a meaning for his life as a whole." (p. 52) Until only recently, the need for a goal, a meaning, created by Christianity, was also fulfilled by Christianity. It taught men to pose a new question to which it conveniently could provide an answer. But "an" answer is misleading, for this Christian (ascetic) answer has, indeed, been the answer. "Therefore the 'death of God' means that the very heart has dropped out of existence. For apart from the religious ('ascetic') ideal, the human lot as a whole has had no meaning." (p. 52)

When Nietzsche begins to "rebuild," to transvaluate the old values which have lost their value, he builds on the foundation of "loyalty to life." "In adopting life as his standard, Nietzsche intends to exclude both supernatural and fragmentary values: nothing beyond life and nothing less than it shall be accepted. 'The death of God' explains the rejection of other-worldly ideals: they have become nihilistic. The fragmentary ones arose because some instrument of life was mistaken for its end; some part for the whole." (p. 116) One of the most devastating consequences of the death of God is the

dubiousness of conscience as a moral guide. Once we discover "that traditional morality depends upon the existence of a 'moral world order': a God of righteousness whose will establishes the moral law, who speaks through man's conscience, who rewards obedience and punishes sin," then "if 'God is dead,' conscience can no longer claim to be an oracle of living truth...." (p. 168)

- 51) Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche. Philosophen..., p. 82.
- 52) Ibid., p. 81.
- 53) Ibid., p. 82.
- 54) Ibid., p. 84.
- 55) Ibid., p. 85.
- 56) Ibid., p. 86.
- 57) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 127.
- 58) Kaufmann, Nietzsche. Philosophen..., p. 84.
- 59) Martin Buber, Eclipse of God (Harper Torchbook ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1952), p. 110.
- 60) Ibid., p. 14.
- 61) Ibid., p. 66.
- 62) Ibid.
- 63) Ibid.
- 64) Ibid., p. 68.
- 65) Ibid., p. 23.
- 66) Ibid., p. 129.
- 67) Ibid., p. 24.
- 68) Eugen Fink, Nietzsches Philosophie (Urban Bücher paperback ed.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1960), p. 66.
- 69) Ibid., p. 68.

- 70) Ibid., p. 67.
- 71) Ibid., p. 68.
- 72) Ibid., p. 71.
- 73) Ibid., p. 72.
- 74) See especially his concluding remarks: "The death of God means the denial of the difference between being and appearance in the traditional sense. But in spite of this negation of the Platonic-Christian and Kantian form of this difference, Nietzsche remains caught in it..." Ibid., p. 184.
- 75) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 280.
- 76) Fink, op. cit., p. 74.
- 77) Eugen Biser, "Gott ist tot." Nietzsches Destruktion des christlichen Bewusstseins (München: Kösel Verlag, 1962), p. 13.
- 78) Ibid., p. 99.
- 79) Ibid., p. 105.
- 80) Ibid.
- 81) See Chapters 5 and 6.
- 82) Nietzsche, Werke, I, pp. 1073-74.
- 83) Biser, p. 107.
- 84) Ibid., p. 111.
- 85) Ibid., p. 112.
- 86) Ibid., p. 291.
- 87) Ibid., p. 292.
- 88) Ibid., p. 293.
- 89) Ibid., pp. 296-97.
- 90) Hermann Wein, Positives Antichristentum. Nietzsches

Christusbild im Brennpunkt nachchristlicher Anthro-
pologie (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. x.

- 91) Ibid., p. xi.
- 92) Ibid., p. 2.
- 93) Ibid., p. 17.
- 94) Ibid., pp. 17-18.
- 95) Ibid., p. 18.
- 96) Ibid.
- 97) Ibid., p. 39.
- 98) Ibid., p. 18.
- 99) Rainer Maria Rilke, Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge, quoted in Wein, p. 18.
- 100) Thomas J. J. Altizer, The Gospel of Christian Atheism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 103.
- 101) Ibid., pp. 104-05.
- 102) Ibid., p. 108.
- 103) Ibid., p. 86.
- 104) Ibid., p. 104.
- 105) Ibid., p. 86.
- 106) Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, Radical Theology and the Death of God (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), p. 14.
- 107) Ibid., p. 19.
- 108) See Chapters 9 and 10.
- 109) Altizer and Hamilton, op. cit., p. 21.
- 110) Altizer, The Gospel....., p. 112.

4. The only humanly possible atheism.

Nietzsche said, "God is dead," and that is quite different from saying, "God does not exist," that is, he cannot be, does not exist, will not be, and never lived. On the contrary, he was alive! And this is at least the only humanly possible atheism, the only form of atheism accessible to men.¹

--Franz Overbeck

I

These words of Franz Overbeck are of great value for our understanding of Nietzsche's pronouncement of God's death. Overbeck's point is quite simple, but profound in its simplicity. The proclamation of God's death is not to be taken as a catalyst to arguments about the existence of God, which are invariably as boring as they are useless. Nietzsche himself says, speaking not about God in particular at this point, but about the metaphysical world in general,

It is true, there could be a metaphysical world; the absolute possibility of it can hardly be resisted.... ..but one can do nothing at all with it, to say nothing of allowing happiness, salvation and life to depend on the spider-spinnings of such a possibility. For one could assert nothing at all about a metaphysical world except its otherness, an inaccessible, incomprehensible otherness. It would be a thing with negative characteristics. Even if the existence of such a world were proven beyond all doubt, it would be certain that this knowledge would be the most irrelevant knowledge of all, still more irrelevant than the knowledge of the chemical analysis of water would be to a seaman facing the peril of a gale.²

So also with attempts to prove the existence or non-existence of God. Not God is or is not or never was or never could have been, rather God lived and died. God is dead. As Overbeck so rightly perceived, this is an expression of the only humanly possible atheism.

As we saw in the preceding section, this statement has had different meanings for different people. It has been interpreted philosophically, psychologically, historically, and from the viewpoint of the history of religions. And it has been interpreted away by those who were affronted and threatened by it as the aberrant utterance of a feeble-minded philosopher. Let us attempt, with the aid of Freud's myth of the primal horde, a theological interpretation.

II

Freud's theory of the phylogensis of man, namely "his reconstruction of the prehistory of mankind from the primal horde through patricide to civilization,"³ has been ignored out of existence or vehemently rejected by most of Freud's heirs as being unscientific, by which they apparently mean that there simply is no evidence to prove that Freud was "right," that his reconstruction is the "correct" one. But what appears at first glance to be such a glaring exception to Freud's otherwise iron rule of integrity in such matters deserves closer scrutiny.

If Freud's hypothesis is not corroborated by any anthropological evidence, it would have to be discarded altogether, except for the fact that it telescopes, in a sequence of catastrophic events, the historical dialectic of domination and thereby elucidates aspects of civilization hitherto unexplained. We use Freud's anthropological speculation only in this sense: for its symbolic value.

It is precisely in this way, as an aid to interpretation, that I propose to use Freud's myth of the primal horde.⁵

According to Freud's reconstruction, the phylogenesis of man began when life was organized by domination, when one man succeeded in establishing and sustaining his power over all others. This one man was the father, the possessor and monopolizer of pleasure, that is, of the desired women of the horde, with whom he produced children. The sons he then subjugated to his domination by forbidding them access to the desired women with threats of death, castration, or expulsion from the horde.

The similarity of this hypothesis to Nietzsche's attempt to account for repression by positing a master-slave dichotomy is obvious. Both theories hinge on the concept of domination. But Freud's theory is more ingenious in that it goes beyond the establishment of domination to account for its maintenance and sustenance. Despite the fact that both Freud's primal father and Nietzsche's master established their domination out of self-interest, the primal father was also successful in creating a

semblance of order on the basis of which the horde became a group. By monopolizing the pleasure, he forced the sons to suppress their sexual desires. This "enforced abstinence" (Herbert Marcuse's phrase) provided the rechanneled energy for the tasks which had to be performed if the group was to continue to exist.

The constraint on the gratification of instinctual needs imposed by the father, the suppression of pleasure, thus not only was the result of domination but also created the mental pre-conditions for the continued functioning of domination.⁶

This can not be said of Nietzsche's masters. The domination which they established depended solely on their continued presence and strength. Their domination could not outlive them.

But why was the primal father so successful? How were the "mental preconditions for the continued functioning of domination" created? The next development in Freud's hypothesis is the rebellion of the sons against the tyrant father, which takes the form of their killing and devouring him. After the murder of the father, we would normally expect the sons to take advantage of their new freedom from domination. And since the rebellion was directed essentially against the father's taboo on women, it is to be expected that the sons would now break this taboo and seek "integral gratification" of their sexual desires, a gratification represented by the mother who,

"for the first and last time, provided such gratification."⁷ To our surprise, something quite different happens. The sons form a brother clan, "reinstate" the father to his position of authority by deifying him, and agree among themselves to uphold the taboo on the women of the horde, thus taking upon themselves the task of dominating once carried out by the patriarch alone. Why the sudden change of plans? Why the refusal or inability of the sons to relish the newly-won liberty? Why the reinstatement and glorification of a tyrant who had until recently so harshly suppressed his sons and monopolized the women of the horde? Freud cites two reasons, guilt and fear.

According to Freud's theory of the origin of conscience, the brothers' sense of guilt may justly be called the original sense of guilt. It arose out of an original feeling of remorse which in turn was the outgrowth of the ambivalent feelings of love and hate which the sons bore toward their father. In Freud's own words,

When one has a sense of guilt after having committed a misdeed, and because of it, the feeling should more properly be called remorse. It relates only to a deed that has been done, and, of course, it presupposes that a conscience--the readiness to feel guilty--was already in existence before the deed took place. Remorse of this sort can, therefore, never help us to discover the origin of conscience and of the sense of guilt in general.

But if the human sense of guilt goes back to the killing of the primal father, that was after all

a case of 'remorse'. Are we to assume that (at that time) a conscience and a sense of guilt were not, as we have presupposed, in existence before the deed? If not, where, in this case, did the remorse come from? There is no doubt that this case should explain the secret of the sense of guilt to us and put an end to our difficulties. And I believe it does. This remorse was the result of the primordial ambivalence of feeling towards the father. His sons hated him, but they loved him, too. After their hatred had been satisfied by their act of aggression, their love came to the fore in their remorse for the deed. It set up the super-ego by identification with the father; it gave that agency the father's power, as though as a punishment for the deed of aggression they had carried out against him, and it created the restrictions which were intended to prevent a repetition of the deed. And since the inclination to aggressiveness against the father was repeated in the following generations, the sense of guilt, too, persisted, and it was reinforced once more by every piece of aggressiveness that was suppressed and carried over to the super-ego. Now, I think we can at last grasp two things perfectly clearly; the part played by love in the origin of conscience and the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt. Whether one has killed one's father or has abstained from doing so is not really the decisive thing. One is bound to feel guilty in either case, for the sense of guilt is an expression of the conflict due to ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between Eros and the instinct of destruction or death.⁸

As for the second reason for the brothers' move from their newly-won liberty to renewed domination, fear, we need only draw attention to the fact that, despite his harshness, the father had, in fact, succeeded in establishing and maintaining in his person a semblance of order on which the life of the group depended and which now threatened to collapse in his absence.

The assassins, overcome with guilt at having murdered their father, and haunted by the growing apprehension that the group which he had created and maintained might soon begin to disintegrate for lack of authority, hurried to assuage their guilt and eliminate the threat to the group by defying the father and introjecting their feelings of guilt. The group was preserved and the father continued to live and function in the old constraints, now introjected, in the ruling sons.

Not all was loss. There was one advantage accruing to the members of the group as a result of this putsch. Pleasure, heretofore monopolized by the tyrant father, was now "distributed" among the brothers. But this small advantage was outweighed by the sacrifice that had been made, namely that the tyrant brothers were the objects of their own domination. In contrast to their father before them, who was the cause of repression in others but himself unrepressed, the brothers were both repressors and repressed. This is the meaning of the introjection of the prohibitions once imposed by and embodied in the father.

It should now be clear that Freud understood the maintenance of civilization to depend on guilt and the development of civilization to consist of a seesaw movement from domination to liberation to domination.

In the development of civilization, freedom becomes possible only as liberation. Liberty follows domination--and leads to the reaffirmation of domination.⁹

But is this really the last word? Has not something integral to this myth of the phylogenetic development of man been omitted in the conclusion? Is there not one consequence yet to be drawn?

Aside from their feelings of parricidal guilt, there are some other guilt feelings which must have caused the brothers some sleepless nights as well. As we have noticed, the brothers have re-established domination and thus both repented their deed and ensured the continued existence of the group. However, this is only half the story, and the negative half at that. At best, a limited progress has been made, certainly not worth the death of the father. The brothers set out to liberate themselves from domination, but achieved only a modified form of domination. And the short span of time between prohibitions imposed by the father and self-imposed prohibitions was apparently disturbed by doubts about both the "rightness" and the outcome of their revolt and plans for the new regime. This all amounts to the simple fact that the brothers had betrayed themselves! They carried out their original intentions only to annul their efforts in the end. Surely they harbored guilt feelings towards themselves for having failed in this venture.

The overthrow of the king-father is a crime, but so is his restoration--and both are necessary for the progress of civilization. The crime against the reality principle is redeemed by the crime against the pleasure principle; redemption thus cancels itself. The sense of guilt is sustained in spite of repeated and intensified redemption; anxiety persists because the crime against the pleasure principle is not redeemed. There is guilt over a deed that has not been accomplished: liberation.¹⁰

This is the one "loose end"--and, indeed, it is an important one--left unaccounted for in Freud's myth of the primal horde. Though the brothers have atoned for their original deed (the murder of the father), they are still burdened by unredeemed guilt feelings stemming from their betrayal of their intended act of liberation.

Although he makes no explicit mention of the unredeemed sense of guilt in this context, it is from Freud himself that we take our cue to pit this sense of guilt against the original sense of guilt which followed as a result of the murder of the father. Specifically, it is his theory of instincts which justifies, indeed, which compels us to juxtapose these two senses of guilt.

In this aspect of Freud's thought the key concept is antagonism (Freud's ambivalence). Every human being is the embodiment of a continuing struggle between what Freud came to call the life instinct and the death instinct, that is, between the desire to progress, to become oneself by freeing oneself from one's ties to the past,

and the desire to regress, to return to the rest and integral gratification of one's desires remembered from infancy. This ontogenetic struggle of the instincts is parallel to the phylogenetic antagonism between the desire for domination and the desire for liberation, which we have recounted above. Granting the validity of this analogy and recalling the intensity of the strife between the life instinct and the death instinct, we are forced to doubt the extreme one-sidedness of the struggle between liberation and domination. It looks as though we may not have to content ourselves with the inevitability of domination.

Are there any other rays of hope? Yes, one, namely the dubiousness of "the fatal inevitability of the original sense of guilt."¹¹ In the long quotation from Civilization and its Discontents cited above, Freud describes in two simple sentences what he elsewhere calls the "return of the repressed," namely his contention that "the inclination to aggressiveness against the father was repeated in the following generations," and, thus, that "the sense of guilt, too, persisted...." This may be accurate history, but there is no inevitable move from the inclination to aggressiveness to the sense of guilt. "Whether one has killed one's father or has abstained from doing so is not really the decisive thing." True, in either case, one will have wished his death. However, it does not necessarily

follow from this that "one is bound to feel guilty in either case." What Freud believed to be fatally inevitable is wholly dependent on the remorse felt by the sons at having killed (or desired to kill) the father. And this remorse is the result of the ambivalence of feelings of love and hate which the sons bore toward the father. That they hate him is easy to believe. But that they love him is less imaginable. And surely Freud meant more by "love" in this case than what Herbert Marcuse calls "a biological affection--ambivalent emotions which were expressed in the wish to replace and to imitate the father, to identify oneself with him, with his pleasure as well as with his power."¹² If by "love" here is meant a combination of respect, fear and a desire to imitate and displace, then surely the sons would not have been so overcome by remorse at having killed their father. Surely Freud meant by "love" something more binding than "a biological affection." To sum up, the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt depends on the inevitability of feelings of remorse, which in turn depend on the sons' ambivalent love-hate feelings for the father. The role played by love in this scheme is, as Freud himself admitted, indeed major! Perhaps the sense of guilt is not as inevitable as Freud believed it to be.

Keeping in mind this reconstruction of Freud's hypothesis of the primal horde, and leaving undeveloped for the moment the two rays of hope which can be derived from it--the dependence of a sense of guilt in the parricidal sons upon feelings of love for the father and the potency of the sense of guilt in the brothers for having failed to liberate themselves from domination--let us proceed to our theological interpretation of Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God.

III

Upon a close look at Nietzsche's statements about the death of God--and there are many besides the popular words of the madman--we are struck by an ambiguity. Faithful to his method, Nietzsche is experimenting with attitudes, trying on different views of this phenomenon, sizing it up from various perspectives, and he ends up saying at least two things about it. One is that "God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!"¹³ The other, "'God is dead; God died of his pity for man'."¹⁴ Both cases witness to a death of God, the significant difference being how he met his death. In the words of the madman, he is murdered and we are his murderers; in the less familiar words of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, God died, in this particular passage, of pity.

Thanks to Freud's insights concerning the reaction of the sons to having murdered their father, we are treading familiar ground in the case of Nietzsche's former proclamation. Nietzsche's madman, that frantic seeker of God, is both afraid of the consequences of having killed God and plagued by a sense of guilt. We recall that the madman tells his fellow assassins of the chaos he sees encroaching upon them as a result of their terrible deed. But these unbelievers, who had poked fun at him before for running through the market place in broad daylight with a lighted lantern and "seeking God," are now silent. They merely gaze at the madman, and he sees in their glassy stares their lack of comprehension. He shatters his lantern on the ground and laments, "I come too soon...."

Nietzsche himself had come too soon. As early as 1873, he had expressed his fear of the consequences of the death of God. It was in that year, in the first of his Untimely Meditations, a polemical essay directed against David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer, that he raised a warning finger against an uncritical acceptance of Darwin's discoveries. It will perhaps be instructive for us, before proceeding with the development of our theological interpretation, to look at this ostensibly theological reaction to the death of God and Nietzsche's critique of it.

In this early essay, Nietzsche, availing himself of an approach which he was to use several times again in the future, attacked, not Strauss the man or Strauss the theologian, but Strauss the Bildungsphilister.¹⁵ That is to say, his vehemence and aggressiveness were directed against a real but invisible danger which could be made visible only with the aid of "a strong magnifying glass"--in this case, Strauss.¹⁶ The Bildungsphilister were advocates of a sham culture who were intoxicated by the (false) assumption that Germany's victory over France in the Franco-Prussian War was a cultural as well as a military victory. Strauss's The Old Faith and The New, published in 1872 and devoured by the "culturally emancipated" readers throughout Germany (it was in its sixth printing and being hailed as a classic when Nietzsche wrote his essay) was characteristic of the growing mood of certainty among citizens of the new Reich that Germany was emerging at the center of European culture.

In The Old Faith and The New, Strauss asks and answers four questions: 1) Are we still Christians? No. 2) Are we still religious? Yes, in that we demand the same piety for the All (the universe) as the man of the "old faith" demanded for his God. 3) How do we view the world? Optimistically, in terms of scientific positivism. 4) How do we order our lives? On the basis of a little Darwin,

a dash of Goethe and Lessing, and what Karl Barth has called "a great deal of anonymous, flatly bourgeois morality."¹⁷ The book even contains a quite practical (and very telling) explanation of how the men of the "new faith" spend their Sundays. In order to better understand the reasons for their unexpected cultural promotion, they engage in historical studies,

which are now being made available even to the non-scholarly in a series of historical works, written in an attractive and popular national style; in addition, we attempt to extend our knowledge of nature, for which there is also no shortage of easily understandable resources; and finally, we find, in the writings of our great poets, in the performances of the works of our great musicians, a stimulus for spirit and mind, for fantasy and humor, which leaves nothing to be desired. Thus we live, thus we happily spend our days.¹⁸

Finally, for the purpose of further clarification, two appendices were added to the book; the one treating Germany's great poets, the other her great musicians. This, in brief, is Strauss's confession of the "new faith."

Nietzsche put three questions to Strauss: How does the new believer conceive his heaven? How far does the boldness which his new belief affords him reach? How does he write his books? Nietzsche expects Strauss the confessor to answer the first two questions, and Strauss the author to answer the last. We shall concern ourselves with only the questions directed to Strauss the confessor.

The first question is easily answered. But Nietzsche asks it, because he believes it to be highly significant for our understanding of a man, to find out how he imagines his heaven. Strauss is outspoken in his rejection of "an immortal, heavenly life";¹⁹ the heaven of the "new believer" is, above all, an earthly heaven. Furthermore, this heaven is made up of the stuff of the everyday--home, family, children, work, nation--all this and more, the "more" meaning specifically, continued edification from the great classical poets and musicians. Of course, the cultural philistines do reserve the right to decide just which of these great men are really "classical" and which fail to measure up. According to Nietzsche,

they want to know about an artist only insofar as he is suitable for service in their sitting-rooms, and they are aware of only two possibilities, whiffing and burning.²⁰

Nietzsche has the answer to his first question. The cultural philistine

dwells in the works of our great poets and musicians like a worm that lives by destroying and admiring, by feeding and worshiping, by digesting!²¹

That is his heaven which leaves nothing to be desired!

The second question--how far does the boldness conferred by this "new faith" reach?--is the significant question for us. This is the ethical question which derives from Strauss's own query--how do we view the world?

--with its blandly optimistic answer in which he lauds Darwin as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind. Once again, how do we view the world? By first renouncing Christianity and then by enlisting the aid of modern natural science.

Strauss was right in admitting that after Darwin, it was no longer possible to continue to repeat the time-worn pious phrases about God guiding the development of man. In his Origin of the Species (1859) Darwin had sufficiently established the principle of natural causation, and later, in his Descent of Man, which was first published in 1871, he addressed himself to the specific task of throwing light on the development of man. By "natural causation," Darwin intended to express two sides of one relation. On the side of the organism, natural causation referred to the perpetual "struggle for existence" which characterizes life preserving itself under unfavorable conditions; on the side of the environment, natural causation denoted natural selection, i.e. the principle by which the environment favors and preserves certain qualities useful to the individual.

Both Nietzsche and Strauss were aware that Darwin had established the evolution hypothesis. In fact, they both agreed with his findings. But the similarity ends

there, for their reactions to Darwin could hardly have been more different. As we have seen, Strauss was superficially optimistic.

He announces with admirable candor that he is no longer a Christian, but he does not want to disturb any contentment of any sort; it seems contradictory to him to establish an association to destroy an association--which is really not so contradictory. With a certain rugged satisfaction he cloaks himself in the hairy garments of our ape genealogists and praises Darwin as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind--but abashed, we see that his ethics is constructed completely detached from the question: how do we view the world?²²

Nietzsche, on the other hand, was shaken violently. He was aware, not only of Darwin's conclusions, but also of the as yet undrawn consequences of them, consequences that probably would deal a death blow to the very culture the Bildungsphilister thought themselves to be championing.

Here was Strauss's opportunity to show us the boldness of his "new faith." But he failed. He missed both the unspoken consequences of Darwin's argument and his one chance to be bold. He realized that the "struggle for existence" is the law of nature, but he proceeded from this realization to stale imperatives about ethics and religion.

Strauss has not yet learned that an idea can never make men more ethical and better, and that preaching morals is just as easy as providing reasons for morals is difficult; instead,

it should have been his task seriously to explain and derive the phenomena of human goodness, mercy, love and self-denial, which after all exist as a matter of fact, from his Darwinistic presuppositions: whereas he preferred to flee the task of explanation by a leap into the imperative. In this leap, he even hops light-heartedly over Darwin's fundamental axiom. "Forget," says Strauss, "at no time that you are a human being and not a mere nature being (Naturwesen); at no time, that all others are likewise human beings, i.e. notwithstanding all individual diversity, the same as you, with the same needs and demands as you--that is the essence of all morality."

"Forget at no time that you and all that you perceive in yourself and around you is no disconnected fragment, no wild chaos of atoms and accidents, rather that everything proceeds according to eternal laws out of the origin of all life, all reason and all good--that is the essence of religion."²³

This is what enraged Nietzsche! Strauss was quite willing to reject Christianity, but he insisted on continuing to preach morals and be religious. He accepted the world of bellum omnium contra omnes, but was unwilling to admit that if existence must be described in terms of struggle, then ethics and religion are rendered meaningless.

The theological escape-hatch in the face of this problem, both in Nietzsche's day and still today, is to say that Darwin was of course only concerned with the effects of natural selection between variations, not with the origin of the variations. This is true, but for theology to move, with a sigh of relief, from that realization to confident statements about the One Originator and Creator of life is to avoid the issue, not to tackle it.

We have seen Strauss's obtuseness in the face of the ethical problem raised by Darwin's findings, but what about religion? In what sense can the cultural philistine remain religious and continue to believe in the eternal laws of life?

It is by means of a faulty interpretation of some famous words of Lessing that Strauss thinks he can keep his balance. Lessing's words can be paraphrased thus: were God to offer all Truth with his right hand and, with his left, the constant desire and search for that Truth, including of course the stipulation that it could never be found, he would humbly request that the contents of the left hand be given him. Strauss interprets these words as the expression of the restless desire for inquiry and activity. He perceives a hidden meaning in Lessing's words which he thinks serves as the best answer to Schopenhauer's pessimism, which he considers an insult to man's intellect and feelings. Schopenhauer had spoken of the "ill-advised God, who knew nothing better to do than to enter into this miserable world."²⁴ Strauss replies; "And what if the Creator Himself were also of Lessing's opinion, that striving is to be preferred to undisturbed possession?"²⁵ Here Strauss stands in his self-made maze of metaphysics, with a God who chooses to forfeit the Truth itself for the unending and always erring search for

Truth. Why does he not admit that Darwin has successfully knocked the supporting buttresses from beneath our belief in a Creator and Providential God? Why does he not confess that the whole edifice of our ethical standards has come crashing down about us? Because he is afraid! The boldness of his "new faith" is not there. As Nietzsche put it,

He does not dare honestly to say: I have liberated you from a supporting and compassionate God; the 'universe' is only a rigid gearing machine, be careful that it does not crush you! He does not dare it, therefore it is the witch's turn, namely metaphysics. Straussian metaphysics is, however, for the philistine, preferable to Christian metaphysics, and the image of an erring God is more sympathetic than that of a miracle-working God. For he, the philistine himself, errs, but he has never worked a miracle.²⁶

A more honest response to the challenge of Darwin might have been some such confession as this.

We have left the land and boarded ship! We have demolished the bridge behind us--what is more, we have demolished the land behind us! Now, little ship, take care! Beside you lies the ocean. It is true, it does not always roar; and now and then it lies there like silk and gold and a vision of goodness. But there will come a time when you will apprehend that it is infinite and that there is nothing more fearful than infinity. Oh, the poor bird which felt itself free and now thrusts itself against the walls of this cage! Woe unto you if homesickness for the land should befall you, as if there would have been more freedom there--and there is no "land" anymore!²⁷

Nietzsche had indeed come too soon with his warning

that the consequences of God's demise could be fearful as well as promising. He too was met with blank stares and unhearing ears. But his madman understood. He was afraid--and guilty.

The madman asks his accomplices,

How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever will be born after us--for the sake of this deed he will be part of a higher history than all history hitherto.²⁸

Beginning with the last question and moving to the first: must we not become gods ourselves to be worthy of this deed? No, we cannot become gods. Is the gravity of this deed not too great for us? Yes, it is too great. What kinds of propitiatory celebrations must we now invent? We must invent holy celebrations of self-sacrifice and repentance. With what water could we cleanse ourselves? With the pure water of forgiveness. Who will wash the blood from us? God the Father and forgiver of sins. How can we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? By reinstating the Father to his position of authority, and by atoning for our deed through repentance

and the acceptance of his forgiveness. And the "higher history"? In what sense are we to understand the history which follows the death of God to be "higher" than the history which preceded the deed? In the sense that it is only after the death of the primal father that the brothers agree among themselves to perpetuate the taboos which the father had enforced by suppression and domination, thus preserving the order on which their life as a group depended. In short, this agreement to self-imposition of prohibitions and constraints is the birth of civilization.

...in a strict sense, civilization begins only in the brother clan, when the taboos, now self-imposed by the ruling brothers, implement repression in the common interest of preserving the group as a whole.²⁹

This, then, would be the most obvious interpretation of the killing of God, using Freud's myth of the primal horde, that is, to see the consequences of the deed as being a subtle interplay of the sons' sense of guilt, being itself a product of remorse which is a result of the feelings of love that overwhelm them after they have committed the parricidal crime, and their fear of the possible outcome of their crime, namely the collapse of the order which the father had established.

But there is yet another feasible interpretation of the murder of God.

It is at this point that we must pick up one of the loose ends left dangling at the end of our reconstruction of Freud's hypothesis of the phylogenetic history of man, namely the dubiousness of the inevitability of the sense of guilt. (see p.118 above) As we recall, even Freud admitted that the sense of guilt in the sons was dependent upon their feelings of love for their father which overcame them after his death at their hands as a feeling of remorse. From this dependence emerges, at least theoretically, the possibility of a remorseless murder. If we take the word "remorse-less," not in its figurative sense, i.e. most commonly connoting cruelty, viciousness, etc., but literally "free from feelings of remorse" and therefore guilt-less (the sense of guilt depends on feelings of remorse), we are confronted with the killing of God from a totally different perspective. This remorse-less murder would of course, in the end, mean the absence of any feelings of love on the part of the sons for the father, in this case, since we are looking at the murder of God, the absence in ourselves of feelings of love for God, the Father.

But is this not stretching the point a bit too far? Isn't this really an outrageous impossibility? I think not, at any rate not for Nietzsche. (And not only for Nietzsche. One need only think of the frightful images

of God in much of the art of the past hundred years-- from Kafka's inapproachable inhabitant of The Castle to Ingmar Bergman's aggressive spider in "Through A Glass Darkly"--the sheer number of which forbids our disregarding them as the isolated products of a few sick men.) It is not unusual to find in Nietzsche's work such references to God as "jailer,"³⁰ as "a God for the ailing, a 'Saviour,'"³¹ For Nietzsche, God was the embodiment of everything contrary to life itself, a castrator of men--indeed, one might say, the primal father become ruthless, seeking revenge from his sons for his murder.

The Christian conception of God--God as god of the sick, God as a spider, God as spirit--is one of the most corrupt conceptions of the divine ever attained on earth. It may even represent the low-water mark in the descending development of divine types. God degenerated into the contradiction of life, instead of being its transfiguration and eternal Yes! God as the declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live! God--the formula for every slander against "this world," for every lie about the beyond"! God--the deification of nothingness, the will to nothingness pronounced holy!³²

Similarly, this time in the context of an attack on morality,

Anti-natural morality--that is, almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached--turns, conversely, against the instincts of life: it is condemnation of these instincts, now secret, now outspoken and impudent. When it says, "God looks at the heart," it says No to both the lowest and the highest desires of life, and posits God as the enemy of life. The

saint in whom God delights is the ideal eunuch. Life has come to an end where the "kingdom of God" begins.³³

If we, on the one hand, are not threatened by these indictments, but, on the other, do not share Nietzsche's views at this stage, we may fairly ask, not "is Nietzsche right or wrong"?, not "is God really that way or isn't he"?, rather, taking Nietzsche at his word, "how did God get that way"?

According to Freud, as we have already noted, "the inclination to aggressiveness against the father was repeated in the following generations."³⁴ The phylogenetic history of man is a history of the return of the repressed. What happened for the first time when the brothers in that mythical primal horde agreed among themselves to repress their desires for integral instinctual satisfaction has happened again and again since the "original" founding of the brother clan, and it continues to happen. The return of the repressed and its re-repression is the stuff of which civilization is made. In other words, what these first "brothers" did and what we do for the sake of our life together, appears to be identical. But the appearance is misleading, for there is one major difference, a difference which will help us understand how the primal father, that domineering and hated figure who

nevertheless commanded a certain respect and inspired a certain awe in his sons, degenerated into a God who appeared to men like Nietzsche as the vengeful castrator of his own sons.

Let us examine again a portion of the long quotation from Civilization and Its Discontents which occupied us above.

And since the inclination to aggressiveness against the father was repeated in the following generations, the sense of guilt, too, persisted (now comes the significant assertion), and it was reinforced once more by every piece of aggressiveness that was suppressed and carried over to the super-ego.³⁵

Here is the solution to the puzzle. It (the brothers' sense of guilt) was reinforced, added to, every time a "brother," a "son," to use the idiom of the myth, suppressed his feelings of aggressiveness toward the "father." That is to say, the father, the super-ego, the receptacle and embodiment of all our "thou shalt not's," in short, the Father, writ large, increased to the same degree that we, the "sons," the "brothers," decreased. This is how God became a castrator of men. The more "civilized" we became, the stricter we were forced to become with ourselves; and the stricter we became with ourselves, the crueler and more demanding became our God. Finally, the pain was too great, the cruelty unbearable. He had pushed us too far. If we were not fully to suffocate

beneath his smothering, stifling constraints, we would have to fight back. It had become a choice between his life and ours. In desperation, we killed him.

The remorse-born-of-love which is the origin of a sense of guilt might well be thoroughly lacking in such a situation. Such an eruption of the desire for self-preservation could feasibly be void of the after-effects of a sense of guilt. What then would be the likely reaction of these murderers-out-of-desperation? Their fathers and their fathers' fathers sacrificed their liberty for new domination. But it was their guilt and fear that brought about that sacrifice. Surely these guilt-less murderers would not reinstate that which they hated so passionately and which nearly cost them their own lives? Probably not, but it is just as unlikely that they could react at all positively to their newly-won freedom. Precisely because they were so "low" such a short time ago, because they had been exiled for so long, getting by, vegetating, existing only by being forced to take a bare minimum of risks, they would no doubt find it impossible to adjust immediately to a life lived dangerously,³⁶ responsibly, to the full. And immediate adjustment would be compulsory. They would have no time to spare in taking charge of and responsibility for the whole lumbering monster of civilization, until recently controlled by the

iron hand of their father and without their participation, lest it take advantage of the death of its strong master to play havoc with the established order and turn it into chaos. These guilt-less murderers are doomed, I fear, to that chaos. They will never master in time the controls left vacant by their father. It is no simple feat; it demands concentration, the willingness to take risks, and above all, agility.³⁷ These guilt-less sons have suffered too long; the years of extreme repression have disfigured them and disabled them. It is asking too much.

IV

So much for two possible interpretations of Nietzsche's words about the murder of God. Are either of them viable options for us? Does either describe our situation? Is either a faithful rendering of our experience of the death of God? I think not. For though we must in all honesty admit that God is dead, we are neither aware of a sense of guilt for having been involved in his murder (as in the first interpretation) nor does our feeling of guiltlessness correspond to the utter helplessness and inability to react positively to his death experienced by the desperate murderers in the second interpretation above. In short, we may draw one negative conclusion from our experience of the death of God, namely that we have not killed him. How he has died for us remains

to be seen. If the madman cannot help us, perhaps Zarathustra can.

It is in Thus Spoke Zarathustra that Nietzsche's statements about God having died (as opposed to his having been murdered as in both instances above) are most prevalent. Hear the words of Zarathustra as he reflects "On the Pitying":

Alas, where in the world has there been more folly than among the pitying? And what in the world has caused more suffering than the folly of the pitying? Woe to all who love without having a height that is above their pity!

Thus spoke the devil to me once: "God too has his hell: that is his love of man." And most recently I heard him say this: "God is dead; God died of his pity for man." 38

This same thought is taken up again later in a conversation between Zarathustra and the last Pope--"Retired".

Not long, however, after Zarathustra had got away from the magician, he again saw somebody sitting by the side of his path: a tall man in black, with a gaunt, pale face; and this man displeased him exceedingly. "Alas!" he said to his heart, "there sits muffled-up melancholy, looking like the tribe of priests: what do they want in my realm? How now? I have scarcely escaped that magician; must another black artist cross my way so soon--some wizard with laying-on of hands, some dark miracle worker by the grace of God, some anointed world-slanderer whom the devil should fetch? But the devil is never where he should be; he always comes too late, this damned dwarf and clubfoot!"

Thus cursed Zarathustra, impatient in his heart, and he wondered how he might sneak past the black man, looking the other way. But behold, it happened otherwise. For at the same moment the

seated man had already spotted him; and not unlike one on whom unexpected good fortune has been thrust, he jumped up and walked toward Zarathustra.

"Whoever you may be, you wanderer," he said, "help one who has lost his way, a seeker, an old man who might easily come to grief here. This region is remote and strange to me, and I have heard wild animals howling; and he who might have offered me protection no longer exists himself. I sought the last pious man, a saint and hermit who, alone in his forest, had not yet heard what all the world knows today."

"What does all the world know today?" asked Zarathustra. "Perhaps this, that the old god in whom all the world once believed no longer lives?"

"As you say," replied the old man sadly. "And I served that old god until his last hour. But now I am retired, without a master, and yet not free, nor ever cheerful except in my memories. That is why I climbed these mountains, that I might again have a festival at last, as is fitting for an old pope and church father--for behold, I am the last pope--a festival of pious memories and divine services. But now he himself is dead, the most pious man, that saint in the forest who constantly praised his god with singing and humming. I did not find him when I found his cave; but there were two wolves inside, howling over his death, for all animals loved him. So I ran away. Had I then come to these woods and mountains in vain? Then my heart decided that I should seek another man, the most pious of all those who do not believe in God--that I should seek Zarathustra!"

Thus spoke the old man, and he looked with sharp eyes at the man standing before him; but Zarathustra seized the hand of the old pope and long contemplated it with admiration. "Behold, venerable one!" he said then; "what a beautiful long hand! That is the hand of one who has always dispensed blessings. But now it holds him whom you seek, me, Zarathustra. It is I, the godless Zarathustra, who speaks: who is more godless than I, that I may enjoy his instruction?"

Thus spoke Zarathustra, and with his glances he pierced the thoughts and the thoughts behind the thoughts of the old pope. At last the pope began, "He who loved and possessed him most has also lost him most now; behold, now I myself am probably the more godless of the two of us. But who could rejoice in that?"

"You served him to the last?" Zarathustra asked thoughtfully after a long silence. "You know how he died? Is it true what they say, that pity strangled him, that he saw how man hung on the cross and that he could not bear it, that love of man became his hell, and in the end his death?"

The old pope, however, did not answer but looked aside, shy, with a pained and gloomy expression. "Let him go!" Zarathustra said after prolonged reflection, still looking the old man straight in the eye. "Let him go! He is gone. And although it does you credit that you say only good things about him who is now dead, you know as well as I who he was, and what his ways were queer."

"Speaking in the confidence of three eyes," the old pope said cheerfully (for he was blind in one eye), "in what pertains to God, I am--and have the right to be--more enlightened than Zarathustra himself. My love served him many years, my will followed his will in everything. A good servant, however, knows everything, including even things that his master conceals from himself. He was a concealed god, addicted to secrecy. Verily, even a son he got himself in a sneaky way. At the door of his faith stands adultery.

"Whoever praises him as a god of love does not have a high enough opinion of love itself. Did this god not want to be a judge too? But the lover loves beyond reward and retribution.

"When he was young, this god out of the Orient, he was harsh and vengeful and he built himself a hell to amuse his favorites. Eventually, however, he became old and soft and mellow and pitying, more like a grandfather than a father, but most like a shaky old grandmother. Then he sat in his nook by the hearth, wilted, grieving

over his weak legs, weary of the world, weary of willing, and one day he choked on his all-too-great pity."

"You old pope," Zarathustra interrupted at this point, "did you see that with your own eyes? Surely it might have happened that way--that way, and also in some other way. When gods die, they always die several kinds of death. But--well then! This way or that, this way and that--he is gone! He offended the taste of my ears and eyes; I do not want to say anything worse about him now that he is dead.

"I love all that looks bright and speaks honestly. But he--you know it, you old priest, there was something of your manner about him, of priest's manner: he was equivocal. He was also indistinct. How angry he got with us, this wrath-snorter, because we understood him badly! But why did he not speak more clearly? And if it was the fault of our ears, why did he give us ears that heard him badly? If there was mud in our ears--well, who put it there? He bungled too much, this potter who had never finished his apprenticeship. But that he wreaked revenge on his pots and creations for having bungled them himself, that was a sin against good taste. There is good taste in piety too; and it was this that said in the end, "Away with such a god! Rather no god, rather make destiny on one's own, rather be a fool, rather be a god oneself!"

"What is this I hear?" said the old pope at this point, pricking up his ears. "O Zarathustra, with such disbelief you are more pious than you believe. Some god in you must have converted you to your godlessness. Is it not your piety itself that no longer lets you believe in a god? And your overgreat honesty will yet lead you beyond good and evil too. Behold, what remains to you? You have eyes and hands and mouth, predestined for blessing from all eternity. One does not bless with the hand alone. Near you, although you want to be the most godless, I scent a secret, sacred, pleasant scent of long blessings; it gives me gladness and grief. Let me be your guest, O Zarathustra, for one single night! Nowhere on earth shall I now feel better than with you."

"Amen! So be it!" said Zarathustra in great astonishment. "Up there goes the way, there lies Zarathustra's cave. I should indeed like to accompany you there myself, you venerable one, for I love all who are pious. But now a cry of distress urgently calls me away from you. In my realm no one shall come to grief; my cave is a good haven. And I wish that I could put everyone who is sad back on firm land and firm legs.

"But who could take your melancholy off your shoulders? For that I am too weak. Verily, we might wait long before someone awakens your god again. For this old god lives no more! he is thoroughly dead."

Thus spoke Zarathustra, 39

I have quoted the entire conversation between Zarathustra and the last Pope because I think that we need to become as familiar with it as we have become with the oft-quoted madman passage, and because I am sure that there are some clues in these words to a better understanding of our experience of the death of God.

The last Pope, unable to speak about the reason for his grief, however, hints at it when he refers to "what all the world knows today." After Zarathustra hazards the guess that it is because God is dead, the last Pope brings himself to admit that this is the reason and adds that he had served him till his death. This unexpected confession from the last Pope gives Zarathustra the opportunity to find out whether what the devil had said about God's death was really true or mere gossip. He

asks if it is true that God strangled on his pity for man. At first the last Pope, reminded again by these words of the death of his master, cannot answer. But as Zarathustra becomes less pressing, the last Pope mellows and begins to speak about his many years of faithful service to God. As for his death, the last Pope neither confirms nor denies what the devil told Zarathustra. God died of pity, yes, but of pity for man or of self-pity? He became "like a shaky old grandmother. Then he sat in his nook by the hearth, wilted, grieving over his weak legs, weary of the world, weary of willing, and one day he choked on his all-too-great pity."⁴⁰ The cause of God's death was pity, and in view of the ugliest man's indictment of God--"His pity knew no shame: he crawled into my dirtiest nooks"⁴¹ --this description seems plausible; but, according to his servant, he had grown cranky and senile and weary of life before he choked on pity. This conception of God having grown old and weak bears remarkable similarity to Philip Rieff's hypothesis that "the cultural 'super-ego' has aged into a fussy critic of the energetic (the 'id')." ⁴² Furthermore, according to Rieff, "It is the impotence of the cultural super-ego rather than the potency of the id that is the crucial fact of our time."⁴³ That is to say, in theological jargon, not that men have become more potent, but that God has become impotent.

It is not my intention to quibble about the order of this sentence, but I am convinced that the course of one development in the theology of the past twenty-five years has been in the direction of an affirmation of both the potency of men and the impotence of God, the former perhaps necessarily preceding and, in some sense, causing the latter. It is doubtless most useful, for the sake of clarity, to look in some detail at this development, taking as its symbolic beginning Dietrich Bonhoeffer's letters from prison in which he discusses the coming of age of the world and God's being edged more and more out of life. In this way we shall arrive at a theological interpretation of the death of God which conceives of that death both in terms of God's dying and of his having been killed by man, specifically by western, Christian man; but of this latter, more in the section below on the ascetic ideal.

In the best full-length study of Bonhoeffer's thought to date, John Phillips shows how the themes of secularism and the historical emerge in Bonhoeffer's Ethics and how Bonhoeffer is unable to decide just how the Christian should view the historical process of secularization.⁴⁴

In most instances in the Ethics, secularism has a pejorative sense. Secularism leads to the

abyss and means, if its relentless march is not halted, the ultimate destruction of history. But Bonhoeffer can also recognize a better secularism.⁴⁵

In the prison letters Bonhoeffer sets forth this line of thought, but by now it appears in a somewhat different light.

The time when men could be told everything by means of words, whether theological or simply pious, is over, and so is the time of inwardness and conscience, which is to say the time of religion as such. We are proceeding towards a time of no religion at all: men as they are now simply cannot be religious anymore.

Our whole nineteen-hundred-year-old Christian preaching and theology rests upon the religious premise of man. What we call Christianity has always been a pattern--perhaps a true pattern--of religion. But if one day it becomes apparent that this a priori 'premise' simply does not exist, but was an historical and temporary form of human self-expression, i.e. if we reach the stage of being radically without religion--and I think this is more or less the case already--- --what does that mean for Christianity?⁴⁶

New at this point is Bonhoeffer's conviction that the historical process, which he had described (and seen as dangerous) in the Ethics, is leading to a time of no religion.

'Being radically without religion', a stage at which man has arrived through the course of human history, calls into question the apologetic basis upon which Christian preaching and theology has been built. As we have seen, the Ethics identified secularism with godlessness, against which the church had to contend with all its strength and in the face of which found itself allied with a 'better secularism'. But here he is willing to explore 'a time of no religion at all'....⁴⁷

And the result of his explorations is the honest admission, "It means that the linchpin is removed from the whole structure of our Christianity to date...."⁴⁸

Phillips makes two helpful observations about Bonhoeffer's explorations.

First, one suspects that such pictures of a 'better secularism' as that which Bonhoeffer sketched in the Ethics have here been discarded as part of what is meant by 'religion'. Christianity can no longer be content simply with allying herself with 'last survivals of the age of chivalry.' Secondly, Bonhoeffer is attacking the kind of apologetic which assumes that all men are innately religious--that it is the task of the apologist to expose and make articulate the 'religious basis' of the life of every man and of the world in which he lives.⁴⁹

The latter point is crucial, more crucial, indeed, than many Christian theologians are willing to admit--even today when Bonhoeffer has become so popular (or is it because he has become so popular that such a devastating critique as he is leveling here can be trivialized?). Bonhoeffer is not exaggerating when he says that the whole of Christian preaching and theology rests on the religious a priori in man,⁵⁰ a premise thought to be intrinsic to man and universal. From this it follows that if we are confronted with evidence that this premise is neither intrinsic nor universal, i.e. if religion is, in fact, disappearing, then "the linchpin is removed from the whole structure of our Christianity to date...." A

more thorough pulling of the rug from beneath the feet of Christianity can hardly be imagined!

Bonhoeffer's reaction to this collapse is, as we have seen, different from his reaction in the Ethics. His admission that "there is no longer any need for God as a working hypothesis, whether in morals, politics or science. Nor is there any need for such a God in religion or philosophy (Feuerbach)," is followed with the words, "In the name of intellectual honesty these working hypotheses should be dropped or dispensed with as far as possible."⁵¹ Bonhoeffer is outspoken in his rejection of all brands of apologetic which find it necessary first to convince men how bad off they really are and how terrible a place the world is before offering them "salvation" from themselves and the world. In the letter of July 16, 1944, just quoted, Bonhoeffer uses some form of the word "honesty" (Redlichkeit) five times in the course of two brief paragraphs in a plea in many ways reminiscent of that other advocate of intellectual honesty, Nietzsche. "And the only way to be honest is to recognize that we have to live in the world etsi deus non daretur"--even if there were no God.⁵²

I am aware that Bonhoeffer is deliberately emphasizing this "even if". Nor is it my intention to twist something out of his words that just is not there. Bon-

hoeffer is not proclaiming the death of God. He is saying, quite simply, that we must for the sake of intellectual honesty, live in the world even if there were no God. And this we must do "before God"!⁵³ Yet, it is surely plain to anyone who does not have a particularly reactionary theological ax to grind that it is a very short distance indeed from Bonhoeffer's "even if" to a proclamation of the death of God.

This is not the place for a further explication of Bonhoeffer's radical thoughts. Suffice it to say, in his own words, "The question is, Christ and the world come of age."⁵⁴ In that July 16 letter, Bonhoeffer comes to the conclusion that by coming of age, the world has rid itself of a false conception of God, that of a deus ex machina, and is now thus free to live before the true God, the God of the Bible, the weak and suffering God who needs our help in the world.⁵⁵ This biblical God, God on the Cross, is the only God who can help--and only as long as we act as though we do not need His help. This, I take it, is the meaning of Bonhoeffer's statement, "Now that it has come of age, the world is more godless, and perhaps it is for that very reason nearer to God than ever before."⁵⁶

To be sure, God is still very much alive for Bonhoeffer. But I think we must admit that there is in these late formulations a clearly discernible wavering.

On the one hand, Bonhoeffer is certain that we have come of age, that is, that we actually do not need God's "help" anymore, yet he also says, "God is weak and powerless in the world, and that is exactly the way, the only way, in which he can be with us and help us." (my italics) And again: "God is teaching us that we must live as men who can get along very well without him. God allows himself to be edged out of the world and onto the cross."⁵⁷ Which is to say that God is still in some mysterious way in command after all. These statements clash glaringly with Bonhoeffer's earlier statements that "what we call 'God' is being more and more edged out of life, losing more and more ground"⁵⁸ and that "God is being increasingly edged out of the world, now that it has come of age."⁵⁹ In these cases, it is not that God is allowing himself to be edged out of life, but, quite simply, that the world, in the process of its coming of age, edges God out.

In sum, we have seen in Bonhoeffer the move away from an omnipotent God (the Lordship of Christ in Ethics is conceived of as triumphant), a need-fulfiller upon whom man was reliant, at least in "ultimate" situations, to a God whose reserve of power has dwindled noticeably, indeed, whose power can be described only in terms of weakness and whose help can come to man (or can it?) only

when man acts as if he does not need it and instead stands by God in his suffering. The next move, admittedly a step beyond Bonhoeffer but unthinkable without him, is the Christian affirmation of the death of God and full participation in the life of the world come of age. This, then, is that theological development of which I spoke which affirms both the potency of men and the impotence of God and sees men's growth to maturity as the cause of the weakening and death of God.

Perhaps it is worth noting before moving on that there is no shrillness in this affirmation, no arrogance. On the one hand, God has died, not been killed, therefore there is no guilt, no need to reinstate him as an act of repentance. On the other hand, men have come of age, they are not helpless. As Bonhoeffer put it, in his first reference to the maturity of the world, "To the maturity of man belongs precisely responsibility."⁶⁰ Men may be afraid of the consequences of God's death, but, though not arrogant, they have a kind of chastened confidence that they will be able, not alone, each on his own, but together, with each other's help, to handle those problems they used to hand over to God--even the ones they once called "ultimate." This is the only humanly possible atheism. In it lies the possibility of real liberty.

Truly, we philosophers and "free spirits" feel, upon hearing the news that "the old God is dead", that we have been touched by the rays of a new dawn; our heart overflows with gratitude, astonishment, misgiving and expectation. The horizon seems to us, though, granted, not bright, at last open once more; finally our ships are allowed to put to sea again, to put to sea in the face of every danger. Every risk of him who knows is permitted again. The sea, our sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never before been such an "open sea."⁶¹

Just how Nietzsche chose to navigate in this new "open sea" will concern us later on.⁶² For the present we must continue to assemble the tools which will help us understand Nietzsche's positive advance. We have seen that he assumed the death of God rather than trying to prove it; and we discovered, in our theological interpretation, that the death of God is the harbinger of the possibility of real liberty. Before saying how Nietzsche envisaged the features of this liberty, one question remains to be answered: liberty from what? Or, in keeping with Nietzsche's metaphor, in what sense is the "open sea" also fraught with danger? Why is the horizon not bright? Why the misgivings? To answer this question, we must turn to an analysis of Nietzsche's critique of Christian morality.

NOTES

- 1) Quoted in Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche. Eine Freundschaft (Jena: Diederichs, 1908), I, p. 216.
- 2) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 452.
- 3) Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (Vintage paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1955), p. 54.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) I will largely be following Marcuse's reconstruction of the myth; ibid., pp. 55-63. Actually, as Freud himself admits, he borrowed this myth from Darwin. "In 1912 I took up a conjecture of Darwin's to the effect that the primitive form of human society was that of a horde ruled over despotically by a powerful male." A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. John Rickman, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" (Anchor paperback ed.: Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1957), pp. 196-97.
- 6) Ibid., pp. 55-56.
- 7) Ibid., p. 61.
- 8) Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), pp. 78-79. More will be said about the creation of the superego in the next chapter. For the sake of clarity, I will only draw attention here to Freud's treatment of it in connection with the theme of parricide in an essay entitled "Dostoevsky and Parricide" reprinted in Dostoevsky. A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Rene Wellek (Spectrum Books paperback ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 98-111. Nowhere else in modern literature has this theme been more penetratingly dealt with than in Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov. The murdered father "returns" to haunt the brothers and to tempt them to "resurrect" him.

...in spite of everything the identification with the father finally makes a permanent place for itself in the ego. It is received into the

ego, but establishes itself there as a separate agency in contrast to the rest of the content of the ego. We then give it the name of super-ego and ascribe to it, the inheritor of the parental influence, the most important functions. (p. 104)

In his essay, "'Banished from the Land of Unity': A Study of Dostoevski's Religious Vision through the Eyes of Ivan and Alyosha Karamazov," William Hamilton says, in pointing out Ivan's "two different answers to the problem of the freedom of the will":

His mind affirms that man is free...and this freedom is what finally leads him to rebel against God. But Ivan's actions convince him that there is no freedom, that all men are fated to be parricides, that no one can escape the curse. (Theology Today, Princeton, N.J. (n.d.) p. 247).

The killing of God is inevitably followed by a curse.

- 9) Marcuse, op. cit., p. 59.
- 10) Ibid., p. 62.
- 11) This and the short quotations which follow in this paragraph are all excerpts from the lengthy quotation referred to in note 8.
- 12) Marcuse, op. cit., p. 56.
- 13) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 127.
- 14) Ibid., p. 348.
- 15) Bildungsphilister--this word was coined by Nietzsche and later adopted and used by the Nazis as a derogatory label for the educated.
- 16) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1079. Here Nietzsche summarized what he called his "practice of war" in four propositions, the third of which was this:

I never attack persons; I only avail myself of the person as of a strong magnifying glass with which one can render visible a general but creeping calamity which it is otherwise hard to get hold of. Thus I attacked David Strauss

--or more precisely, the success of a decrepit book among German "educated people"--here I caught these educated people in the act.

If we do not take this proposition seriously, we are apt to misjudge Nietzsche's polemical efforts. Indeed, several otherwise level-headed judges have been unfair to Nietzsche on this count. Albert Schweitzer has written some chastising words about Nietzsche for having "mocked at the fallen hero" (The Quest of the Historical Jesus, (London: SCM Press), p. 76). Similarly, Karl Barth, in his essay on Strauss, writes:

It was indeed too easy for Nietzsche, in the well-known, devastating first part of his Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung, to bring about the old man's literary and philosophical demise, a few weeks before the latter met his physical end. (From Rousseau to Ritschl, (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 366).

But it is not Nietzsche's intention to gleefully bring about the ruin of a defenseless old man. In fact, in a letter to his friend, von Gersdorff, on February 16, 1874, Nietzsche wrote:

Yesterday David Strauss was buried in Ludwigsburg. I hope very much that I have not aggravated the end of his life, and that he died without even knowing of me. (quoted by Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche. Philosopher. Psychologist. Antichrist (Meridian paperback ed.; Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., June 1963), p. 114).

Thus we must say, in all fairness, that Nietzsche's attack on Strauss was incidental. Nor had Nietzsche failed to take into account Strauss's earlier positive scholarly achievements, as Karl Löwith has claimed. In a reference to Overbeck's considerably milder criticism of Strauss's "new faith", Löwith writes:

In a few sentences, this criticism of Strauss's Bekenntnis says everything that Nietzsche in

his Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung said with the exuberance of youth and without a fair assessment of Strauss's historical achievement. (Karl Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 382).

It is not that Nietzsche was unaware of Strauss's earlier historical contribution, rather he bemoaned the fact that Strauss had moved away from the service of truth. Nietzsche actually praised Strauss's genius as being of a "basically strong and profound scholarly and critical nature." (Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 189). Strauss had upset the entire theological world in 1835 with his study of the life of Jesus.

He had himself attacked the assumptions which both his theological teachers and his contemporaries had too long left unquestioned. He, Strauss, had, in his youth, exploded the theological world and cleared the musty air of theological discussions! But between the 1830's and the 1870's much had changed. In part, no doubt, for personal reasons, but also as a result of severe reprimands at the hands of the very philistines for whom he now served as spokesman, he had become embittered and had sold out. (Barth writes that Strauss's Leben Jesu of 1835 "made him at once and for many years to come the most famous theologian in Germany and ensured that he would never in his life be considered for any post in the church or in the academic world." (Barth, op. cit., p. 362). Strauss was appointed professor of dogmatics at Zurich in 1839, but the conservative element there saw to it that he was pensioned off, even before he took his chair. He became a free-lance journalist, ended his unhappy marriage of four years, and made an unsuccessful attempt to be a politician.) It is the Strauss who now serves as a mouthpiece for the Bildungsphilister whom Nietzsche is attacking, and, at that, only as a mouthpiece, not as a man.

17) Barth, op. cit., p. 366.

18) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 154.

19) Ibid., p. 153.

20) Ibid., p. 161.

- 21) Ibid., p. 162.
- 22) Ibid., p. 167.
- 23) Ibid., pp. 168-69.
- 24) Ibid., p. 170)
- 25) Ibid.
- 26) Ibid., p. 171.
- 27) Ibid., II, p. 126.
- 28) Ibid., p. 127.
- 29) Marcuse, op. cit., p. 57.
- 30) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 914.
- 31) Ibid., II, p. 245.
- 32) Ibid., p. 1178.
- 33) Ibid., p. 968.
- 34) Freud, Civilization..., p. 79.
- 35) Ibid.
- 36) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 166: "For, believe me, the secret of the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment of existence is: to live dangerously!"
- 37) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 838: "Light-footedness itself belongs perhaps to the concept "god"..."
- 38) Ibid., II, p. 348.
- 39) Ibid., pp. 497-501.
- 40) Ibid., p. 499.
- 41) Ibid., p. 504.
- 42) Philip Rieff, The Triumph of the Therapeutic (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), p. 259.

- 43) Ibid.
- 44) John Phillips, The Form of Christ in the World (London: Collins, 1967). Shorter treatments of one or both of the themes which concern us here, secularism and the historical, include Eberhard Bethge's "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology" (The Alden-Tuthill Lectures, printed as Volume LI, Number 2, February 1961, of The Chicago Theological Seminary REGISTER), William Hamilton's "A Secular Theology for a World Come of Age", (Theology Today, Princeton, N. J. (n.d.), pp. 435-59), Ronald Gregor Smith's The New Man, especially the chapter entitled "This-worldly Transcendence." There are, in addition, two helpful essays in the volumes of Die mündige Welt (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1955-63), the one by O. Hammelsbeck, "Zu Bonhoeffers Gedanken über die mündig gewordene Welt" (volume I, pp. 46-61), the other by John Phillips, "Die Bedeutung des Lebens und Werkes Dietrich Bonhoeffers für britische und amerikanische Theologen" (volume IV, pp. 152-69). Especially useful in the latter essay is Phillips' comparison of the interpretations of Bonhoeffer by Professors Gregor Smith and Hamilton (both mentioned above). Among full-length Bonhoeffer studies in German Hanfried Müller's Von der Kirche zur Welt (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1966 (1960)) should be mentioned in this context. An excellent review of Müller's book by the Czechoslovakian theologian, Jan Lochman, appeared in the journal Communio Viatorum (Prague: Winter, 1962) under the title, "From the Church to the World." Finally, Lochman himself has written an essay, "Theologie in der mündigen Welt", which is reprinted in Evangelium und mündige Welt, ed. Helmut Ristow and Helmuth Burgert (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1962).
- 45) Phillips, *ibid.*, p. 149.
- 46) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Prisoner for God, trans. Reginald Fuller, (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 122.
- 47) Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
- 48) Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
- 49) Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
- 50) In the article, "Bonhoeffers Gedanken über die Kirche und ihre Predigt in der 'mündig' gewordenen Welt", Albrecht Schönherr asks: "What is 'religious

a priori'?" and answers:

It is the tacit, all-embracing presupposition carried through the centuries that man needs the concept of God in order to develop himself, solve his problems, perceive his world.... The hallmark of such a 'religious interpretation', Bonhoeffer holds, is that it is in essence metaphysically and individualistically determined. Individualistically--that means that in the centre stand the personal problems of man: his distress, guilt, birth and death, spiritual welfare. Metaphysically--that means that God's action appears as the prolongation of our questions and distresses into the beyond; God is the helper in need, the deus ex machina, the solution of our 'ultimate questions'. In this way, the beyond is understood to be that which temporally and materially 'comes afterward'. (Die mündige Welt, I, p. 77; also quoted by Phillips, op. cit., p. 205).

Phillips presents a careful analysis of the development of Bonhoeffer's views on the religious a priori from his acceptance of it from his teacher, Reinhold Seeberg, to his final rejection of it in the prison letters. See Phillips, op. cit., pp. 41-44; 200-204.

51) Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p. 163.

52) Ibid. The phrase, etsi deus non daretur, is, as Bonhoeffer himself acknowledges in this same letter, that of Grotius. See his De Iure ac Pacis Libri Tres, Prolegomena, paragraph 11: "Et haec quidem quae iam disimus locum aliquem haberent, etiamsi daremus, quod sine summo scelere dare nequit, non esse deum, aut non curari ab eo negotia humana..." Grotius is, needless to say, not claiming that God is dead but "groping after a standard of moral and political conduct that should avail for all times and all peoples, regardless of the particular religious creed of the Christian." (William Archibald Cuning, A History of Political Theories from Luther to Montesquieu (New York: Macmillan, 1905), p. 160.) Grotius, himself a devout Christian, conceived of natural law as independent of divine revelation. He could believe this because of his conviction, expressed in the quotation above, that "the rational

nature would guide men even if there were no God, or if he had no interest in mortal affairs." (Ibid., p. 166; my italics) This is undoubtedly the sense in which Bonhoeffer is using the phrase. I am grateful to Professor Gregor Smith for this reference to Grotius.

53) Ibid.

54) Ibid.

55) See Bonhoeffer's poem, "Christians and Unbelievers," op. cit., pp. 167-68, in which this conception of mutual help is most explicit. This poem bears many resemblances to Pascal's meditation in the Pensees on "The Mystery of Jesus."

56) Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p. 167.

57) Ibid., p. 164.

58) Ibid., p. 146.

59) Ibid., p. 156.

60) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Eberhard Bethge (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958 ff.), II, p. 16.

61) Nietzsche, op. cit., II, p. 206.

62) See Chapters 7-10.

II. Morality as a Problem

5. The ascetic ideal and will to power.

To see and point out the problem of morality; that seems to me the new task and main point.¹

All in all, the ascetic ideal, with its sublime moral cult, this most ingenious, most resolute and dangerous systematization of all means of debauching the emotions under the protection of holy motives, has etched itself onto the whole history of mankind in a frightful and unforgettable way - and, alas, not only onto its history. I can think of scarcely anything else more destructive of the health of the European race than this ideal. One could, without exaggerating, call it the essential disaster in the history of European man's health.²

- Nietzsche

I

Nietzsche wrote in Ecce Homo, looking back at his work, Dawn: "With this book begins my campaign against morality."³ Here at the outset we must, without digressing into a discourse on the strategy of Nietzsche's "campaign," remind ourselves of the mood in which it was undertaken. The very word "campaign" suggests, in keeping with Nietzsche's predilection for explosive language, a military man, armed to the teeth, going to war against, in this case, morality. Leaving aside the, in any case unanswerable, question of whether this is what Nietzsche wanted it to connote, it is, in fact, not what he means to say. For he immediately goes on to describe his

"campaign" in somewhat more detail by saying of Dawn,

Not that there is the slightest scent of gun-powder in it. One will detect very different and much more agreeable aromas in it, assuming, that is, that one's nostrils are refined enough. Neither large nor small arms. Though the effect of this book is negative, its means are not, these means from which the effect follows as a consequence, not as a cannon shot (wie ein Schluss, nicht wie ein Kanonenschuss). That one takes leave of the book with a healthy caution against everything that has been revered, even worshiped, under the name of morality, is not inconsistent with the fact that no negative word appears in the entire book, no attack, no malice Morality is not attacked, it is simply left out of consideration.⁴

Now that we know the spirit in which the campaign was undertaken, we may ask: why is morality ignored; or, rather, considered only for the purpose of analysis and critique? The answer to this question is simple, the path leading up to it less so. But first, the answer.

With the death of God, morality ceased to carry the weight it had when God was alive, lending support to and providing authority for morality. The death of God meant the demise of the dominant moral demand system as well; the two, God and moral values, though not one and the same, were inextricably bound together. It meant, in the words of Bonhoeffer, not about God but with regard to the religious a priori, "that the linchpin is removed from the whole structure of our Christianity to date..."⁵

This fact, that with the death of God the moral values which were grounded in him (in effect, just about every "western value from Socrates to the present) became sapped, hollow, was recognized by only a very few among Nietzsche's contemporaries, among them Dostoevsky and the radical Young Hegelians. And this recognition is the source both of Nietzsche's attacks on philistines from David Strauss to George Eliot,⁶ who sought to "shore up the superstructure of Christian morality"⁷ in the face of the death of God, and of his call for a revaluation of all values. In sum, just as Nietzsche did not call for the murder of God but found him dead, so also he did not launch an all-out attack on perfectly stable moral values in order to destroy them and replace them with values of his own liking; rather, he comprehended the full significance of the death of God as encompassing as well the collapse of morality, and set about revaluating all values. And this revaluation consisted of evaluating the moral demand system which had determined men's lives for two thousand years (Nietzsche calls it "Christian-Platonic") with a view to discovering whether it is a useful and desirable guide to men's lives in the present and therefore to be reaffirmed in the name of a new estimate of life, or useless and undesirable and thus to be allowed to disappear without lament. So much for the

"answer" to the question posed above. Now let us attempt to walk the path leading up to it.

Nietzsche attempted to answer the moral question arising out of the death of God with an honesty and thoroughness seldom achieved in the past. As we have seen, Pascal and Goethe set a precedent in this matter. Schopenhauer's integrity allowed him to put the moral question at its most radical: "Has existence any meaning at all?"⁸ But his virtue was not thoroughness and the providing of answers. Thus Nietzsche was left with the question and the nagging conviction that the traditional answers, including that put forward by Schopenhauer, had been discredited by the death of God.

II

"In what form shall life be justified? That is the essence of the moral question."⁹ The first of Nietzsche's answers to the moral question was consciously amoral; it was aesthetic. The Birth of Tragedy (1871) which contains Nietzsche's unconventional ideas on the origin of both tragedy and the scientific spirit of inquiry (the latter of which will occupy us further in Chapter 6) was written out of a deep distrust of morality

My instinct, as a life-affirming instinct, turned against morality in this questionable book, and set up a valuation and doctrine of life diametrically opposed to it, a purely artistic, antichrist doctrine. ¹⁰

Looking back on The Birth of Tragedy in 1886, Nietzsche said of it:

One can guess at what point the big question mark was placed on the value of existence. Is pessimism inevitably a sign of decline, decay, miscarriage, of weary and weakened instincts...? Is there such a thing as a pessimism of strength? ...What was the meaning of the tragic myth for the Greeks during their best, strongest, most courageous period? What of the colossal phenomenon of the Dionysian and the tragedy to which it gave birth? On the other hand, could that of which tragedy died, namely Socratic morality, dialectics, the moderation and cheerfulness of the theoretical man - could not precisely this Socratism be a sign of decline, fatigue, sickness, of instincts in anarchic dissolution? ...And inquiry itself, our science, what meaning does all inquiry have when viewed as a symptom of life? To what purpose - or worse, whence comes science? Is scientific inquiry perhaps only dread and evasion of pessimism? A subtle self-defense against - the truth? Morally speaking, something like cowardice and deceit? Amorally speaking, shyness?¹¹

Already in the first sentence of the text, Nietzsche tells us that it is to the Apollonian-Dionysian duality that art owes its continued existence. Creation is a result of competition, strife, struggle (agon), and creativity is passion, controlled and rechanneled. Seen separately, Apollo is the god of form, of the dream world, and of healing, while Dionysus is the formless one, the god of music and dance and intoxication.

Apollo, as the god of all plastic powers, is at the same time the god of prophecy. He who is etymologically the "lucent one" ("Scheinende" the deity of light, rules over the fair illusion (Schein) of the inner fantasy-world as well.¹²

Dionysian stirrings, in whose intensification the individual vanishes in complete self-forgetfulness, are awakened either through the influence of the narcotic potions of which all primitive peoples and nations speak in hymns, or through the violent approach of spring which permeates the whole of nature with joy.¹³

But before moving too quickly to an examination of these two particular deities, we must first ask about the Olympian gods in general. Is it possible to make general statements about the inhabitants of Olympus, and, if so, what can be said about them? To the first question, Nietzsche answers with an unequivocal "yes." To the second he says that the Olympians impress us with neither high intellect nor duty. We are not reminded of asceticism. What we are immediately aware of, what in fact nearly overwhelms us, is the exuberance of their existence. In them, life overflows!

This, however, is only one side of the coin, and he who sees this side only can never know the Greeks nor understand their art. The other side of this coin is revealed in a Greek legend about life.

An old saga has it that King Midas hunted a long time in the woods for the wise Silenus, companion of Dionysus, without being able to catch him. When he finally had fallen into the King's hands, the king asked him what he thought to be the best and most excellent thing for man to do. Stiff and stubborn, the demon remained silent, until finally, compelled by the king to speak, these words burst forth in

shrill laughter: "Ephemeral wretch, child of chance and toil, why do you force me to tell you what would be most advantageous for you not to hear? That which is best for you is quite inaccessible to you - not to have been born, not to be, to be nothing. But what is second-best for you is - to die soon."¹⁴

How can such a view of life be related to the triumphant Olympians?

It was only by means of the artificially constructed gods of Olympus that the Greeks, who were well aware of the evils in the world, were able to live at all. As the legend shows, the Greeks were far from shallow and superficial in their creation of these "overcoming" gods. On the contrary, precisely because the Greeks had had a careful look at the world and human existence, their gods were "overcoming" gods, gods that justified human existence by living it themselves - what Nietzsche rather sarcastically calls "...the only satisfactory theodicy ever invented."¹⁵

It is here that we move back from the general to the particular, that is, from the Olympians, first to Apollo, god of prophecy and healing, and interpreter of dreams. To help us understand Apollo as the interpreter of dreams, Nietzsche asks us to abstract from our own reality and to view our own existence, as well as the existence of the empirical world, "...as the

idea of the original Oneness, produced anew each instant."¹⁶ That is to say, we are to think of ourselves and our world as the stuff of the dreams of the original Oneness, the ground of being. For it is because of this Being's longing for illusion and its achieving of illusion in its dreams that it is able to redeem itself. It is now of course clear what place the dreams which are the fulfillment of our longing for illusion have in this scheme. They are the dreams of dreams, the illusions of illusions and therefore an even higher form of fulfillment of the original desire for illusion. This movement from illusion to further illusion, this creative-reductive process "...is the original act of the "naive"¹⁷ artist and at the same time of all Apollonian culture."¹⁸

It will now be apparent to what extent the Dionysian spirit appeared unruly and barbaric to the Apollonian Greeks, with their doctrine of redemption by illusion. But strange though it was, it served to remind the Greeks of the reality, of the suffering and evil so basic to their existence. Despite the unpleasantness of being reminded of what they knew to be true, but tried so hard to keep hidden, the Greeks discovered the Dionysian spirit to be as essential to their lives

as the Apollonian element. And so these two radically hostile spirits locked horns and began their struggle for the Greek mind. Intermediate victories were claimed by both contestants, but these were always only temporary. Apollo dominated only until Dionysus swept back to overwhelm his forces; Dionysus could hold sway only until Apollo returned with his rigid, but discreet, comfort of illusion. Both voices were heard alternatively; each enhanced the other. But this is not the whole story. Indeed, it is only the budding of what will later flower into "...the dramatic dithyramb and Attic tragedy... the common goal of both drives..."¹⁹ Yes, each of these elements is striving towards the same goal and it is their very struggle that is leading them to it. But how is this possible? How does Nietzsche envisage this movement from strife to creation?

To answer these questions we must dig back a bit further still to the very seed of this struggle - music, or perhaps more exactly, a musical mood. To help us here, some words from Schiller concerning what he experienced before beginning to compose:

With me a sensation is there first, without any definite and clear subject; this develops only later on. A certain musical frame of mind comes first, and only after follows the poetic idea.²⁰

It is this "musical frame of mind" which Nietzsche

takes to be essential to the composition of lyric poetry. And he concentrates on folk song (in contrast to epic poetry, which is completely Apollonian) as "...the classical instance of a union between Apollonian and Dionysian intentions."²¹ His justification for this concentration is his conviction that the Dionysian spirit is the precondition of folk poetry. In the medium of folk poetry, the effort is made on the part of language to imitate music. The uneven and irregular imagery of folk poetry is no doubt distasteful when viewed from the vantage of Apollonian epic. But it is precisely its irregularity, along with its strophic form, which allows the melody of folk song to give birth to poetry. Here is what Nietzsche calls "...the only possible relation between poetry and music, word and sound...; word, image, and idea now seek for an expression analogous to music and thus experience the power of music."²²

In other words, within this admittedly dualistic scheme, we have, on the one hand, words, images, ideas, all belonging to the realm of symbols, representatives, appearances; on the other hand, there is sound, music which is independent of words and concepts, in touch with reality and powerful to an extent that appearances could never be.

The cosmic symbolism of music can in no way be exhaustively treated by language because music refers symbolically to primordial contradiction and pain, thus symbolizing a sphere which is above and prior to all appearance. Over against music, every appearance is only analogy....²³

This, then, is the seed of which we just spoke, the seed of the struggle between Apollo and Dionysus which was to lead to the birth of tragedy and the dramatic dithyramb, namely, the imitation of the language of music.²⁴

To sum up, at the root of Nietzsche's examination of Greek culture is the pessimism of Dionysus, lucidly expressed in the legend about King Midas. Dionysus represents the reality of which the Greeks were only too aware and at which a sustained look was unbearable. It is Apollo who makes reality tolerable by overcoming it, that is, by masking it with illusions; in short, by sublimating it.²⁵ But in the process of masking reality, Apollo becomes a part of it. He overcomes Dionysus only insofar as he (Apollo) hides him (Dionysus) with himself (Apollo). Yet, as we have seen, he is also violently opposed to Dionysus.

Whether Nietzsche's effort to show that tragedy was born out of music was successful or not is open to question, and it is not within the range and purpose of our deliberations to offer an answer. However, a basic

criticism must be leveled against his final formulation. Nietzsche failed in his attempt to keep the Apollo-Dionysus tension while, at the same time, talking of the two spirits as enhancing each other. In Nietzsche's later philosophy, as we shall see, this difficulty is resolved, but at this early stage he is unnecessarily confusing because of his insistence on holding to Schopenhauer's (and, before him, Kant's) dualism of will and idea (noumena and phenomena). This dualism can operate as long as Apollo and Dionysus are two distinct spirits, held together by the tension generated by the conflict between them. But it is incongruous with Nietzsche's conception of a Dionysian monism, and at this early stage he attempted to hold on to both of them.

What does become clear in The Birth of Tragedy, despite the failure of this particular attempt to express it, is that creativity is the product of agon. strife. The very language of this book is the language of struggle. The unruly Dionysus becomes creative only as he is harnessed by Apollo.

This is, essentially, Nietzsche's conception of redemption by illusion. The pessimism resulting from a careful look at reality can become optimism only with the help of dreams, those masks of reality. Not suf-

fering as such, but endurance, or better, the ability to adjust to what is given, was for the Greek an outstanding virtue and the essence of wisdom.

Suffering is sometimes said to be an outstanding virtue of tragic personages. This view derives from the Hebrew-Christian tradition, and is not to be applied to Athenian tragedy. Suffering occurs in Athenian tragedy, and bearing it is a necessity for tragic heroes - but endurance is the virtue, not suffering per se.²⁶

An acceptance of life, perhaps even a real affirmation of life was always an affirmation in spite of the horrors of existence, and it was only possible because of Apollo --dream, illusion, sublimation.

III

Nietzsche now leaves the domain of aesthetics and approaches the moral question psychologically; that is, he undertakes an analysis of the origins of moral values.

Hegel had given credence to the theory that ideas have a history and a traceable development, but moral philosophers have not been anxious to entertain the notion that morality too might have a history.

All philosophers required of themselves, with a pedantic earnestness that makes one laugh, something much more sublime, pretentious, solemn, as soon as they began to concern themselves with morality as a science. They wanted proof of morality, and every philosopher to date has believed that he established that proof. Morality itself, however, was taken to be "given." ...Precisely because the moral philosophers were so poorly acquainted with moral facts, knowing them in arbitrary extracts

or random abbreviations, as, for example, the morality of their milieu, their class, their church, their Zeitgeist, their climate and region - precisely because they were poorly informed and themselves so uninquisitive with regard to peoples, epochs, the past, they never got around to discovering the real problems of morality, which appear only when comparing many moralities. In all hitherto existing "science of morality" there was lacking, as odd as it may sound, the problem of morality itself. The suspicion that there could be something problematic here was missing.²⁷

For Nietzsche, morality was not given, but problematical. Thus he wrote in Beyond Good and Evil, in the interests of clarity, of the need for a "typology of morality."²⁸

There are moralities which are intended to justify their originator to other men; others which are supposed to comfort him and make him content with himself; others with which he nails himself to the cross and humiliates himself; still others with which he can revenge himself or hide himself or glorify himself and set himself above others. This morality helps its author to forget something; that one to have him or something about him forgotten. Some moralists wish to exercise their power and creative temper on mankind; others, perhaps Kant in this case, say with their moralities, "that which is honorable in me is that I can love!" In short, moralities too are only a sign language of the passions.²⁹
language of the passions.²⁹

This is the first major discovery in Nietzsche's psychological probing of morality, that every morality is an "evaluation and hierarchy of human drives and actions."³⁰ Thus, the working out of such a typology was not to be done for its own sake, but solely for the purpose of

determining the relative value of various moralities. (Nietzsche's own typology of morality, based on the master/slave theory, will occupy us in Chapter 6.)

The second major discovery is this: "The essential and invaluable thing about every morality is that it is a prolonged restraint."³¹ This explains why Zarathustra calls the table of good that hangs over every people "the tablet of their overcomings."³² Each moral demand system is both a guide to the passions that seem most threatening to men and a set of commands created to compel men by their belief in them to "overcome" those passions, which is to say, to restrain them and give them form. It accomplishes this by "teaching men to hate too much freedom and planting in them the need for limited horizons, immediate tasks;" it "teaches that the narrowing of perspectives...is a necessary condition for life and growth."³³ Nietzsche is by no means negatively disposed toward what he discovers morality to be. That morality is necessarily restrictive means that an instinct or a drive must learn "to duck and submit, but also to refine and sharpen itself."³⁴

The essential thing, "in heaven and on earth," seems to be, to say it once more, that there be prolonged obedience in one direction. From that always emerges something for the sake of which life on earth is worthwhile.³⁵

We must now put a question implicit in these words to Nietzsche himself: in which direction do we obey, and what are the consequences of this particular narrowing of perspectives? His answer to the first half of the question we know, namely that we in the West have for two thousand years lived according to the dictates of the "Christian-Platonic" moral demand system which is characterized by the excessively repressive means it employs to fulfill its restraining, shaping function. In fact, the form given to men's instincts by this morality is a crippled, perverse form. And this perversion betrays the secret that the morality which bore it is an "Anti-natural morality...", a morality set "against the instincts of life: it is the condemnation of these instincts."³⁶ The dominant values in this "Christian-Platonic" tablet of overcomings are ascetic values. We must now turn our attention to an examination of the ascetic ideal which is of pivotal importance in Nietzsche's critique of Christian morality.

The fact that the ascetic ideal has meant so much to man points to the basic trait of the human will, its horror vacui: man needs a goal - and he would rather will Nothing than not will at all. Do you understand me?³⁷

What is the meaning of the ascetic ideal? It means,

in the traditions of the great religions, poverty, humility and chastity - "a strict yet high-spirited continence...."³⁸ Nietzsche himself is fond of analyzing and exposing the hidden motives of what he calls "the ascetic priest."

This partiality to ostensibly religious nomenclature has, in the past, caused Christians generally to react defensively to Nietzsche's charges, thus missing the significance of his very revealing observations. It would be untrue to say that Nietzsche did not mean what he said with regard to the ascetic priest. But it would be helpful to bear in mind his practice, which we have already encountered,³⁹ of never attacking persons but only availing himself of a person "as of a strong magnifying glass with which one can render visible a general but creeping calamity which it is otherwise hard to get hold of."⁴⁰ The general calamity in this case is the ascetic ideal and the magnifying glass the priest, who is also "the theologian" and "the philosopher." No quotation from Nietzsche kindly disposed toward the priests (and there are a few) will convince us unless we realize that he is attacking, not any real, human priest, nor even the priesthood in general, but a moral-religious ideal which has dominated the West for centuries.

"The question at hand is the value which the ascetic priest places on our life."⁴¹ Life is viewed by the ascetic as a bridge to transcendence. It is a maze, the only escape from which is through the portal by which one entered; or it is a mistake which can be corrected only by a resolute act of will. A bridge, a maze, an error - these images are all contrary to life. Our earthly existence is denigrated, even denied, by the ascetic ideal. Why then has it thriven for so long? Why has the ascetic ideal not destroyed life, or life the ascetic ideal? It must be, in some sense, in the interest of life that this ideal has held sway. Yet this seems most unlikely. The rigid continence which typifies the ascetic ideal is nothing less than "an attempt to use energy to block the very sources of energy."⁴²

We are faced with a split which wills itself and which relishes its own suffering, which, in fact, becomes more self-assured and triumphant the more its own condition for survival, namely physiological vitality, diminishes. "Triumph in extreme agony" - under this superlative motto the ascetic ideal has always battled....⁴³

What possible explanation can there be for this inner split, this deliberate attempt to pit life against life? Nietzsche claims that the split is only apparent, a psychological misunderstanding. He continues:

...the ascetic ideal arises from the protective and healing instinct of a degenerating life which is trying with every means to hold on and stay alive. It points to a partial physiological suppression and fatigue against which the deepest instincts of life which have remained intact battle untiringly and with new means and devices. The ascetic ideal is such a device, contrary to what the worshipers of this ideal claim. In it and through it life struggles with death and against death; the ascetic ideal is a device for the preservation of life. That this device could become so powerful and hold sway over man to such an extent...especially wherever civilization and the taming of men was carried out, points up a very important fact: the morbidity of man to-date, at least of tamed man; the physiological struggle of man with death (more exactly, with ennui, weariness, longing for "the end"). The ascetic priest is the embodiment of the longing to be something else, somewhere else; in fact, he is that longing at its most intense, its most arduous and passionate. Yet precisely the power of his longing is the chain which binds him to this life. And just because of this, he becomes a tool which must work to create better conditions for this life. With this power he strengthens the entire flock of defeated, ill-humored, wretched, self-tormentors of every kind whom he leads instinctively, as a shepherd. You will already understand what I mean: this ascetic priest, this apparent enemy of life, this negator - it is just he who belongs to the really formidable conserving and yea-saying forces of life.⁴⁴

Were the source of these words not known, one would be quite justified in assuming them to be a paraphrase of Freud's theory of instincts.

Both Nietzsche and Freud were seeking an explanation for the apparent inner split in man, the pitting of life against life; or, in Freud's terms, repression.

Both worked out explanations which, as we have just noted, are in many ways remarkably similar to each other, but which also diverge at a few very crucial points. One of these points of divergence is in their differing explanations of the phenomenon of conscience (Nietzsche) or super-ego (Freud). It will be important for our later deliberations⁴⁵ to have this divergence before us. Thus we must first trace the development of the theories on which the explanations of conscience or super-ego were based. That is, for Nietzsche, the theory of will to power, and for Freud, the theory of instincts.

IV

Suppose, finally, that we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctual life as the development and specialization of one basic form of will - namely will to power, which is my thesis - and that all organic functions could be traced back to this, ... then we would have earned the right clearly to define all effective energy as will to power.⁴⁶

By the time Nietzsche wrote these words in Beyond Good and Evil (1886) the theory of will to power was fully developed and its implications being worked out. It was not a principle which Nietzsche merely adopted and used; it had emerged, been born, out of his attempt to explain the behavior of men. And what had become, by the mid-1880's, a monistic hypothesis, began as a

dualism, perhaps best expressed in terms of the agon of Dionysus and Apollo in The Birth of Tragedy, which we examined above.

The next phase in the development of the theory and the first explicit mention of will to power is in a note which reads:

Fear (negative) and will to power (positive) explain our strong consideration for the opinions of men.⁴⁷

However, as Walter Kaufmann⁴⁸ rightly points out, "this is but a variation of a theme which had been struck at the beginning of the third meditation,"⁴⁸ namely, an attempt to explain conformity as the result of either fear or laziness.⁴⁹ In the note just cited, Nietzsche is still trying to explain conformity, this time as resulting from fear and will to power. Yet this is not the will to power, but only a kind of will to success which Nietzsche considered a negative tendency.⁵⁰ The psychological experimenting with fear and power continues through Human, All-too-Human, Dawn, and The Gay Science. It was during this period of experimentation that the will to power is mentioned explicitly for the second time, this time in a note in which Nietzsche insists that

the ancient Greeks frankly admitted their will to power. This sudden association of the will

to power with the Greeks was one of the most decisive steps in the development of this concept into an all-embracing monism.

Nietzsche had previously considered the contest (agon) the most fruitful concept for any analysis of Greek culture. ...now it occurred to him that the contest itself was a manifestation of the will to power.⁵¹

Indeed, it looks as though Nietzsche, without realizing it as yet, is tracing all human behavior to a single principle. If he is successful, he will have to admit that his earlier dualism is reducible to a single source. Without being himself fully aware of where his experiments are leading, Nietzsche speaks in the Dawn of the striving for excellence as a striving to overwhelm one's neighbor. This strikes a familiar chord from The Birth of Tragedy, the one difference being that Nietzsche has moved from an admittedly dualistic scheme to a potentially monistic scheme.

The striving for excellence is the striving to overwhelm one's neighbor, even if only very indirectly or only in one's own feelings or even in dreams. There is a long line of degrees of this secretly desired overwhelming, and a complete list of these would almost amount to a history of culture from the first still grimace-like barbarism to the grimace of over-refinement and pathological ideality. The striving for excellence brings with it for the neighbor - to name only a few steps of this long ladder: tortures, then blows, then terror, then anguished amazement, then wonder, then envy, then admiration, then elevation, then joy,

then gaiety, then laughing, then ridicule, then derision, then scorn, then the dealing of blows, then the inflicting of tortures: here, at the end of the ladder, stands the ascetic and martyr. He experiences the supreme delight, as a consequence of his striving for excellence, in benefiting himself precisely from that which his opposite on the first rung of the ladder, the barbarian, inflicts upon the other, on whom and before whom he wishes to distinguish himself. The triumph of the ascetic over himself, his introverted eye which sees men split into a sufferer and a spectator and which henceforth looks to the outside world only for the purpose of gathering from it wood for his own funeral pyre, this last tragedy of the striving for excellence, in which there remains only one person who chars himself - that is the deserving ending which belongs to this beginning; both times, unspeakable delight at the sight of tortures. Truly, this delight, viewed as the liveliest feeling of power, has perhaps been nowhere greater on earth than in the souls of superstitious ascetics.⁵²

We are presented with the picture of a ladder of degrees of power; on the bottom rung stands the barbarian, on the top, the ascetic. Nietzsche seems to be experimenting with quantities of power. He is saying that the barbarian is at the bottom of the scale because he has the least amount of power, and the ascetic is at the top because he is the most powerful. There can be no doubt about it, Nietzsche is thinking of power in terms of power over oneself. The ladder of culture is conceived of as a process from the inflicting of torture on others to the inflicting of torture on oneself; in

short, from the barbarian to the ascetic. But Nietzsche shudders at the thought of how the next rung of the ladder might look.

Could this cycle not begin once more from the beginning...? That is, to hurt others in order thereby to hurt oneself in order thereby to triumph anew over oneself and one's pity and to revel in the uttermost reaches of power?⁵³

We are left to assume that Nietzsche's foray into the realm of quantitative power standards was brief. In fact, Nietzsche himself adds evidence to this assumption when he speaks unequivocally of "the demon of power."⁵⁴ Finally, near the end of Dawn, Nietzsche, having, as we have seen, not consciously adopted a monistic hypothesis, says:

Still one lies on one's knees before strength - according to the ancient habit of slaves - and yet, when the degree of worthiness of being honored is to be determined, only the degree of reason in strength is decisive: one must measure in how far strength has been overcome by something higher and now serves that as its tool and means!⁵⁵

Power is a demon, reason is "something higher," reason is in power, and the standard of value is no longer the quantity of power but "the degree of reason in strength." This could be only a variation of the original dualism. In that case, Dionysus would still be Dionysus (intoxication, formless striving), and Apollo would still be Apollo ("something higher," the form-giver) the slight difference being in Apollo's method; whereas in The

Birth of Tragedy he gave Dionysus form by sublimating him, masking him, he now controls him by giving him rational form.

My hypothesis is, however, that something very different is meant by these words. To be sure, Nietzsche's assertion that one must measure to what extent strength has been overcome by means of something higher and now serves that as its tool can be interpreted dualistically. However, there is only a colon separating this statement from Nietzsche's previous assertion that "only the degree of reason in strength is decisive." He is confronting strength with the question of value, denying that it has any innate value, but that its value lies in the degree to which it has been successfully controlled, in Nietzsche's language, "overcome." But now comes the really decisive question: how does Nietzsche envisage this overcoming? As an imposition from "outside," whether from dream and illusion or reason? On the contrary, it is a self-overcoming.⁵⁶

We may recall that in The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche had tried an interpretation of Greek culture on the basis of a contest between Dionysus and Apollo in which the unruly Dionysus became creative only to the degree that he was masked, i.e. sublimated, by Apollo. We saw that Nietzsche was unable successfully

to both show how Apollo "overcame" Dionysus and yet keep the tension necessary for the continuance of the contest. Further on, we saw that Nietzsche's first experiment with a potentially monistic scheme came to naught because of its quantitative power standard which could explain man's striving for excellence only at the cost of extreme sublimation. In other words, the use of a quantitative power standard means that the value of man's striving for excellence is determined by the degree to which Apollo reigns supreme, as in the ascetic. In such a scheme, the movement away from "grimace-like barbarism" was ensured, but so was the movement toward "the grimace of overrefinement and pathological ideality" - the bodiless, lifeless ascetic as the most excellent (read: powerful) man. But now both the dualism (Apollo vs. Dionysus) and the monistic quantitative power standard (Apollo) have been discarded in favor of a Dionysian monism, will to power.⁵⁷

Let us now look, for the sake of comparison, at Freud's theory of instincts, second in notoriety only to Nietzsche's theory of will to power.

Repression is one of the several "psychic snares" (Philip Rieff's phrase) which endangers the path from wish to wish-fulfillment in the mind. It is the (almost always faulty) mechanism by which the human

mind chooses to "forget" something which it does not wish to "remember." It is the "false bottom" of the mind below which "memory really begins."⁵⁸ In Freud's own words,

One of the vicissitudes an instinctual impulse may undergo is to meet with resistances the aim of which is to make the impulse inoperative. Under such conditions...the impulse then passes into the state of repression.

Repression is a preliminary phase of condemnation, something between flight and condemnation
....⁵⁹

...the essence of repression lies simply in the function of rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness.⁶⁰

But the repression, at first successful, does not hold.... The rejection of the idea from consciousness is obstinately maintained.... So, the final form of the work of repression
....is a sterile and never-ending struggle.⁶¹

Now to the question why men refuse to remember certain things, why they strive to incapacitate certain instinctual impulses; in short, why men command and obey themselves.

Freud's theory of the instincts developed as an attempt to explain the fact of repression.

This goal immediately explains two formal characteristics of the theory of instincts. The Freudian theory of the instincts is persistently dualistic because it starts from the fact of conflict in mental life and aims at explaining that fact.

Secondly, the Freudian "instinct" is a borderland concept between the mental and the biological, because Freud is seeking an explanation of

man as neurotic or repressed in terms which would relate man's specifically human characteristic (repression) to his animal (bodily) nature.⁶²

In the several stages of the development of this theory, two factors remained constant: the instincts are common to all animal life, and they are mutually antagonistic (Freud's "ambivalence").

Up to 1914 (the publication date of Freud's paper "On Narcissism"), Freud conceived of the antagonism in the mind to be between the sexual (reproductive) instinct and the instinct of self-preservation (the ego impulses). This was analogous to the antithesis of the pleasure-principle and the reality-principle. With the emergence of the concept of narcissism, however, which Freud was forced to see as including the instinct of self-preservation, the original conception was called into question. Narcissism and the reproductive instinct are but two forms of the same sexual instinct (libido). Freud was still convinced by the fact of repression that there must be a "second" instinct, probably an ego instinct, which opposed the sexual libido. It was

at about this time (that) he had repeatedly observed a game played by his eldest grandson, who kept carrying out over and over again actions which could only have an unpleasant meaning for him - actions relating to his mother's absence.⁶³

These observations caused him to question even further the validity of his earlier pleasure-reality (pleasure-pain) antithesis. In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," before relating his observations of his grandson, Freud recapitulates what is to be understood by "pleasure principle."

In the psychoanalytical theory of the mind we take it for granted that the course of mental processes is automatically regulated by "the pleasure-principle": that is to say, we believe that any given process originates in an unpleasant state of tension and thereupon determines for itself such a path that its ultimate issue coincides with a relaxation of this tension, i.e. with avoidance of "pain" or with production of pleasure.⁶⁴

To make this assumption even clearer, he continues:

The pleasure-principle is deduced from the principle of constancy; in reality the principle of constancy was inferred from the facts that necessitated our assumption of the pleasure-principle. ...this tendency on the part of the psychic apparatus postulated by us may be classified as a special case of Fechner's principle of the tendency towards stability...⁶⁵

But now, confronted by evidence which contradicted this tendency toward a relaxation of psychic tension, e.g. the repetition of war dreams, the increase of sexual tension, Freud suggests that perhaps "there really exists in psychic life a repetition-compulsion which goes beyond the pleasure principle."⁶⁶ Freud has ostensibly discovered the antagonist of the sexual instinct. But in what sense are we to understand it as

"going beyond" the pleasure principle?

As is common knowledge, Freud considered the dream a wish-fulfillment, a principle which he was now forced to doubt by the appearance of the tendency to repeat "unpleasant" experiences. This tendency must serve some purpose other than wish-fulfillment.

When the dreams of patients suffering from traumatic neuroses so regularly take them back to the situation of the disaster, they do not thereby, it is true, serve the purpose of wish-fulfillment, ...but we may assume that they thereby subserve another purpose, which must be fulfilled before the pleasure-principle can begin its sway. These dreams are attempts at restoring control of the stimuli by developing apprehension, the pretermission of which caused the traumatic neurosis. They thus afford us an insight into a function of the psychic apparatus, which without contradicting the pleasure-principle is nevertheless independent of it, and appears to be of earlier origin than the aim of attaining pleasure and avoiding "pain."⁶⁷

Repetition-compulsion must be considered instinctual because it is an internal impulse, the function of which is to "bind" unpleasant experiences which have been "forgotten" but which threaten, in the relaxed state of sleep, to erupt into consciousness in the dream.⁶⁸ It is "beyond" the pleasure principle in the sense that it is independent of and more fundamental than the pleasure principle, that is, its work must be done before the pleasure principle can begin to operate. But it also has "a daemonic character" in that "there is no contradiction of the pleasure principle," rather, "the repeti-

tion...is itself a source of pleasure...."69 Thus, given on the one hand, the instinctual nature of the compulsion to repetition, and, on the other hand, its earlier origin than the sexual instinct (pleasure principle), Freud must concede to himself that his conception of the very character of instinctual life must be altered.

According to this, an instinct would be a tendency innate in living organic matter impelling it towards the reinstatement of an earlier condition....70

This "expression of the conservative nature of all living beings"71 brings Freud again dangerously close to a monistic theory of the instinctual life, but now, not as in 1914 with a monism of life, but with a monism of death. If all instincts are conservative in nature, aimed at regression, then death must, indeed, be the goal of life.72

However, this is not the whole story. The sexual instinct, though admittedly conservative, is not duped completely by the death instinct into becoming its handmaiden.

...not all the elementary organisms that make up the complicated body of a higher form of life take part in the whole path of evolution to the natural end, i.e. death. Some among them, the reproductive cells, probably retain the original structure of the living substance and, after a given time, detach themselves from the parent organism, charged as they are with

all the inherited and newly acquired instinctive dispositions. Possibly it is just those two features that make their independent existence possible. If brought under favorable conditions they begin to develop, that is, to repeat the same cycle to which they owe their origin, the end being that again one portion of the substance carries through its development to a finish, while another part, as a new germinal core, again harks back to the beginning of the development. Thus these reproductive cells operate against the death of the living substance and are able to win for it what must seem to us to be potential immortality, although perhaps it only means a lengthening of the path to death. Of the highest significance is the fact that the reproductive cell is fortified for this function, or only becomes capable of it, by the mingling with another like it and yet different from it.

There is a group of instincts that care for the destinies of these elementary organisms which survive the individual being, that concern themselves with the safe sheltering of these organisms as long as they are defenseless against the stimuli of the other world, and finally bring about their conjunction with other reproductive cells. These are collectively the sexual instincts. They are conservative in the same sense as the others are, in that they reproduce earlier conditions of the living substance, but they are so in a higher degree in that they show themselves especially resistant to external influences, and they are more conservative in a wider sense still, since they preserve life itself for a longer time. They are the actual life-instincts; the fact that they run counter to the trend of the other instincts which lead towards death indicates a contradiction between them and the rest, one which the theory of neuroses has recognized as full of significance. There is, as it were, an oscillating rhythm in the life of organisms: the one group of instincts presses forward to reach the final goal of

life as quickly as possible, the other flies back at a certain point on the way only to traverse the same stretch once more from a given spot and thus to prolong the duration of the journey.⁷³

This, then, is Freud's theory of instincts in its final form - life against death - two violently opposed forces locked in combat.

We noted at the end of Section III above the similarity between Nietzsche's theory of will to power and Freud's theory of instincts. But now that we have the developments of both theories before us, a basic dissimilarity appears. Nietzsche has developed a Dionysian monism, Freud a thorough-going dualism. Nietzsche's final formulation of the theory of will to power is, to be sure, monistic, but it is a dialectic monism which he describes, a two-in-oneness; not reason and power, but reason in power. What he might mean by "reason" in this context will be the subject of a discussion in the following chapter. Suffice it to say at this point, with Nietzsche, "...only the degree of reason in strength is decisive: one must measure in how far strength has been overcome by something higher and now serves that as its tool and means!"⁷⁴

Both men were seeking an explanation for repression, conflict, strife. By its very nature, repression

presupposes two opposed forces; thus, the similarity between Nietzsche's theory of reason in power and Freud's theory of life and death instincts. The difference is in Nietzsche's postulation of two-in-oneness. And this difference, though slight, will have consequences out of all proportion to its slightness when we follow it through Nietzsche's theory of the development of conscience, to which we must now turn.

NOTES

- 1) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 448.
- 2) Ibid., II, p. 883.
- 3) Ibid., p. 1124.
- 4) Ibid., pp. 1124-25.
- 5) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Prisoner for God, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 122.
- 6) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 993:

G. Eliot. They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality. That is an English consistency; we do not wish to hold it against little moralistic females a la Eliot. In England one must rehabilitate oneself after every little emancipation from theology by showing in a veritably awe-inspiring manner what a moral fanatic one is. That is the penance they pay there.

We others hold otherwise. When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one's feet.
- 7) Havelock Ellis, Affirmations (London: Walter Scott, Ltd., 1898), p. 54.
- 8) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 228.
- 9) Saul Bellow, "The Writer as Moralist," Atlantic Monthly (March 1963), p. 62.
- 10) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 15.
- 11) Ibid., pp. 9-10.
- 12) Ibid., p. 23.
- 13) Ibid., p. 24.

- 14) Ibid., pp. 29-30.
- 15) Ibid., p. 30.
- 16) Ibid., p. 32.
- 17) A term used by Schiller to express a harmony with nature, an awareness of evil and suffering overcome by means of illusions (art).
- 18) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 35.
- 19) Ibid., p. 36.
- 20) Ibid., p. 37.
- 21) Ibid., p. 41.
- 22) Ibid., p. 42.
- 23) Ibid., pp. 43-44.
- 24) We must, in all fairness to our understanding of Nietzsche's interpretation of Greek tragedy, remind ourselves that, while working on this book, Nietzsche was a devoted disciple of Wagner. On the other hand, this is not to say that we should simply write off everything that even smacks of Wagner as ingenuine or even unimportant to our understanding of Nietzsche. Nietzsche's emphasis on folk poetry and lyrical tragedy (i.e. operatic tragedy) may very well bear marks of Wagner's influence, but it is more than that. Obviously, that music is the mother of tragedy is an idea so basic to Nietzsche's whole treatment of this subject that we can hardly consider it solely the product of an "alien" influence.
- 25) We shall have more to say about Nietzsche's theory of sublimation in Chapter 6.
- 26) A. C. Schlesinger, Boundaries of Dionysus: Athenian Foundations for the Theory of Tragedy (Cambridge; Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 33-34.
- 27) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 643-44.
- 28) Ibid., p. 643.

- 29) Ibid., p. 645.
- 30) Ibid., p. 121.
- 31) Ibid., p. 645.
- 32) Ibid., p. 322.
- 33) Ibid., p. 647.
- 34) Ibid., p. 646. Because we are concerned in this section almost exclusively with Nietzsche's critique of Christian morality, most of what will be said here will of necessity be negative. The positive aspects of the phenomenon will be treated in Chapter 9 below.
- 35) Ibid.
- 36) Ibid., p. 968.
- 37) Ibid., p. 839.
- 38) Ibid., p. 853.
- 39) See note 16 of Chapter 4.
- 40) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1079.
- 41) Ibid., p. 858.
- 42) Ibid., p. 859.
- 43) Ibid.
- 44) Ibid., pp. 861-62.
- 45) See Chapter 8.
- 46) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 601
- 47) Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Musanion Ausgabe) (München, 1920-29), IX, p. 397.
- 48) Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Meridian Books paperback ed.; (Cleveland & New York: The World Publishing Co., 1956), p. 153.

49) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 287:

That traveler who had seen many countries and peoples and several continents and who was asked which characteristic he found most common among human beings everywhere, said: they are inclined to laziness. Many will fancy that he should have more accurately and validly said: they are all fearful. They hide themselves behind customs and opinions. Basically, every person knows quite well that he will appear only once, uniquely, in the world and that even the strangest chance could not mix together a second time from such a singularly colorful diversity the unity that he is; he knows it, but he hides it like a bad conscience--why? Out of fear of the neighbor, who demands the conventional and disguises himself in it. But what is it that compels the individual to fear the neighbor, to think and act like a herd animal and not enjoy himself? Modesty, perhaps, for the few and rare. For most of them it is indolence, inertia in short, that tendency to laziness of which the traveler spoke. He is right, people are still lazier than they are fearful, and they fear most just those inconveniences that would impose upon them an unconditional honesty and nudity.

50) Very near the end of his meditation on Wagner, Nietzsche writes, referring to success, "Which one of you will not renounce power, knowing and experiencing that power is evil?" Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 434.

51) Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 165. This note is not included in Schlechtha's edition. It is translated by Walter Kaufmann and included in his The Portable Nietzsche (New York: Viking Press, 1954), p. 75: "One hardly dares speak any more of the will to power: it was different in Athens."

52) Nietzsche, Werke, I, pp. 1086-87.

53) Ibid., p. 1087.

54) Ibid., p. 1178.

55) Ibid., p. 1268.

- 56) On the translation of "self-overcoming," see Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, op. cit., p. 383, note 10: "'Overcoming' as a translation of Überwindung, and 'self-overcoming' for Selbstüberwindung is admittedly inadequate--but self-surpassing, self-transcending, and self-conquest seem no better, though each suggests something of the connotation of the German word.
- 57) It is important that we are aware of the scope of the theory of will to power. Though we have followed the development of the theory in order to determine its value as an aid to explaining human behavior, to leave the impression that it is solely a psychological theory would create, at best, a very one-sided picture. For, as Arthur Danto puts it, "Will-to-power was to have been the constructive idea with which he (Nietzsche) was to replace all of what had heretofore passed for philosophy and much of what had passed as science." (Arthur C. Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher (New York: Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 214). We must at least note therefore some of the "cosmic implications" of the theory of will to power.

Nietzsche intended to publish a systematic presentation of the "cosmic implications" of his theory of will to power. Many of the notes of his late years of sanity bear evidence of his attempts to work out these implications. Arthur Danto has ordered Nietzsche's thoughts on this subject, which are strewn throughout the published material and the unpublished notes. He claims neither that this is the order that Nietzsche intended in his projected book, nor that it is the only way to order Nietzsche random thoughts. But he has taken the thoughts and Nietzsche's intention to work them out in a systematic way seriously, and his reconstruction is both plausible and convincing. I can do no better than reproduce his argument here in its broad outline.

As we have seen, Nietzsche has, in the course of the discovery of will to power at the root of all life, become more and more suspicious of opposites and has adopted a Dionysian monism as an hypothesis for driving what appear to be several causes to one

cause. Still, this all sounds fairly old-fashioned and harmless, surely not a theory that could change the entire course of the way we do our intellectual work, indeed, of the way we live our lives, as Nietzsche expected it would do. But let us have a closer look. In Beyond Good and Evil, the first published work to follow Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche writes:

Assuming that nothing is "given" as real except our world of desires and passions, that we cannot go down or up to any other "reality" except the reality of our drives--for thinking is only the relation of these drives to one another--is it not allowed to make the experiment and pose the question whether this "given" does not suffice to understand the so-called mechanistic (or "material") world as well? I do not mean as an illusion, a "semblance", an "idea" (in Berkeley's or Schopenhauer's sense), rather as belonging to the same range of reality as our affects--as a more primitive form of the world of affects in which everything which later branches off and develops into organic processes is still an a powerful unity...as a kind of instinctual life in which all the organic functions are still bound up together with self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, secretion, and metabolism--as a pre-form of life? In the end it is not merely permissible to make this experiment, it is, seen from the conscience of methodology, demanded. Not to assume several types of causality until the experiment to get along with only one has been driven to its very limit (to the point of absurdity, if I may say so). That is a morality of methodology which one may not evade today--it follows "by definition" as a mathematician would say. The question is, in the end, whether we really acknowledge the will as effective, whether we believe in the causality of the will.... (Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 600-601).

Nietzsche wants to experiment further with his new hypothesis. If we begin with the assumption that will to power, "the world of our passions and desires," is all that is given, then we must try to understand the "material" world as well on the basis of this given. The inorganic world could then be conceived

of as "a pre-form of life," that is, as a primitive form of life in which the inorganic and the organic functions have not yet been differentiated, but are still bound up together in some sort of unity. Finally, Nietzsche admits that the real question in such an experiment is "whether we believe in the causality of the will," by which he means whether we believe in causality at all.

This reminds us very much of Schopenhauer. Nietzsche has been careful to distinguish between his own position and the positions of Berkeley and Schopenhauer. He has warned us that he does not understand the material world as a "semblance" or an "idea," but as "a pre-form of life." Nevertheless, when he says that the question is really whether we believe the will to be effective, we are suspicious of Schopenhauer's influence. Our suspicion is, in fact, without grounds, and it is perhaps wise to see why before proceeding.

We may recall from our introductory remarks on Schopenhauer (Introduction 2, II) that what he meant by "will" was a kind of natural force which exists beyond conscious life as the absolute reality, of which matter is but the visible appearance. Further, this will strives for existence, that is, it attempts objectification because to appear as phenomenon is the highest form of life. But because it is a blind natural force constantly seeking objectification, it pushes us from behind, so to speak. Even those of our actions which we call "free" are mere expressions of the drive of the world-will in its attempt to actualize itself. Schopenhauer's pessimism is the result of this view of the world. His proposed solution to this dilemma cannot concern us here, except to mention that he conceived salvation in terms of negation of the "will to existence" through total resignation.

There is an obvious difference between what Schopenhauer called "will to existence" and Nietzsche's will to power. Schopenhauer begins with One Will and sees the world as its manifestation. Nietzsche, on the other hand, disdains "the unprovable teaching of One Will," (Ibid., p. 104) and exposes Schopenhauer's belief in it as an "after-effect of the oldest religiosity."

...the belief in the will, as in the cause of effects, is the belief in magically active powers... Schopenhauer, with his assumption that everything that is there is only something willed, has raised an ancient mythology to the throne; he apparently never attempted an analysis of the will, because he believed in the simplicity and directness of all willing.... (Ibid., pp. 128-29).

For Nietzsche, there is no such thing as the "will to existence," because there is will only where there is life. That which does not exist cannot will, and that which does exist cannot will existence--it has existence! With his belief in One Will in many forms, Schopenhauer had drained both the content and the goal from willing, thereby destroying the character of the will.

...what (Schopenhauer) calls "will" is merely an empty word. It is still less a question of a "will to life," for life is only a particular case of the will to power; it is completely arbitrary to assert that everything strives to change over to this form of the will to power. (Ibid., III, pp. 750-51). (Of. also p. 518: "Schopenhauer's basic misunderstanding of the will (as though desire, instinct, urge were the essential in the will) is typical: devaluing of the will until unrecognizable. Similarly, that of willing; attempt to see in wanting-no-more, in "being subject without goal and intention" (in "the pure will-free subject") something higher, indeed the higher, the valuable.)"

Against this background it is essential that we take notice of what Nietzsche considers to be the ingredients of willing.

Volition seems to me, above all, something complicated, something that is a unity as a word only. ...in every willing there is first of all a plurality of feelings.... Just as feeling, indeed many kinds of feeling, is to be recognized as an ingredient of the will, so also thinking: in every willing-act there is a commanding thought--and one must not suppose that one is able to separate this

thought out of "willing," as if will would then still remain! Thirdly, will is not merely a complex of feeling and thinking, but above all a passion (Affekt): namely, the passion of command.... A man who wills--commands a something in himself that obeys or of which he believes that it obeys. (Ibid., II, pp. 581-82).

Volition then is neither simply without content and goal, nor is it a mechanistic process. It is a complex combination of feeling, thinking, and, perhaps most important, the passion of commanding.

This necessary aside has taken us back into the realm of human volition. Prior to making this distinction between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, we were trying to understand in what sense the belief in the causality of the will is so important. The answer to this question lies in these words. If we believe in the causality of the will,

...then we must experiment with the hypothesis of the causality of the will as the only one. "Will" can naturally effect only "will"--not "matter"....

...one must risk the hypothesis that wherever we recognize "effects," will is effecting will, and that everything that happens mechanically (Nietzsche is referring here to physics, his "mechanics"), insofar as energy is at work, is just will-power, will-effect. (Ibid., p. 601).

It should now be more obvious how fundamentally Nietzsche's understanding of the causally operative will differs from Schopenhauer's understanding. Will can effect, not "material" (Stoffe), but only will. His hypothesis is this: that effects must be traced, not to causes in the traditional sense, but to other effects, i.e. wills. In order to understand what Nietzsche means by this interaction of wills upon wills, we must look at some words of his concerning physics.

Mechanics formulates sequences of phenomena, for semiotic purposes, by means of expressions which relate to the senses and to our psychology,

e.g., that every effect is a motion; that where there is motion, something moves, etc. It does not touch upon the (real) causal power.

The mechanistic world is imagined in the only way in which the eye and the touch can make a world understandable to themselves (i.e., as moved). And, so that it may be calculated, causal entities are invented, "things" (atoms) whose effect remains constant....

These are illusory: the mixing in of numerical concepts, thing concepts (subject concepts), activity concepts (separation of causal entities from effects) the concept of motion. In all of these are our visual and psychological (prejudices).

If we eliminate all these trimmings, there remain no things, but (rather) dynamic quanta, in a relationship of tension with all other dynamic quanta. Their being (Wesen) consists in their relationship to all other quanta, in their "effect" upon these. The will to power is not a being, and it is not a becoming. It is a pathos. This is the most elementary fact out of which an effect, a becoming, first results. (Ibid., III, p. 778).

Physics, as we know it, is an agglomeration of fictions useful in making the world intelligible. That is, it has been useful, its usefulness depending upon a belief in the causality of the will (in Schopenhauer's sense), a belief which Nietzsche is now exposing as based on visual and psychological prejudices.

The physicists believe, in their way, in a "true world," a stable, atom-systematization in fixed movements, alike for all beings, so that for them the "apparent world" reduces itself to the accessible side of the general, and inevitable general, existence (Sein), for every being (Wesen) according to its kind (accessible and also arranged--made "subjective"). But they thereby mistake themselves. The atom that they fix is inferred according to the logic of that perspectivism of consciousness (Bewusstseins-Perspektivismus), is therewith also

itself a subjective fiction. The picture of the world that they sketch is not essentially different from the subjective picture of the world; it is merely constructed with more thoroughly thought out senses, but, by all means, with our senses.... (Ibid., III, pp. 704-705).

The invention of causal entities to explain experienced effects remains nevertheless invention. The will to power can therefore not be conceived as a being, a thing.

The attributes of a thing are effects on other "things": if one imagines other "things" as absent, a thing has no attributes, i.e. there is no such thing as a thing without other things, i.e., there is no such thing as a "thing in itself." (Ibid., pp. 502-503).

The "thing in itself" is a fiction, as, indeed, are all "things." We must try to think in terms of dynamic quanta, of a world of effects only. But these effects must be thought of neither as the effects of any-thing, nor as effecting some-thing. We must try to imagine only effects and in an undifferentiated unity, not entities, and not separated from one another. Using Nietzsche's language, effects are not the effects of will to power, they are will to power. The suggestion made by Danto that "an effect might be regarded as the impact of will upon will, not the shock of thing upon thing," clarifies Nietzsche's point considerably. Danto goes on to add the comforting words:

We might find it hard to grasp this idea, but Nietzsche would attribute this to the repellent power of our subject-predicate grammar. It would be difficult to put it in a sentence which would not mislead, because of the sentence structure, if nothing else. (A. Danto, op. cit., p. 220).

If we have followed Nietzsche so far and are willing to admit with him that the concepts of thing and being are no longer useful fictions for interpreting the world, we must now face the puzzling fact that Nietzsche is equally unwilling to grant that will to power can be understood as a becoming. It is, in his own words, "a pathos."

In a passage, a portion of which was quoted above, in which Nietzsche is dealing with the physicists' belief in a "true world," he notes something which may help us understand what he means by "pathos."

And finally they (the physicists) have left something out of the constellation without knowing it: just the necessary perspectivism, by virtue of which every power center (Kraftzentrum), and not only man, constructs the entire remainder of the world from its point of view, i.e., measures it, feels it, forms it according to its power.... They have forgotten to figure this perspective-setting power (Perspektiven-setzende Kraft) into the "true world"--in common language: being a subject.

Perspectivism is only a complex form of specificity. My idea is that each specific body strives to become master over the whole of space, and to spread out its power--its will to power--repelling whatever resists its expansion. But it strikes continually upon a like endeavor of other bodies, and ends by adjusting ("unifying") to those who are related closely enough to it: in this way they conspire together to power. And thus the process continues.... (Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 705).

This is perhaps the most concise short definition of what Nietzsche is driving at. The world is made of "power centers" or "will points" (Willens-Punktationen), forces or power quanta, each of which strives "to become master over the whole of space." Since all power quanta are striving for the same "end," namely, more power, expansion, incorporation, they repel each other and make the adjustments necessary for continuing their striving in the face of mutual resistance.

However, this interpretation does not lead Nietzsche to pronouncements about the "laws of the universe."

If something happens this way and not that, there is still nothing of "law," or "principle," or "order," but only the working of power quanta, whose nature consists in exercising their power upon every other power quantum. (Ibid., p.776).

Nietzsche has not fallen into the trap of the scientists whose "beliefs" he has thrown doubt upon. He realizes that interpretations are invariably fictions which are useful in explaining certain otherwise inexplicable phenomena. He has not claimed to have arrived at the Truth, but only at a truth, i.e., one interpretation--no doubt among many--which, however, takes into account the perspectivism of the subject who interprets. We are impressed not only by the modesty of his claims, but by his honesty in the face of spurious beliefs--where we would have least expected them!

This brief statement of the "cosmic implications" of the theory of will to power has afforded us at least a glimpse of the extent to which Nietzsche thought his theory would renovate our ways of seeing the world, thinking about it and talking about it. These implications will be helpful later when we direct our attention to Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence. (See Chapter 8).

- 58) Philip Rieff, Freud: The Mind of the Moralist (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1961), p. 40.
- 59) Sigmund Freud, "Repression," in A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. John Rickman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1957), p. 87.
- 60) Ibid., p. 89.
- 61) Ibid., pp. 96-97.
- 62) Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1959), pp. 78-79.
- 63) Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, edited and abridged by Lionel Trilling and Steven Marcus (Pelican Books, 1964), p. 505.
- 64) Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," A General Selection..., op. cit., p. 141.
- 65) Ibid., p. 142. See also Ernest Jones, op. cit., p. 506: "Freud used a term suggested by Barbara Low,

the 'Nirvana principle,' to apply to both, whether the goal was to abolish or merely reduce the excitation."

- 66) Freud, "Beyond the....," p. 150.
- 67) Ibid., p. 156.
- 68) The concept of "bidding" is by no means something new for Freud. Ernest Jones writes: "He reverted to his and Breuer's distinction between free and bound energy, one which he had made a fundamental basis of his own psychology, and he now correlated this with the endeavor to 'master' or 'bind' unpleasant experiences which to him was the meaning of the repetitions in question." (Jones, op. cit., p. 507). See J. Breuer & S. Freud, Studien über Hysterie, 1895.
- 69) Freud, "Beyond the....," p. 158.
- 70) Ibid.
- 71) Ibid., p. 159
- 72) Freud actually quotes Schopenhauer's statement to this effect: "The goal of all life is death...." Ibid., p. 160.
- 73) Ibid., pp. 161-62.
- 74) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1268.

6. The right to make promises and the instinct of conscience.

To rear an animal with the right to make promises - is that not precisely the paradoxical task which nature has set itself with regard to man? And is this not man's true problem?

I

In Section III of the preceding chapter we noted that the major discoveries emerging from Nietzsche's psychological probing of morality were two: that every morality is a sign-language of the passions, and that the essential feature of every morality is that it provides for long obedience in one direction. Further, we saw that this "one direction" in the specific instance of our own "Christian-Platonic" historical past was an ascetic direction, one characterized by continence and a pitting of life against life - for the sake of preserving life. By way of introduction to Nietzsche's theory of conscience, we must now bring in the first of his major discoveries about morality, only alluded to above. Let us consider Nietzsche's working out of a typology of morality, bearing always in mind that it is a means to an end, a tool indispensable for determining the value of morality.

II

What confronts us in Toward a Genealogy of Morals

in the form of a treatise composed of three extended aphorisms is the matured statement of Nietzsche's hypothesis concerning the provenance of moral values, the product of a project begun in Human, All-too-Human.² The question is still one of value.

The point is to travel through the huge, distant, and completely hidden land of morality, morality as it actually existed and was actually lived, with all sorts of new questions in mind and with new eyes....³

Under what conditions did man invent the value judgments good and evil? And what value have they? Have they inhibited or enhanced man's growth? Are they a sign of distress, impoverishment, degeneration of life? Or do they, on the contrary, betray plenitude, power, a will to life, its courage, confidence, its future?⁴

In the first extended aphorism, "'Good and Evil,' 'Good and Bad,'" Nietzsche delves into the history of moral value judgments. He approaches the problem in a manner consciously different from that of "the English psychologists, whom we have to thank for the only attempts made thus far to produce a history of the origin of morality...."⁵ Because they approach this historical problem unhistorically, it is not surprising that their findings are less than convincing. For instance, in an effort to explain the genealogy of the value judgment "good," they proceed according to a utilitarian principle, claiming that altruistic actions

were originally approved by those to whom they were useful. Later on, the reasons for calling them good were forgotten; not, however, the habit of praising them. The movement is from usefulness to habit, via the forgetting of the original reasons for approval. Moreover, they are fond of searching for the origin of moral values from the standpoint of the dichotomy of egoism/altruism, that is, by assuming rather than questioning the association of egoistic deeds with the judgment "bad" and altruistic deeds with "good." Another, more consistent but no less unconvincing, version of the utilitarian approach is represented by Herbert Spencer who considers "good" and "bad" as judgments summarizing and sanctioning precisely the "unforgotten and unforgettable experiences of the useful practical and the harmful impractical."6

Now it is obvious to me, first of all, that this theory begins to search for the origin of the concept "good" in the wrong place. The judgment "good" is not made by the ones to whom "good" is done! Rather, it is "the good" themselves, that is, the noble, the mighty, the aristocratic and high-minded who took themselves and their actions to be good, namely as being of the highest rank, in contrast to all that was mean, low-minded, base and plebeian. It was out of this pathos of distance that they first assumed the right to create new values and give them names. What was utility to them?7

Here we have Nietzsche's master/slave concept which derived from his etymological study of the term "good" in

various languages. It receives a final formulation in Beyond Good and Evil, which was published just prior to Toward a Genealogy of Morals.

In a tour of the many finer and coarser moralities which have ruled or still rule on earth I found certain traits regularly recurring together and bound up with one another: until at length two basic types were revealed and a basic distinction emerged. There is master morality and slave morality - I add at once that in all higher and mixed cultures attempts at mediation between the two are apparent and more frequently confusion and mutual misunderstanding between them, and sometimes their harsh juxtaposition - even within the same man, within one soul. The various moral evaluations have arisen either among a ruling order...or among the ruled, the slaves and dependents.... In the former case, when it is the rulers who determine the concept "good," it is the exalted, proud states of soul which are considered distinguishing and determine the order of rank. The noble man separates from himself those natures in which the opposite of such exalted proud states appear: he despises them. It should be noted at once that in this former type of morality the antithesis "good" and "bad" means the same thing as "noble" and "despicable" - the antithesis "good" and "evil" originates elsewhere. The cowardly, the timid, the petty, and those who think only of narrow utility are despised, as are the mistrustful,...those who abase themselves, the dog-like type of man who lets himself be ill-treated, the fawning flatterer, above all the liar - it is the fundamental belief of all aristocrats that the common people are liars... It is immediately obvious that designations of moral value were first applied to men, and only later and derivatively to actions: ...The noble type of man feels himself to be the determiner of values; he does not need to be approved of; he judges "what harms me is harmful in itself," ...he creates values...such a morality is self-glorification. In the foreground stands the

feeling of plenitude, of power which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension.... The noble man honours in himself the man of power, and also the man who has power over himself, who understands how to speak and how to keep silent, who enjoys practising severity and harshness upon himself and feels reverence for all that is severe and harsh... It is the powerful who understand how to honour, that is their art, their realm of invention. Deep reverence for the old and traditional....., prejudice in favour of ancestors and against descendants is typical of a morality of the powerful;... It is otherwise with the second type of morality, slave morality. Suppose the abused, oppressed, suffering, unfree, those uncertain of themselves and weary should moralise: what would their moral evaluations have in common? Probably a pessimistic mistrust of the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man together with his situation. The slave is suspicious of the virtues of the powerful: he is skeptical and mistrustful... of everything "good" which is honoured among them... On the other hand, those qualities which serve to lighten the existence of the suffering will be brought into prominence and flooded with light: here it is that sympathy, humility, friendliness, come into honour - for here these are the most useful qualities and virtually the only means of enduring the burden of existence. Slave morality is essentially the morality of utility. Here is the source of the famous antithesis "good" and "evil" - power and dangerousness were felt to exist in the evil, a certain dreadfulness, subtlety and strength which could not be despised...⁸

Of decisive significance for our purposes is Nietzsche's claim that morality derives from two basic sources. As he put it in a preliminary formulation in Human, All-too-Human, "The concept good and evil has double antecedents, namely, on the one hand, in the soul of the

dominant tribes and castes..., on the other, in the soul of the oppressed, the powerless."⁹

...the basic concept is always "aristocratic," "noble," in the class sense, from which there developed, of necessity, the concept "good" in the sense of "spiritually aristocratic," "noble" in the sense of "spiritually noble," "spiritually privileged" - a development that always runs parallel to that other which finally changes "base," "plebeian," "mean," into the concept "bad."¹⁰

That is to say, the valuations emerging from a master morality have their source in a spontaneous "Yes" to life and self, from which subsequently is derived the notion "bad." In contrast and parallel to this development the value judgments of a slave morality are essentially re-active and arise from an original "no," "and this no is its creative act."¹¹ "Evil" is thus at the root of slave ethics, and only what is not evil is "good."

On the basis of his discovery of the double origin of all moral values - good/bad and good/evil - Nietzsche concludes that in their battle for ascendancy, the valuations "good/evil" have undoubtedly won the day, so much so that we hardly notice that there is a second set of valuations engaged in the struggle. This he calls the "slave revolt in morals,"¹² the triumph of the priestly caste (Judaism-Christianity) over the noble caste of blond beasts. With this change in the

occupancy of the "master" position comes the inversion of the aristocratic values of the noble beasts of prey - "a robust sensuality; blooming, rich, exuberant health; and everything needed to preserve them: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, tournaments, and everything that involves strong, gay actions."¹³ With the accession of the priests to the aristocracy, these values were displaced by poverty, humility and chastity - "the whole anti-sensual...metaphysics."¹⁴

It was the Jews who, with frightening consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value equation - good, noble, mighty, beautiful, happy, beloved-of-the-gods - and cling to it with the tenacity of the deepest hatred (the hatred born of impotence): "Only the miserable are good, only the poor, the impotent, the base; only the suffering, the needy, the sick and ugly are pious and blessed; for them only is there salvation. But you, you noble and mighty ones, you are to all eternity the evil ones, the cruel, the covetous, the ravenous, the godless, and you will thus be eternally cursed and damned!" We know who has inherited this Jewish inversion of values.¹⁵

There is from the very outset something unhealthy about such priestly aristocracies... Humanity is still suffering from the after-effects of these naive priestly cures. ... in all fairness it should be added, however, that it was on the soil of this essentially dangerous form of human existence, the priestly form, that man became for the first time an interesting animal; that here, as never before, the human soul acquired depth and became wicked in a sublime sense - and it is of course in these two respects that man has proved his superiority over the other beasts.¹⁶

Though it is quite obvious that Nietzsche is taking a very negative, one-sided view of historical Judaism and Christianity, and of rabbis, priests and pastors, it would be to miss the equally obvious force of his insights to take issue with him on these points which, for reasons that will become clearer only after we have the next extended aphorism before us, are strictly incidental to the argument. We must proceed from the origin of moral values to the origin of conscience; or to be more precise, from the phylogeny to the ontogeny of conscience

Nietzsche's early essay on the value of history for life begins thus:

Observe the herd grazing there. It does not know what yesterday is, or today. It roams about, eats, rests, digests, roams further, from morning till night, day in and day out; its joys and woes bound by a short line to the stake of the moment, it is neither melancholy nor bored. This is difficult for man to take, for though he may parade his humanity before the animal, nevertheless he is envious of the animal's bliss. He too wants, just as the animal, to live neither in boredom nor in pain - but in vain, for he does not will as an animal wills. Man may ask the animal: Why do you not tell me of your happiness, but simply stare at me? The animal wants to answer, and says: it is because I always forget immediately what I wanted to say - but then he forgets this answer too and falls silent, which makes the man wonder.

He wonders about himself too, about his inability to learn to forget and his perpetual hanging on to the past. Regardless how far or how fast he runs, this chain runs with him. It

is a miracle, the moment - here in a flash, gone in a flash; nothing before, nothing after; and yet it returns as a ghost to haunt the quiet of a later moment. Continually a leaf breaks loose from the wheel of time, flutters away, then flutters suddenly back into the lap of man. Whereupon the man says, "I remember," and envies the animal which forgets immediately and sees every moment literally die, sink back into the mist and the night, extinguished forever. Thus the animal lives unhistorically, for it goes into the present like a number, leaving no remainder; it knows not how to play a part or conceal something. It appears at every moment exactly as it is, and can be thus nothing but honest. Man, on the other hand, resists the ever-growing burden of the past. It weighs him down and bows his shoulders; it hinders his gait, this invisible and mysterious load, which he can, for show, deny and which, in fact, he enjoys denying in the company of his friends - for the purpose of awakening their envy. Therefore, it moves him, as though he were reminded of a lost paradise, when he sees a herd grazing, or nearer still, a child that still has no past to disown but only plays in blissful blindness between the fences of past and future. And yet his playing must be interrupted; all too soon will he be called away from forgetfulness. Then he will learn to comprehend the words "once upon a time," that watchword with which struggle, suffering and satiety set in to remind man what his existence really is - an imperfect tense that will never become a present. When death finally brings the longed-for forgetfulness, it brings simultaneously to an end the present and existence itself, thus sealing the knowledge that existence is but a continuous "has been," a thing which lives from its own self-denial, self-consumption, self-contradiction.¹⁷

The second part of Toward a Genealogy of Morals, "'Guilt! 'Bad Conscience,' and Related Matters," opens on a similar, though somewhat less melancholy, note.

To rear an animal with the right to make promises - is that not precisely the paradoxical task which nature has set itself with regard to man? And is this not man's true problem? 18

If we consider the strength of the forgetfulness of the animal, the fact that man is the unforgetful animal seems all the more remarkable. For this natural forgetfulness is not merely an inability to remember, but an active choosing not to remember, without which "there could be no happiness, no gaiety, no hope, no pride, no present...."19 That which distinguishes the man-animal from all other animals is this faculty by which in certain cases, the natural, healthy, device of forgetfulness may be suspended. Again, not a passive inability to be done with something but "an active not wishing to be done with something, a willing again and again of a thing once willed, a veritable memory of the will...."20 How has this come about? What is the origin of this faculty?

It is a late product of a long training in the "custom character of morality." (Sittlichkeit der Sitte)

Morality (Sittlichkeit) is nothing other than (that is, nothing more than) obedience to customs (Sitten), of whatever kind; and customs are simply the customary (herkömmlich) way of acting and valuing.²¹

"Egoistic" and "altruistic" is not the basic

contrast which led men to distinguish between moral and immoral, good and evil; rather it was subjection to custom, law, and release from it.²²

What is custom (Herkommen)? A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands us to do what is most useful, but because it commands ...Who is the most moral (der Sittlichste)? On the one hand, he who fulfills the law most often.... On the other, he who fulfills it under the most difficult conditions. The most moral man is he who sacrifices himself most to custom (Sitte). ...the individual should sacrifice himself - thus demands the custom character of morality.²³

With the help of the custom character of morality, a long, cruel process which Nietzsche places in man's pre-historical past, an unpredictable, incalculable animal was made predictable and calculable. The next link in this chain is historical man, "this liberated one who really can make promises," and who possesses, by virtue of his new "long, infrangible will...his criterion of values as well."²⁴

The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over himself and his fate, has sunk into the depths of his being and become an instinct, the dominant instinct. What will he call it, this dominant instinct, assuming that he will want to give it a name? There is no doubt, this sovereign man will call it his conscience.²⁵

Let us repeat these final words so as not to miss their impact: man's proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility, of being able

to make and keep promises, of having control of himself and his fate, has become an instinct - the dominant instinct!

Before saying any more about this new, late-blooming, positive phenomenon of conscience which has become an instinct, we must ask, with Nietzsche: what about bad conscience, the consciousness of guilt? Nietzsche makes the highly original claim that "the moral term guilt (Schuld) had its inception in the very material term owe (Schulden)."²⁶ Further, he claims that "punishment, as compensation, developed quite independent of any ideas about freedom of the will...."²⁷ In primitive times wrongdoers were punished as repayment for damage suffered, not because they were believed responsible for their actions. The answer to the question as to the origin of the connection between damage done and compensation (the pain of the wrongdoer) is "that it arose out of the contractual relation between creditor and debtor...which harks back to the basic forms of purchase, sale, exchange, barter and trade."²⁸ (This may remind us, though Nietzsche does not use this specific example, that in biblical usage "redemption" is related to the concrete act of owing or paying a sum of money or bartering goods or property.

When New Testament writers speak of "a ransom for many" (as in Mark 10:45) or of "being bought with a price" (as in I Corinthians 6:20; 7:23), their words are understood in a new mythical sense only by virtue of their being grounded in the common language of the marketplace. See, by way of comparison, the very different, unmythical use of the same words in Exodus 21:30.

We noticed in passing above that the custom character of morality was a long, cruel process. We should now be better able to understand why this is so. Both guilt (punishment of self) and punishment (of others), understood as compensation, reveal themselves as warrants entitling one man to exercise cruelty on another, the punisher in the former case being one's ancestors, in the latter, one's fellow men.

Let us make sure we understand the logic of this whole method of compensations - it is strange, to be sure. An equivalent is determined, so that the creditor receives, in place of compensation relating directly to the loss suffered (that is, instead of an equivalent in money, land or property of some sort), a kind of pleasure as repayment....²⁹

"Inflicting pain" was accepted as equivalent to "extracting payment" "in the sense that causing someone to suffer was extremely pleasurable...."³⁰

To behold suffering gives pleasure, to cause suffering greater pleasure still - that is a hard statement, but an old and powerful human, all-too-human axiom....³¹

Here we have, in the jargon of psychoanalysis, the masochism/sadism complex.

"How does one create a memory for the human animal? How does one impress something on this partially dull, partially scatterbrain intelligence, this incarnation of forgetfulness, in such a way that it stays?" This ancient problem, as one might imagine, has not been solved with delicate words and means. Perhaps, in fact, there is nothing more terrible and sinister in the whole of man's prehistory than his mnemotechnics. "One brands something on the memory in order to make it stay; only that which does not cease causing pain will be remembered" - that is an axiom of the oldest (and, unfortunately, most enduring) psychology on earth. ...it is the past, the longest, deepest, hardest past that surges up in us whenever we become "serious." Whenever man has thought it necessary to create a memory for himself, it never occurred without blood, martyrs and sacrifices. The most gruesome sacrifices and pledges (to which the sacrifice of the first-born belongs), the most repulsive mutilations (castration, for example), the cruelest rituals of all religious cults (and all religions are basically systems of cruelty) - all these have their origin in that instinct which divined pain to be the most powerful aid to mnemonics.³²

Concentrating for a moment on the notion of punishment, Nietzsche points out a common misconception concerning the second aspect of it (the first being the "drama" itself, i.e. watching or causing suffering), namely its purpose. The most general utilitarian purpose of punishment is thought to be that of awakening in the wrongdoer a sense of guilt, "pangs of conscience."

...but this is to miss the mark with regard to the actual facts and to psychology today - and how much more so when one considers man's longest history, his pre-history! Genuine pangs of conscience are extremely rare among criminals and convicts; prisons and penitentiaries are not the breeding-places of this species of gnawer. ...By and large, punishment hardens and cools, it concentrates, it sharpens the sense of alienation, strengthens the power of resistance. ...if we consider the millenia of man's pre-history, we may conclude, without hesitation, that it is precisely punishment which has most effectively retarded the development of the sense of guilt - at any rate with regard to the victims of punitive authority. Let us not underestimate the extent to which the criminal is hindered from perceiving his deed, his way of acting as reprehensible as such by his viewing of the judicial and legal proceedings. For he sees exactly the same kind of actions perpetrated in the service of justice and then sanctioned - perpetrated with a good conscience. Spying, deception, bribery, the setting of traps, the whole tricky, crafty art of police and prosecutors; not to mention the premeditated and cold-blooded despoiling, subjugating, insulting imprisoning, torturing, and murdering represented by the various types of punishment; in short, actions considered by no means objectionable and vile as such by his judges, but only in specific instances and under certain conditions. "Bad conscience," this most uncanny and most interesting plant of our earthly vegetation, did not grow from this soil. In fact, for a very long time judges and penologists were not even aware that they were dealing with a "guilty" person, but only a trouble-maker, an unaccountable piece of misfortune. Likewise, he who was punished sensed no "inner torment, but rather viewed his punishment as a piece of misfortune, a sudden occurrence of something unexpected, a terrible natural disaster like a plunging, crushing rock, against which there is no self-defense. 33

There can be no doubt that we must look for the real effect of punishment in a sharpening

of man's shrewdness, an extension of his memory, in a will henceforth to proceed more cautiously, distrustfully, secretly, in the realization that one is just too weak to accomplish certain things, in a kind of improvement through self-criticism. The primary achievement of punishment, for both men and animals, is an increase in fear, the sharpening of prudence, the controlling of the passions. Thus, punishment tames man, but it does not make him "better." On the contrary, probably the opposite is closer to the truth. ("Misfortune sharpens our wits," it is claimed. To the degree that it sharpens our wits, it also makes us bad. Luckily, it often just dulls us.)³⁴

Having thus laid the necessary groundwork by discrediting the notion of efficaciousness of punishment in calling forth a sense of guilt, Nietzsche now offers his own hypothesis concerning the origin of bad conscience.

I take bad conscience to be the deep sickness which man contracted under the pressure of the most profound transformation he has ever undergone - that transformation in which he found himself once and for all under the spell of society and freedom. Not unlike what must have happened to the sea animals when they were forced either to become land animals or to perish, these semi-animals, happily adjusted to the wilderness, to war, to roaming and adventure, suddenly found all their instincts devalued, "unhinged." They now had to walk on their feet and "carry themselves," whereas the water had always carried them before. A dreadful heaviness weighed upon them. They felt inept for the simplest movements; in this new, unknown world, they could no longer count on their old guides - the regulating, trustworthy, unconscious drives. They were reduced to thinking, deducing, calculating, linking up cause and effect - these unhappy creatures,

reduced to their consciousness, ' their scantiest and most unreliable organ! I doubt that there has ever been a worse feeling of misery on earth, such a leaden discomfort. Besides, these old instincts had not suddenly stopped making their demands! It was only difficult and seldom possible to fulfill them. In the main, they were forced to seek new and at the same time covert satisfactions. All instincts which do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward. This is what I call man's introjection (Verinnerlichung). With this there begins to grow in man what one later calls his "soul." The entire inner world, originally meager and tenuous, expanded, took on depth, breadth and height to the degree that the discharge of man's drives was inhibited. Those terrible bulwarks with which the polity protected itself against the old instincts of freedom (punishment belongs especially to these bulwarks) caused all of the instincts of the wild, free, roaming man to reverse themselves, to turn on man himself. Hostility, cruelty, the joys of the chase, of raids and destruction - all this turning inward against the possessor of such instincts himself, that is the origin of "bad conscience." This man, who, lacking external enemies and opposition and confined to the oppressive narrowness and regularity of custom, impatiently tore into himself, persecuted, gnawed on, disturbed and mishandled himself; this animal that one wants to "tame," hurling itself against the bars of its cage; this deprived one, consumed by his longing to return to the desert, who is compelled to make an adventure of himself, a torture-chamber, an insecure and dangerous wilderness - this fool, this passionate and desperate prisoner was the inventor of "bad conscience."³⁵

The presuppositions of this hypothesis concerning the origin of bad conscience are two. First, that the transformation was not gradual, not voluntary, nor was it an organic growing into new conditions, but a break, a leap, a compulsion, an inescapable misfortune which could neither be struggled against nor even

resented. Second, that the fitting of a heretofore uninhibited and shapeless people into a rigid form could be maintained, as indeed it was begun, only with violence; that the oldest "society" therefore began as a frightful tyranny, a crushing and ruthless machine, and continued to operate as such until the raw material of tribe and semi-animal was not only kneaded and made docile, but also actually given form. I used the word "society," but it is obvious what I mean - a pack of blond beasts, a race of conquerors and masters, organized for war and possessing the power to organize others, unhesitatingly laying its claws upon a perhaps numerically far superior, but as yet formless wandering people. In such a manner was "society" begun on earth. I take it that the fanatic theory that has its beginning with a "contract" is thus disposed of.³⁶

With this brief excursion back into the phylogeny of conscience, we are reminded of the presuppositions of Nietzsche's general argument, namely the master/slave dichotomy. In sum, bad conscience is, then, a sickness contracted by man thrust into civilization, made into a social animal, forced to manipulate (sublimate) his natural unconscious drives rather than having them gratified unconsciously.

One last phase of this development remains to be elucidated. We noticed in our treatment of the custom character of morality that morality is, in essence, not the useful way of acting, judging, living, but simply the customary, traditional way. Further, we saw that consequently guilt, understood as compensation,

amounts to a consciousness of failure to live, act and judge in a way prescribed by custom, which is to say, in keeping with the prescriptions of one's ancestors. Every failure to "keep the ancestral law" adds to the debt owed one's forebears.

The fear of the ancestor and his power, the sense of indebtedness to him, necessarily increases, according to this crude logic, in direct proportion to the increase in the power of the tribe; that is, to the extent that the tribe itself becomes more victorious, more independent, respected and feared. Never the other way around! ...If one follows this crude logic to its end, the ancestors of the mightiest tribes are pushed back into the dusk of divine mystery and inconceivability - the ancestor is, finally, necessarily, transfigured into a god.³⁷

However, as is often the case with myths, man's belief that he was indebted to the gods did not wane with the decline of his primitive morality generally. Not only did man's sense of guilt remain, it also increased cumulatively until his debt was seen as "unredeemable by any act of atonement."³⁸ The "moralization" of guilt, that is, the dissociation of the debtor (man) from the creditor (God) by making bad conscience a purely subjective phenomenon represents an attempted inversion of this cumulative backlog and buildup of guilt.

Now the prospect of final redemption must be closed once and for all; now man's gaze must bounce off, bounce back hopelessly from a

brazen impossibility; now "guilt" and "duty" must turn against - whom? There is no doubt, first of all against the "debtor"...³⁹

When this happens, when man, having reached the extreme point of realizing that his debt is unpayable and castigating himself by internalizing it, there is only one remaining move - to turn on the "creditor" himself.

With this last move man curses his origins or nature or existence itself and begins to long for a different sort of life, an after-life, or simply an end to life.

...suddenly we stand face to face with the paradoxical and ghastly expedient which brought temporary relief to suffering humanity, Christianity's stroke of genius: God sacrificing himself for man, God himself repaying the debt, God as the only one capable of redeeming what had become irredeemable for man - the creditor sacrificing himself for his debtor out of love (can you believe it?), out of love for his debtor!⁴⁰

To be sure, the debt, unpayable by man, is paid - by God. But at the same time, because it is God who paid the debt by sacrificing himself, the sacrifice only finalizes man's indebtedness - to God. This is why Nietzsche calls this solution paradoxical. And, as he also rightly says, it can bring no more than "temporary relief to suffering humanity." Man will not be forced to introject his sense of guilt; the link between the subjective bad conscience and the "creditor" is once again established, so that man may

cease cursing his existence. However, the link has been reforged in such a way as to seal and make incontrovertible man's eternal debt to God.

Nietzsche summarizes his hypothesis on the origin of bad conscience thus:

...this inventor of bad conscience made use of religion in order to drive his own martyrdom to its ghastliest extreme. A debt against God - this thought became his instrument of torture. He focused in "God" the ultimate opposites that he could find to his own insatiable animal instincts and made these instincts themselves a sin against God (as hostility, rebellion, revolt against the "Lord," the "Father," the Creator of the world). He stretched himself on the contradiction "God" and "Devil." He projected all of his denials of himself, of nature, of the naturalness and concreteness of his being out of himself as an affirmation; as being, concrete and real; as God, the holiness of God, the judge and executioner; as beyond, as eternity, as eternal martyrdom, as hell, as immeasurable punishment and guilt. This is a kind of madness of the will in spiritual cruelty which is positively without parallel. Man's will to find himself irredeemably guilty and reprehensible; his will to think of himself as being punished, with no hope of the punishment ever being able to absolve the debt of guilt; his will to infect and poison the deepest foundation of things with the problem of punishment and guilt in order to bar his own escape from this monomaniacal maze once and for all; his will to erect an ideal--the "holiness of God"--so as to have close at hand evidence of his own absolute unworthiness. Oh, what a mad, unhappy beast man is! What notions occur to him, what monstrosities, what paroxysms of nonsense, what bestly ideas burst forth in the moment he is hindered in the slightest from being a

beast of action! ... There is so much horror in man! The earth has too long been a mad-house!⁴¹

It would seem that man is condemned to destroy himself with his bad conscience, for the next "turning inward" of guilt is bound to be even more vehement than the last - and now God, the only one capable of paying such an enormous debt, is dead. Nevertheless, this treatise does not end on a negative note, as indeed the first treatise did not. Nietzsche does not venture at all far into the future, but he does drop a few hints which suggest that he may see a way out.

Let us add at once that...with the phenomenon of an animal turned in upon itself, taking sides against itself, something so new and deep, so unprecedented, puzzling, confusing and promising appeared on earth that the earth itself was substantially altered. ...he (man) aroused an interest, created a tension, a hope, almost a certainty, as though something were being heralded in him, something prepared; as though man were not a goal but a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise.⁴²

There can be no doubt that bad conscience is a sickness, but in the sense that pregnancy is a sickness.⁴³

One final touch remains to be added before we can comment on the two sections from Toward a Genealogy of Morals which we have just reviewed, namely the setting alongside Nietzsche's theory of the development of conscience of Freud's notion of super-ego.⁴⁴ In doing this, we shall let Freud speak for himself.

A super-ego must be presumed to be present wherever, as in the case of man, there is a long period of dependence in childhood.⁴⁵

The long period of childhood, during which the growing human being lives in dependence upon his parents, leaves behind it a precipitate, which forms within his ego a special agency in which this parental influence is prolonged. It has received the name of super-ego.⁴⁶

The super-ego is, then, a late product, a further development of the ego resulting from the prolonged infancy of the human child. At "about the age of five," that is, at the end of "infancy,"

A portion of the external world has, at least partially, been given up as an object and instead, by means of identification, taken into the ego - that is, has become an integral part of the internal world. This new mental agency continues to carry on the functions which have hitherto been performed by the corresponding people in the external world: it observes the ego, gives it orders, corrects it and threatens it with punishments, exactly like the parents whose place it has taken. We call this agency the super-ego and are aware of it, in its judicial functions, as our conscience.⁴⁷

The parents' influence naturally includes not merely the personalities of the parents themselves but also the racial, national and family traditions handed on through them as well as the demands of the immediate social milieu which they represent. In the same way, an individual's super-ego in the course of his development takes over contributions from later successors and substitutes of his parents, such as teachers, admired figures in public life or high social ideals.⁴⁸

It is a remarkable thing that the super-ego often develops a severity for which no example

has been provided by the real parents, and further that it calls the ego to task not only on account of its deeds but just as much on account of its thoughts and unexecuted intentions, of which it seems to have knowledge. We are reminded that the hero of the Oedipus legend too felt guilty for his actions and punished himself, although the compulsion of the oracle should have made him innocent in our judgment and in his own. The super-ego is in fact the heir to the Oedipus complex and only arises after that complex has been disposed of. For that reason its excessive severity does not follow a real prototype but corresponds to the strength which is used in fending off the temptation of the Oedipus complex. ...the super-ego continues to act the role of an external world towards the ego, although it has become part of the internal world.⁴⁹

...the super-ego takes up the kind of intermediate position between the id and the external world; it unites in itself the influences of the present and of the past. In the emergence of the super-ego we have before us, as it were, an example of the way in which the present is changed into the past.⁵⁰

All of the elements of Nietzsche's "conscience" are accounted for. It would seem that "conscience" and "super-ego" correspond exactly. Both develop late in man's history; both are a turning inward of man's desire for satisfaction of his impulses; both have their source in will to power (Nietzsche) or id (Freud) and become differentiated by turning against and dominating their source;⁵¹ both bind man to his past by performing the judicial function of commanding obedience to the demands of that past.

There is, however, a difference. It is in the kind

of obedience demanded by conscience and super-ego. Super-ego, as heir to the Oedipus complex, is by definition repressive. "...its chief function remains the limitation of satisfactions."⁵² It is sublimation that Freud sees as providing "a way out, a way by which the claims of the ego can be met without involving repression."⁵³ But sublimation necessarily involves an abandonment of sexual aims; it "consists in the instinct's directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual gratification; in this process the accent falls upon deflection from the sexual aim."⁵⁴ The vocabulary of limitation, repression and deflection belongs to the language of the ascetic ideal. Freud's "answer" to repression was sublimation; but sublimation, as Freud conceived it, however successful in providing an alternative to the destructive repression of the instincts, was forced to pay the high price of desexualization. Only by becoming more ascetic, only by redirecting our desires toward non-sexual gratifications could we hope to escape the crushing weight of the severe super-ego.

But is this a "way out"? Both Freud and Nietzsche were aware that man's sense of guilt (resulting, as we have seen, from the demands of super-ego or conscience) is cumulative.⁵⁵ Thus, Freud's conception of sublimation

will provide a way out of this dilemma only if we agree to forfeit our bodies; for his prescription of more and more sublimation in the face of a cumulative build-up of repression can only lead, by way of a progressive desexualization of the body, to "pure intellectuality."⁵⁶

We are now in a position to return to Nietzsche's theory of conscience and the clues it may contain for a "way out" which does not end in Freud's theoretic and therapeutic pessimism.

III

How are we to read the first two extended aphorisms of Toward a Genealogy of Morals which occupied our attention in the preceding section? How are we to construe Nietzsche's claim to have traced the moral judgments "good and bad," "good and evil" to a master elite and a pack of slaves, respectively? The movement between the first and second parts of Nietzsche's treatise is, ostensibly, from the provenance of moral values in history to their provenance in man; in short, recalling that ultimately the issue in question is the value of ethics, the worth of moral values, a movement from the phylogenetic to the ontogenetic development of conscience.

But is this, in fact, what transpires in Toward a Genealogy of Morals? It is doubtful. Regardless whether we are affronted by the theory that all our value judgments are traceable to an original pre-historic value-bestowing horde of masters and slaves, or just made uncomfortable by it, Nietzsche's claim to have "discovered" it in our past fails to convince. Yet it would be difficult to deny that the content of the theory otherwise rings true and is much more useful in determining the origin and worth of our value judgments than, for example, a utilitarian approach. How is this to be explained?

Nietzsche (like Freud, though to a lesser extent) was a psychological determinist.⁵⁷ He saw his own work as paving the way to a time when "psychology would again be recognized as queen of the sciences...."⁵⁸ As we have seen, Nietzsche began with man and set out to find an explanation for the inner split in man (repression) which was making him sick (neurotic). His search led him to an examination of man's various moral demand systems which he discovered to be both a sign-language of man's passions and a table of his overcomings. And these moralities could be narrowed down and separated into two basic types - master moralities and slave

moralties. We need not retrace Nietzsche's steps any further. His self-appointed task was to account for repression; repression is conflict, and conflict presupposes at least two opposing forces. Nietzsche was compelled to assume the existence of these two forces, and to this end he posited (almost certainly believing that he had discovered it) the master/slave dichotomy. Understood in this way, Nietzsche's whole account of the development of human conscience does not stand or fall with the credence of the master/slave theory, as the structure of Toward a Genealogy of Morals would suggest. On the contrary, the second part of the treatise, in which Nietzsche deals with the development in the individual, is essential to an understanding of the first in which the subject is the "historical" development. Phylogeny is analogous to, indeed, a projection of ontogeny; psychology is the queen of the sciences, on the basis of which the other sciences - not the least of which is history - are to be understood. Conceived in this way, we are not constrained to discard the first part of the treatise, but, taking the primal horde of masters and slaves symbolically (as, indeed, we took Freud's primal horde in Chapter 4), it provides a useful aid to understanding

not history, but the psychology of the development of man's conscience which is, after all, our theme in this chapter.

We may recall that both parts of Toward a Genealogy of Morals contained an apparently indefensible note of hope. In the former, after lamenting that "Humanity is still suffering from the after-effects of these naive priestly cures," Nietzsche admits that, nevertheless, it was only on this soil that man has been able to develop into an interesting creature, and thus "proved his superiority over the other beasts."⁵⁹ Likewise in the latter, he speaks of bad conscience as "a sickness, but in the sense that pregnancy is a sickness."⁶⁰ In what sense can bad conscience be said to be the harbinger of hope? How can sickness be the mother of the "superb health" which Nietzsche believes would reverse the development of bad conscience?

In order to get at the answer to these questions we must clear up one point of confusion in Nietzsche's account of the development of conscience. It would seem that in his discussion of this development Nietzsche is describing two distinct phenomena - conscience and bad conscience. This would be corroborated by his (as we now know) subsequent claim that the pre-history of

the moral valuations "good and bad," "good and evil" is a double history. Conscience is a memory of the will, an ability to remember and thus to make promises; bad conscience is a consciousness of guilt. Nietzsche is himself confused here, and thus confusing to his reader. To be sure, after having treated conscience, on the whole positively, as the human privilege of responsibility, Nietzsche refers to bad conscience as "that other somber phenomenon..."⁶¹ (my italics) Despite this explicit reference, the two are, in fact, not separated by Nietzsche - not even nominally: bad conscience is a kind of conscience. Nowhere in the remainder of Nietzsche's discussion does he give us reason to believe that he is treating two separate phenomena.

Assuming this to be true, let us confront the question just posed - in what sense can bad conscience be said to be pregnant with possibility? - and remind ourselves of Nietzsche's hypothesis concerning the origin of (bad) conscience.

I take bad conscience to be the deep sickness which man contracted under the pressure of the most profound transformation he has ever undergone - that transformation in which he found himself once and for all under the spell of society and freedom. Not unlike what must have happened to the sea animals when they were forced either to become land animals or to

perish, these semi-animals, happily adjusted to the wilderness, to war, to roaming and adventure, suddenly found all their instincts devalued, "unhinged." They now had to walk on their feet and "carry themselves," whereas the water had always carried them before. A dreadful heaviness weighed upon them. They felt inept for the simplest movements; in this new, unknown world, they could no longer count on their old guides - the regulating, trustworthy, unconscious drives. They were reduced to thinking, deducing, calculating, linking up cause and effect - these unhappy creatures, reduced to their "consciousness," their scantiest and most unreliable organ! I doubt that there has ever been a worse feeling of misery on earth, such a leaden discomfort. Besides, these old instincts had not suddenly stopped making their demands! It was only difficult and seldom possible to fulfill them. In the main, they were forced to seek new and at the same time covert satisfactions. All instincts which do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward. This is what I call man's introjection (Verinnerlichung).⁶²

This instinct of freedom, violently made latent ..., this suppressed instinct of freedom, driven back, imprisoned in man's inner self and forced to vent itself upon itself - that is the beginning of bad conscience.⁶³

These are the words of a master psychologist describing, not man's social-historical past, but his individual-psychological past; in short, the trauma of birth which, as Freud knew, is a long, cruel process beginning rather than ending with the physical separation of the body of the child from the body of the mother. That this is a description of birth is supported by the insight which is without a doubt the most audacious and simultaneously

the most enlightening of the entire treatise: that conscience is an instinct - the dominant instinct!

During the birth and prolonged infancy of the human child (both physical and psychological; that is, as psychoanalysis has it, "up to the end of the first period of childhood, till about the age of five"⁶⁴), the as yet undifferentiated will to power (Nietzsche) or id (Freud) is forced to split and turn on itself, not for the purpose of repression but because the drives of the will to power or id, in their new surroundings, cannot always be satisfied directly. Thus the conscience (Nietzsche) or super-ego (Freud) splits off from the will to power or id and takes up a position of mediation between it and the new external world, making demands on the will to power or id in such a way that, if not directly, then indirectly, the drives of will to power or id can be satisfied. Again, we would seem to be at the dead-end of Freud's pessimism, if the two men are in such total agreement on the origin of conscience.

But no. The difference we noticed previously was in the kind of obedience demanded by Nietzsche's "conscience" and Freud's "super-ego." Conscience is for Nietzsche an instinct, that is, a given, inescapable,

unavoidable part of our human make-up. For Freud too, though he never called it an instinct, the super-ego is a comparatively late but inevitable development.⁶⁵ It is also, as heir to the Oedipus complex, inevitably repressive in character. Not so for Nietzsche. And this is why he can be hopeful. This is why conscience as we know it (and as Freud thought it had to be) is a sickness, but also pregnant with possibility for the future.

Conscience as an instinct is a fact that cannot be ignored. This is not to say, however, that this instinct is not malleable. On the contrary, "Conscience changes according to the environment in which we live."⁶⁶ At this point Nietzsche's psychological determinism ends. Conscience, theoretically (though this is a practical impossibility) "neutral" at birth (i.e. given, but as yet unformed), develops in a direction determined by "the environment in which we live." This "environment," as Freud knew, consists at the earliest level of parents, meaning, as we have seen, that "The parents' influence naturally includes not merely the personalities of the parents themselves but also the racial, national and family traditions handed on through them as well as the demands of the immediate social milieu which they represent."⁶⁷ In other words, the social-historical-

cultural milieu into which a child is born and in which he grows shapes his conscience in accordance with the particular moral demand system under which it operates. (This should help us to appreciate more fully the rationale which motivated Nietzsche to a critique of morality.) Freud assumed that this "parental influence of necessity" amounted to a compendium of restrictions - and there is undeniably much historical evidence to support his assumption, his own time providing a choice example. And because he did not shrink from drawing the consequences of this assumption, he ended in pessimism. But Nietzsche, though fully aware of the mass of evidence to the contrary, made a claim for the possibility of a remissive conscience.

Man has, as a result of the "long, cruel process" of infancy during which he is dependent on and molded by others, acquired a conscience, a memory of the will. What kind of conscience it is, what sort of things he wills to remember depend upon who the "others" are and under what kind of moral demand system they live and act and judge. In the preceding chapter we saw that the dominant morality in our time and in our past has been an ascetic morality which, though it gave man a purpose, a meaning, a will, if allowed to have its way,

will deprive us of our bodies and lead us into a wasteland of pure intellectuality.

Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, animal-man, has had no meaning at all. His earthly existence had no goal. The question - what is man? - was left unanswered. The will to man and the earth was lacking. In the wake of every great human destiny, the refrain rang even louder - "In vain"! Therein lies the significance of the ascetic ideal - that something was missing, that a bottomless abyss surrounded man; he knew not how to justify himself, how to define and affirm himself; he suffered from the problem of his meaning. He also suffered from other things, being on the whole a sick animal. But suffering itself was not his problem; rather it was the fact that he had no answer to the gnawing question - "To what end suffering?" Man, the most courageous animal and the most accustomed to suffering, does not deny suffering; he wants it, he seeks it out, on the condition that it can be given a meaning, a purpose. The meaninglessness of suffering, not the suffering itself, was the curse that afflicted mankind. And the ascetic ideal offered it a meaning! It was its only meaning to-date. Any meaning is better than no meaning at all; the ascetic ideal was in every sense the "faute de mieux" par excellence. In it suffering was interpreted; the frightful emptiness seemed filled up; the door to all suicidal nihilism was shut. The interpretation - there can be no doubt - brought new suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-consuming suffering; it brought all suffering under the perspective of guilt. But in spite of all that, man was saved thereby; he had a meaning. He was no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of folly, of "absurdity." From now on he could will something, no matter at first what or why or how he willed: the will itself was saved. One cannot deny, however, just what it was that this willing which took its guidance from the ascetic ideal expressed: this hatred of the

human, the animal, the material; this loathing of the senses and of reason; this fear of happiness and beauty; this longing to be rid of all illusion, change, becoming, death, wishing, of longing itself. All this means, let us attempt to grasp it, a will to nothingness, a will against life, a revolt against the very foundations of life - yet it is and remains a will. And, to repeat at the end what I said at the beginning, man would rather will Nothing than not will at all.⁶⁸

It remains here to ask how Nietzsche was justified in making a claim for the possibility of a new conscience based on a remissive morality. And this takes us to his theory of sublimation.

IV

We know that Freud's theory of sublimation was inadequate to the task of discharging pent-up bodily drives in at least two closely related senses: in that sublimation entails the deflection of those drives to non-bodily fulfillment, which is to say, desexualization; and in that, to the extent that the drives are left unsatisfied, their backlog increases cumulatively. How is Nietzsche's theory different?

In a note above on the "cosmic implications" of will to power we quoted Nietzsche's conjecture about the possibility of the existence of "a pre-form of life," by which he meant "a more primitive form of the world of affects in which everything which later branches off

and develops into organic processes is still a powerful unity...as a kind of instinctual life in which all the organic functions are still bound up together with self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, secretion, and metabolism...."⁶⁹ Granted, Nietzsche was writing about the "mechanistic (read: material) world" in this passage; nevertheless, his approach is, as he himself reminds us in Ecce Homo, looking back at Beyond Good and Evil in which the words above appear, psychological. Thus, our suspicion that Nietzsche is describing indigenously human developments and then reading them into the non-human animal and physical universe (as he did before, into history) is not ungrounded. May we not take this "pre-form of life" to be the undifferentiated, unified animal life which precedes divided, neurotic human life? Assuming this to be a legitimate way of reading these words, let us clear the way to an understanding of Nietzsche's theory of sublimation by pointing out what it is that distinguishes this pre-form of (animal) life from the life of the human animal by focusing on Nietzsche's posture as an anti-Darwinian.

Nineteenth century biologists and philosophers up to and including Darwin and Spencer were at one in the view that life is essentially passive, that is, adaptive

Nietzsche mentions at one point,

...our current instincts and fashions...which would rather come to terms with the absolute contingency, even the mechanistic meaninglessness of all events than with the theory of the development of a will to power in these events.⁷⁰

Darwin had described the evolution of the species in terms of a struggle for existence and natural selection. With the former he was referring to the adaptation of an organism to its environment; "natural selection" denoted the process by which the environment tended to favor certain qualities of the organism. Spencer was in full agreement with Darwin's formulation of the process of natural selection, which he, however, preferred to call "the survival of the fittest." And he was anxious to lay great stress on the fact that life is essentially a continuous adaptation of inner relations to external impressions made on it. The organism continually adjusts itself to its environment and to changes introduced to it from the outside, thus preparing itself to meet subsequent changes and thus to survive them. (It is worth mentioning in passing that, in a similar way, Freud believed life to be basically conservative. "Though they (the instincts) are the ultimate cause of all activity, they are by nature conservative."⁷¹)

As we discovered in our examination of will to

power, Nietzsche saw life in a very different light.

The influence of "external circumstances" in Darwin is absurdly overestimated: the essence of the life process is precisely the prodigious organizing power creating forms from within, which takes advantage of, exploits the "external circumstances"...72

Of particular importance here is Nietzsche's emphasis on the forming, creating force which accompanies the will to increase, and which also comes from within. Further along in a section of Toward a Genealogy of Morals already cited Nietzsche writes, in an allusion to "the democratic aversion to anything that dominates or wishes to dominate,"

...it seems to me that this prejudice has already become master over the whole of physiology and the life sciences. To their detriment, of course, in that it has conjured away one of their basic concepts, namely that of activity, and put in its place, in keeping with the prejudice, the concept of "adaptation," that is, a second-rate activity, mere re-activity. Life itself has even been defined as an ever more purposeful inner adaptation to external circumstances (Herbert Spencer). This is, however, to misconstrue the very essence of life, its will to power. It is to overlook the priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, assailing, interpretive, directive, shaping powers, upon whose effect "adaptation" only subsequently supervenes. It is to deny the dominant role of the highest functions of the organism itself, in which the vital will appears active and form-giving.73

Here is the difference between primitive, unified animal life and detached, divided human life. The dominant

role of will to power in human life is that of shaping, "creating forms from within," or in the words of Zarathustra, "self-overcoming," i.e. commanding and obeying oneself.

I pursued the living; I walked the widest and the narrowest paths that I might know its nature. With a hundredfold mirror I still caught its glance when its mouth was closed, so that its eyes might speak to me. And its eyes spoke to me.

But wherever I found the living, there I heard also the speech on obedience. Whatever lives, obeys.

And this is the second point: he who cannot obey himself is commanded. That is the nature of the living.

This, however, is the third point that I heard: that commanding is harder than obeying; and not only because he who commands must carry the burden of all who obey, and because this burden may easily crush him. An experiment and hazard appeared to me to be in all commanding; and whenever the living commands, it hazards itself. Indeed, even when it commands itself, it must still pay for its commanding. It must become the judge, the avenger, and the victim of its own law. How does it happen? I asked myself. What persuades the living to obey and command, and to practice obedience even when it commands?

Hear, then, my word, you who are wisest. Test in all seriousness whether I have crawled into the very heart of life and into the very roots of its heart.

Where I found the living, there I found will to power; and even in the will of those who serve I found the will to be master.

That the weaker should serve the stronger, to that it is persuaded by its own will, which would be master over what is weaker still: this is the one pleasure it does not want to renounce. And as the smaller yields to the greater that it may have pleasure and power over the smallest, thus even the greatest still yields, and for the sake of power risks life. That is the yielding of the greatest: it is hazard and danger and casting dice for death.

And where men make sacrifices and serve and cast amorous glances, there too is the will to be master. Along stealthy paths the weaker steals into the castle and into the very heart of the more powerful - and there steals power.

And life itself confided this secret to me: "Behold," it said, "I am that which must always overcome itself. Indeed, you call it a will to procreate or a drive to an end, to something higher, farther, more manifold: but all this is one, and one secret.

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

"Whatever I create and however much I love it - soon I must oppose it and my love; thus my will wills it. And you too, lover of knowledge, are only a path and footprint of my will; verily my will to power walks also on the heels of your will to truth.

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

"There is much that life esteems more highly than life itself; but out of the esteeming speaks the will to power."

Thus life once taught me; and with this I shall yet solve the riddle of your heart, you who are wisest.⁷⁴

To help us understand what self-overcoming as sublimation might mean, let us first look at what it does not mean.

Walter Kaufmann offers us an apparently identical but actually very different interpretation of self-overcoming as sublimation. He sets the stage for his interpretation by posing two questions: how would Nietzsche picture the overcoming of the impulses? And how would he handle the special problem - which we touched on earlier - of a monistic, i.e. self-overcoming? He rightly isolates the problematic nature of sublimation when he asks,

Can one properly speak of the sublimation of one and the same impulse? Instead of doing one thing, a man does another - and the continuity of the original impulse seems problematic.⁷⁵

He thinks one can speak of the sublimation of one and the same impulse, by admitting that the energy of an impulse is nondescript and that its definition is dependent upon its objective. As Nietzsche maintained of will to power, it remains constant throughout, regardless how often its manifestations vary.

In other words, not only the energy remains but also the objective, power; and those so-called objectives which are canceled are only accidental attributes of this more basic striving: they are, to use one of Nietzsche's favorite terms, mere "foregrounds."⁷⁶ (I have translated Vorform as "pre-form")

Kaufmann proceeds to pit this theory of sublimation against that of Freud, concluding that

Nietzsche did not decide to reduce the will to power to a sexual libido; for sexuality is that very aspect of the basic drive which is canceled in sublimation and cannot, for that reason, be considered the essence of the drive. Sexuality is merely a foreground of something else which is more basic and hence preserved in sublimation: the will to power. The feeling of potency is essential, while its sexual manifestation is accidental....⁷⁷

Kaufmann summarizes the answer to his first question - how would Nietzsche picture the overcoming of the impulses? - by saying

Our impulses are in a state of chaos. ...No man can live without bringing some order into this chaos. This may be done by thoroughly weakening the whole organism or by repudiating and repressing many of the impulses: but the result in that case is not a "harmony," and the physis is castrated, not "improved." Yet there is another way - namely, to "organize the chaos": sublimation allows for the achievement of an organic harmony and leads to that culture which is truly a "transfigured physis."⁷⁸

In order to reconstruct Kaufmann's answer to his second question - how is self-overcoming (now, sublimation) possible if only one force, will to power, is

involved? - we must assume that, though Nietzsche is definitely operating with a monistic hypothesis, it is impossible to make sense of the metaphor "self-overcoming" without two elements.

...the simile of overcoming...implies the presence of two forces, one of which overcomes the other. "Self-overcoming" is conceivable and meaningful when the self is analyzed into two forces, such as reason and the inclinations. Apart from such a duality, apart from the picture of one force as overcoming and controlling another, self-overcoming seems impossible.⁷⁹

Nietzsche is, then, for Kaufmann, not a dualist, not just an ordinary monist, but a dialectical monist.

The crucial question arising from Kaufmann's argument at this point is: why the sudden appearance of reason as the second of the "two forces" motivating "the self"? Kaufmann attempts to answer this query by claiming that reason is a derivative of will to power.

Reason is the highest manifestation of the will to power, in the distinct sense that through rationality it can realize its objective most fully. ...While Nietzsche thus comes to the conclusion that reason is man's highest faculty, his view is not based on any other principle than the power standard. Reason is extolled not because it is the faculty which abstracts from the given, forms universal concepts, and draws inferences, but because these skills enable it to develop foresight and to give consideration to all the impulses, to organize their chaos, to integrate them into a harmony - and thus to give man power: power over himself and over nature.⁸⁰

Two elements are operative, according to Kaufmann, a lower (impulse, inclinations) and a higher (reason, rationality), but because both are manifestations of the same will to power, we must speak of the overcoming of impulse by reason as self-overcoming, i.e. sublimation. This is the formula for what Kaufmann (drawing on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics for support) calls acting "rationally on instinct."⁸¹

In other words, the truly rational man need not go to war against his impulses. If his reason is strong enough, he will naturally control his passions. He is, without being ostentatious, an ascetic - insofar as he does not yield to his impulses - but instead of extirpating them he masters and employs them.⁸²

In conclusion, Kaufmann quotes one of Nietzsche's notes dealing with this matter which is meant to clinch his argument, but which, on the contrary, best shows up its fallacy. We will use this quotation as a springboard to our critique of Kaufmann's position.

The whole conception of the rank of the passions: as if it were right and normal to be led by reason, while the passions are considered abnormal...and nothing but desires for pleasure. Thus passion is degraded 1. as if it were only in unseemly cases, and not necessarily and always, that which activates; 2. insofar as it is taken to aim at something which has no great value, namely mere amusement.

This misunderstanding of passion and reason, as if the latter existed as an entity by itself,

and not rather as a state of the relations between different passions and desires; and as if every passion did not contain in itself its own quantum of reason.⁸³

Kaufmann's intention to convince his reader that Nietzsche was not an irrationalist is, when not explicit, never far beneath the surface of his work. And on the whole it has done much to clear the air of at least the attacks on Nietzsche based on ignorance. But in the specific instance with which we are now dealing, Kaufmann's good intention leads him to introduce reason uncritically into the discussion as the second of the "two forces" in the process of self-overcoming. His assumption that because the traditional dualism of reason and impulse had been discredited, and because for Nietzsche life was essentially will to power, Nietzsche would have to ground the previously separate pair in his monistic will to power, is unfounded. He is right in saying that because of the death of God, Nietzsche "felt obliged also to question the supernatural origin of reason," and that "he had to account for reason in terms of will to power."⁸⁴ But Nietzsche gives us no cause to assume that reason will necessarily be one of the two forces in his self-overcoming will to power. In fact, the contrary is true; his questioning of reason goes deeper than the negative discovery that it is

not of supernatural origin. Moreover, he makes it all but impossible not to assume that it is the instinct of conscience which is that agent of will to power by which it overcomes itself.

Nietzsche was indeed no irrationalist. But neither did he extol rationality as "man's highest faculty."⁸⁵ He did identify "the hatred of reason with bad intellectual conscience,"⁸⁶ (my italics) as Kaufmann puts it; but this did not drive him to the opposite, equally dangerous extreme, of a belief in reason. Reason was, for Nietzsche, as we noted above, "a state of the relations between different passions and desires."⁸⁷ His questioning of reason led him to the discovery that "trust in reason...is, as trust, a moral phenomenon."⁸⁸ Furthermore, Kaufmann's assertion that "the truly rational man...will naturally control his passions"⁸⁹ fails to do justice to what is anything but a "natural" process, in the sense implied here, namely "effortless" - "if his (man's) reason is strong enough...."⁹⁰ For both Nietzsche and Freud, the "socialization" of man and the sublimation of his instincts which offers the only healthy alternative to outright repression of them is, as we have noticed, a long, cruel, painful process.

If we wish to understand how Kaufmann mistook conscience for rationality, we must look at two key words,

Geist and Vernunft, both of which Kaufmann renders as "reason" (which he uses interchangeably with "rationality"). He himself points out: "This evaluation of Geist is so vital a point in Nietzsche's philosophy that one cannot overlook it without misapprehending Nietzsche's thought."⁹¹ Geist is admittedly an ambiguous word (there are at least a dozen possible equivalents in English of the noun form alone), the translation of which must depend largely on the context in which it is used. In this case, however, Nietzsche has told us explicitly, in the course of one of his "Anti-Darwin" polemics, how he uses the word,

One must need spirit to acquire spirit; one loses it when one no longer needs it. Whoever has strength dispenses with spirit.... It will be noted that by "spirit" (Geist) I mean caution, patience, cunning, simulation, great self-control, and everything that is mimicry....⁹² (This translation is, with the exception of one slight alteration - I have rendered Vorsicht "caution" instead of "care" - Kaufmann's own.)

The negative tone of this passage is unmistakable.

There can surely be no doubt that what Nietzsche means by Geist is not "reason" but "mimicry," or, to use other possible English equivalents of Geist, "wit," "imagination," "cleverness." And what Darwin meant by "mimicry" is the process by which an organism assumes

the resemblance of its environment or another organism for purposes of protection. "Foresight (translated "care" in the passage just cited) and patience, and above all 'great self-mastery'" are, to be sure, "according to Nietzsche, of the very essence of Geist." ⁹³ But far from lauding them as the clue to the self-overcoming of will to power, Nietzsche satirizes them - "Whoever has strength dispenses with Geist." ⁹⁴ This is the point.

And yet not merely strength is important. For, as we heard Nietzsche say in what is only now revealing itself as the passage which holds the key to an understanding of self-overcoming as sublimation, "when the degree of worthiness of being honored is to be determined, only the degree of reason in strength is decisive: one must measure in how far strength has been overcome by something higher and now serves that as its tool and means!" ⁹⁵ Strength (will to power) is worthy of being honored only to the degree that it has been overcome and given shape by the reason (Vernunft, not Geist) which is in it - self-overcoming.

In what sense are we to understand "reason" in this context? In an unpublished note cited by Kaufmann (note 84 above) Nietzsche refers to "the misunderstanding

of passion and reason (Vernunft), as if the latter existed as an entity by itself, and not rather as a state of the relations between different passions and desires; and as if every passion did not contain in itself its own quantum of reason (Vernunft)."⁹⁶ Here we have a similar use of reason in strength or passion. Vernunft, though less ambiguous than Geist, can also be rendered into English by several different equivalents: reason and intellect, but also judgment, discernment, understanding. It is my contention that it is in the latter sense that Nietzsche is using Vernunft in these passages, that is, loosely rendered, in the sense of "being reasonable, exercising discretion, "using good sense."

In tracing the development of Nietzsche's theory of conscience, we came to see conscience as a part of will to power which is forced to split off during the time when men are being "made sociable," i.e. during infancy, and take up a position as mediator between will to power and the external world. On the basis of this development we can now claim that "the degree of reason in strength" is another way of saying "the degree of conscience in will to power." In short, decisive is the extent to which the impatient and intemperate demands made by animal-man's will to power have been

brought under the guiding, shaping, molding influence of "something higher," namely, that dominant instinct, conscience.

Perhaps the single most unconvincing aspect of Kaufmann's argument for the self-overcoming will to power as the overcoming of the impulses by rationality is that it leads straight to the dilemma which drove Freud to pessimism - the progressive desexualization of the body and pure intellectuality (reine Geistigkeit). Kaufmann rests his argument on the proposition that "Sexuality is not basic...." He continues, in passage cited above,

Nietzsche did not decide to reduce the will to power to a sexual libido; for sexuality is that very aspect of the basic drive which is canceled in sublimation and cannot, for that reason, be considered the essence of the drive. Sexuality is merely a foreground of something else which is more basic and hence preserved in sublimation: the will to power. The feeling of potency is essential, while its sexual manifestation is accidental....⁹⁷

To say that libido is an accidental manifestation of an essential will to power is to take Freud too seriously (that is, too narrowly, too literally) and Nietzsche not seriously enough. In his Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, Freud defined "libido" thus:

Libido is an expression taken from the theory of the emotions. We call by that name the energy...of those instincts which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word "love." The nucleus of what we mean by love naturally consists (and this is what is commonly called love, and what the poets sing of) in sexual love with sexual union as its aim. But we do not separate from this - what in any case has a share in the name "love" - on the one hand, self-love, and on the other, love for parents and children, friendship, and love for humanity in general, and also devotion to concrete objects and to abstract ideas. ...We are of the opinion, then, that language has carried out an entirely justifiable piece of unification in creating the word "love" with its numerous uses, and that we cannot do better than take it as the basis of our scientific discussions and expositions as well....⁹⁸

And for Nietzsche, as the following chapter is designed to show, will to power in men can be conceived of only in terms of their bodies. Suffice it to say here what "the awakened and the knowing" say in Thus Spoke Zarathustra: "body am I entirely, and nothing else...."⁹⁹ Or, better, let Nietzsche speak for himself: "There is so unspeakably much more in that which has been called 'body' and 'flesh'; the rest is only trimming."¹⁰⁰ As we saw in our comparison of Nietzsche's will to power and Freud's theory of instincts, libido and will to power are identical. It is not a matter of "sexuality" in Freud versus "power" in Nietzsche; both men "start with the body and use it as a guide" because of their

conviction, to use Nietzsche's words, that "it is the much richer phenomenon, which affords clearer observations. Belief in the body is easier to confirm than belief in Geist."101

The overcoming of the impulses by rationality, whether dualistically or dialectically, is the prescription offered by the scientific, scholarly spirit who, all appearances to the contrary, warms himself at the fire of the ascetic ideal. The absolute will to truth with which Nietzsche characterizes the scientific spirit is motivated by

the belief in the ascetic ideal itself...the belief in a metaphysical value, the value of truth as such as founded in and guaranteed by that ideal alone (it stands or falls with that ideal). There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as science "without assumptions." The thought of such a science is unthinkable, paralogistic. A philosophy, a "faith, must always precede it to give it a direction, a meaning, a method, a right to exist. Science itself now requires a justification (which is not to say that one can be found). Let us look at the most ancient and the most modern philosophies with this question in mind. In none of them is there an awareness that the will to truth itself requires a justification. Here is a gap in every philosophy. Why is that? Because the ascetic ideal has always been the master of all philosophy; because truth was given - as Being, as God, as Truth; because truth was never allowed to become a problem. Do you understand this "allowed"? From that moment on in which belief in the ascetic ideal is denied, there is a new problem - the problem of the value of truth. The will to truth

requires a critique...; the value of truth must tentatively be called into question. ...No, let no one speak to me of science when I ask for the natural antagonist to the ascetic ideal, when I ask: "Where is the opposing will which expresses an opposing ideal?" For that, science is not nearly independent enough. It needs in every way an ideal, a value-creating power, in whose service it may believe in itself; science itself never creates values. Its relation to the ascetic ideal is in no way antagonistic. In fact, it would probably be nearer the truth to say that it provides the driving force for the inner interpretation of the ascetic ideal. The contradiction and struggle of science with the ascetic ideal has, upon closer examination, no bearing at all on the ideal itself, but only on its effects, its veils and masks, and on its occasional hardening, petrification, and dogmatization. Science sets the life of the ascetic ideal free again by denying what is exoteric to it. These two, science and the ascetic ideal, stand on common ground...namely the same over-estimation of truth (or more accurately, the same belief that the value of truth is inestimable, and that truth is not susceptible of criticism); and this makes them inevitable allies. Therefore, if they are to be opposed, they can always only be opposed and called into question together. An assessment of the value of the ascetic ideal entails unavoidably an assessment of the value of science, and it is time we woke up to this fact! ... Even physiologically, science rests on the same ground as the ascetic ideal. A certain impoverishment of life is necessary in both instances - the passions must be cooled, the tempo slowed, dialectics put in place of instincts, earnestness stamped on face and gestures (earnestness, this unmistakable sign of a more laborious metabolism, of life struggling, working harder). ...No, "modern science"...is for the time being the best ally of the ascetic ideal, precisely because it is the least conscious, least willing, most secret and most subterranean of allies!102

The rationalization of will to power was not the "way out" Nietzsche envisaged for man, who suffers and atrophies, or intellectualizes his aggression in the straitjacket of bad conscience. At the end of Human, All-too-Human Nietzsche describes the ascetic ideal and its perverted progeny thus:

Man has had many chains put on him in order that he might learn to stop behaving like a beast. And really, he has grown milder, more spiritual, more joyful, more circumspect than all other animals. But he still suffers from having borne his chains and from having lacked fresh air and free movement for so long. These chains - I repeat it again and again - were those heavy and pregnant errors of moral, religious and metaphysical conceptions. Not until he has recovered from the chain-disease has the first main goal been reached - the separation of man from beast. We are now in the midst of removing the chains, and we must exercise the greatest care.¹⁰³

These chains have, as we have seen, made man into an animal with a memory of the will, a creature possessing the unique privilege of responsibility, the ability to make promises. But until he can throw off the chains and recover from having borne them, he will not be free to exercise to the full his new memory and privilege. And for this he needs a new kind of conscience.

Man has looked far too long on his natural inclinations with an "evil eye," so that they have become for him intimately connected with "bad conscience." A converse endeavor is conceivable..., namely the associating of the unnatural inclinations - all those aspirations to a beyond, everything anti-sensual, anti-

instinctual, anti-natural, anti-animal; in short, the hitherto existing ideals, which are altogether hostile to life and slanderous of the world - with bad conscience.¹⁰⁴

We must unlearn this bad conscience just as we learned it.¹⁰⁵

What Nietzsche means by a new kind of conscience is the subject of Chapter 8. But first we must follow up "The Clue of the Body" - Nietzsche's alternative to pure intellectuality.

NOTES

- 1) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 799.
- 2) Toward a Genealogy of Morals was written in twenty days, from July 10 to 30, 1887.
- 3) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 768.
- 4) Ibid., p. 765.
- 5) Ibid., p. 771.
- 6) Ibid., p. 774.
- 7) Ibid., pp. 772-73.
- 8) Ibid., pp. 729-32. This translation is R. J. Hollingdale's. See his Nietzsche. The Man and His Philosophy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 224-26.
- 9) Ibid., I, p. 483.
- 10) Ibid., II, pp. 774-75.
- 11) Ibid., p. 782.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) Ibid., p. 779.
- 14) Ibid., p. 778.
- 15) Ibid., pp. 779-80.
- 16) Ibid., pp. 777-78.
- 17) Ibid., I, pp. 211-12.
- 18) Ibid., II, p. 799.
- 19) Ibid.
- 20) Ibid., p. 800.
- 21) Ibid., I, p. 1019.

- 22) Ibid., p. 504.
- 23) Ibid., pp. 1019-20.
- 24) Ibid., II, p. 801.
- 25) Ibid. Nietzsche's claim that "new" instincts may evolve in the living organism strong enough to exist on a par with and compete with so-called "natural instincts" has, until recently, seemed to many scholars incredible. But findings in the field of ethology have lent new life to this idea, which is called by ethologists "ritualization." Konrad Lorenz writes: "What I have here tried to show is the inestimably important fact that by the process of phylogenetic ritualization a new and completely autonomous instinct may evolve which is, in principle, just as independent as any of the so-called 'great' drives such as hunger, sex, fear or aggression, and which--like these--has its seat in the great parliament of instincts." On Aggression, trans. Marjorie Latzke (University paperback ed.; London: Methuen, 1967), p. 56.
- 26) Ibid., p. 804.
- 27) Ibid.
- 28) Ibid., p. 805. Nietzsche is operating on the assumption that "No phase of civilization, regardless how primitive, has been discovered in which that relation (creditor/debtor) did not to some extent exist." (Ibid., p. 811) Norman O. Brown, evaluating Nietzsche's proposition from the vantage of psychoanalysis, reverses the relation of debt and guilt, "ought" and "owe" and begins where Nietzsche ends, namely with the words, the "custom character of morality"--and derives trade and indebtedness in the economic sector from conscience and guilt.

Psychoanalysis can accept the idea that the sense of indebtedness to ancestors is the governing idea of the religion of self-sacrifice. Psychoanalysis can accept the idea that the religion of self-sacrifice is the cause of the life (and economy) of instinctual repression and renunciation (non-enjoyment), and that the religion of self-sacrifice

is cumulative in its effects. Freud explains the process in Civilization and Its Discontents better than Nietzsche, by invoking Nietzsche's other ideas, the convertibility of sadism and masochism, and the derivation of the whole complex from the repression of life in the present. The repression of full enjoyment in the present inevitably releases aggression against those ancestors out of love of whom the repression was instituted. Aggression against those simultaneously loved is guilt. And the more fully the debt to the past is paid, the more complete are its inroads on the enjoyment of life in the present; but then fresh quantities of aggression are released, bringing fresh quantities of guilt.

Whatever the ultimate explanation of guilt may be, we put forward the hypothesis that the whole money complex is rooted in the psychology of guilt. ... Since...we must abandon Nietzsche's notion (the old Adam Smith notion) that trade is an aboriginal human institution, we must reverse his explanation of the semantic facts and derive trade from guilt.

(Life Against Death (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1959), pp. 267-68). Brown's version of the relation of economic to psychological indebtedness is more plausible than Nietzsche's, for reasons which we cannot go into here. For our purposes, the inversion of cause and effect does not alter the basic insight, namely that "owe" and "ought" are of a piece and can be understood only in relation to each other.

- 29) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 806.
- 30) Ibid., p. 807.
- 31) Ibid., p. 808.
- 32) Ibid., p. 802.
- 33) Ibid., pp. 822-23.
- 34) Ibid., p. 824.
- 35) Ibid., pp. 824-25.

- 36) Ibid., pp. 826-27.
- 37) Ibid., p. 830. An early formulation of this same notion reads: "Now every tradition (Herkommen) becomes more and more venerable, the farther away one gets from one's origins, the more one forgets them. The veneration given them accumulates from generation to generation until finally they become sacred and inspire reverence." Ibid., I, pp. 504-505.
- 38) Ibid., II, p. 832. See Section III of Chapter 4 above for our discussion of Freud's almost identical claim that "the sense of guilt...was reinforced once more by every piece of aggressiveness that was suppressed and carried over to the super-ego."
- 39) Ibid.
- 40) Ibid., pp. 832-33.
- 41) Ibid., pp. 833-34.
- 42) Ibid., p. 826.
- 43) Ibid., p. 829.
- 44) Technically, "conscience" and "super-ego" should not be equated. Freud speaks of the super-ego as the agency itself (described below), conscience as one of the conscious functions of that agency. Nevertheless, "conscience" and all that it connotes is undoubtedly the primary function of the super-ego; thus, we do not misconstrue the meaning if we use the two terms interchangeably.
- 45) Sigmund Freud, An Outline of Psychoanalysis, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 4.
- 46) Ibid., p. 3.
- 47) Ibid., p. 77.
- 48) Ibid., p. 4.
- 49) Ibid., p. 77-78.
- 50) Ibid., pp. 79-80.

- 51) This development is less obvious in Freud's formulation of it, though no less true. The super-ego originates in the id in the sense that life is basically id. Both the ego and the super-ego (ego-ideal) develop from the id, the ego as an intermediary between the id and the infant's new surroundings (the external world), the super-ego as a further development (in fact, a splitting) of the ego.
- 52) *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 53) Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," in A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. John Rickman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1957), p. 117.
- 54) *Ibid.*
- 55) See note 38 above.
- 56) The phrase is Sandor Ferenczi's, the insight Nietzsche's and Freud's. See Norman O. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 173: "And since the dialectic of sublimation in civilization is cumulative, cumulatively abstract and cumulatively deadening, Freud's (and Nietzsche's) intuition that civilization move towards the primacy of intellect and the atrophy of sexuality is correct. At the end of the road is pure intelligence, and, in the aphoristic formula of Ferenczi, 'Pure intelligence is a product of dying, or at least of becoming mentally insensitve.'"
- 57) Philip Rieff discusses Freud's psychological determinism and his reliance on the analogical method for explaining social-historical phenomena in "History, Psychoanalysis, and the Social Sciences," Ethics (1953), pp. 107-20.
- 58) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 587.
- 59) *Ibid.*, p. 778.
- 60) *Ibid.*, p. 829.
- 61) *Ibid.*, p. 804.
- 62) *Ibid.*, p. 824-25.

- 63) Ibid., p. 827.
- 64) Freud, Introduction..., p. 77.
- 65) See note 45 above: "A super-ego must be presumed to be present wherever, as in the case of man, there is a long period of dependence in childhood."
- 66) Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Musanion Ausgabe) (München, 1920-29), XVI, p. 237.
- 67) Freud, Introduction..., p. 4.
- 68) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 899-900.
- 69) Ibid., pp. 600-601.
- 70) Ibid., pp. 819-20.
- 71) Freud, Introduction..., p. 5
- 72) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 889. Arthur Danto maintains that Nietzsche's anti-Darwin utterances, of which there are many, especially in his unpublished notes, are not worth serious consideration because he thinks they are based on a pun and a misunderstanding. He quotes Nietzsche's words in Twilight of the Idols:

As regards the famous struggle for existence (Kampf ums Leben), it seems to me that this is asserted rather than proved. It takes place, but it is the exception. The general aspect of life is not need, nor starvation, but far more richness, profusion, even an absurd prodigality. Where there is struggle, there is struggle for power." (Ibid., II, pp. 998-99)

Danto comments:

This is the pun to which I refer. The word 'existence' is slightly twisted from its usage as in connection with 'living' to its usage in connection with 'living well' or 'living poorly'--from a philosophical to an economic sense. So the twist misleads. It suggests that we should not so much try to continue in life ('to exist') as to sacrifice ourselves for something else, perhaps power, life not being worthwhile on any other terms. But there

is no life without power, on his theory, and he is plainly not suggesting some heroic course. It goes without saying that creatures strive to persevere in existence. It does not follow that they strive to persevere in a marginal existence. It would be the latter that he is attacking, but then no one ever really held to such a view. (Nietzsche As Philosopher (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 224).

Though I agree that Nietzsche is often misled into attacking the latter, non-existent view, my point has been to show that there is something else in the views of Darwin (and Spencer) that he is legitimately criticizing, namely the basically reactive character of organic life.

- 73) Ibid., II, pp. 819-20. See also in this regard Nietzsche's warning! "Physiologists should ponder the establishing of the 'drive for preservation' as the cardinal drive of a living organism. A living thing wants, first of all, to spend its energy; 'preservation' is only one of the consequences of this. Beware of superfluous teleological principles! And thither belongs the whole concept of 'drive for preservation.'" (Ibid., III, p. 504) Nietzsche's point is being corroborated by recent research in ethology. See especially Konrad Lorenz, On Aggression, "The Spontaneity of Aggression," Evans. Marjorie Latzke (University paperback ed.; London: Methuen, 1967).
- 74) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 370-72.
- 75) Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Meridian paperback ed.; Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., June 1963), p. 190.
- 76) Ibid., pp. 190-91.
- 77) Ibid., p. 192.
- 78) Ibid., pp. 196-97.
- 79) Ibid., pp. 185-86.
- 80) Ibid., p. 199.

- 81) Ibid., p. 202.
- 82) Ibid., p. 203.
- 83) Nietzsche, Werke, III, pp. 647-48.
- 84) Kaufmann, op. cit., pp. 198-99.
- 85) Ibid., p. 199.
- 86) Ibid.
- 87) See note 83 above. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche put it this way: "Thinking is only a relation (Verhalten) of these (our) drives to one another." (Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 600).
- 88) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 1014.
- 89) Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 203.
- 90) Ibid.
- 91) Ibid., p. 199.
- 92) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 999.
- 93) Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 199.
- 94) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 999.
- 95) Ibid., I, p. 1268.
- 96) Ibid., III, p. 648.
- 97) Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 192.
- 98) Freud, A General Selection..., p. 177.
- 99) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 300.
- 100) Ibid., III, p. 681.
- 101) Ibid., p. 476.
- 102) Ibid., II, pp. 890-93.

- 103) Ibid., I, p. 1006.
- 104) Ibid., II, p. 836.
- 105) Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Musanion Ausgabe)
(München, 1920-29), XI, p. 364.

III. The Clue of the Body.

7. der Leib--the physiological doctrine of the body.

They despised the body; they did not take it into account. Even more, they treated it as an enemy. Their madness was the belief that one could carry a "beautiful soul" around in a monstrous cadaver.¹

Is there any mistake more dangerous than despising the body?²

--Nietzsche

When will the harmony return, when will the world recover from the one-sided striving for spiritualization (Vergeistigung), the insane error by virtue of which both the soul and the body fell ill?³

--Heine

I

Nietzsche's courageous insistence on treating morality as a problem led him into the equally little-explored territory of man as a problem. Under the rubric, "Man as a Problem to Himself," Reinhold Niebuhr has written:

If man insists that he is a child of nature and that he ought not to pretend to be more than an animal, which he obviously is, he tacitly admits that he is, at any rate, a curious kind of animal who has both the inclination and the capacity to make such pretensions. If on the other hand he insists upon his unique and distinctive place in nature and points to his rational faculties as proof of his special eminence, there is usually an anxious note in his avowals of uniqueness which betrays his unconscious sense of kinship with the brutes.

...the very effort to estimate the significance of his rational faculties implies a degree of transcendence over himself which is not fully defined or explained in what is usually connoted by "reason." For the man who weighs the importance of his rational faculties is in some sense more than "reason" and has capacities which transcend the ability to form general concepts.⁴

This way of posing the problem, while appearing at first glance to be little more than a neat summary of the traditional question concerning the seemingly paradoxical simultaneity of man's congruity and incongruity with the other animals, turns out upon closer examination to be a much more fruitful way of putting it. For in Niebuhr's formulation there are three facets of the problem, not just the usual two. First, man is an animal; second, man is the animal which can sublimate his animality rationally; finally, however, man is able to back away yet again from himself, this time transcending, observing, contemplating even his own rationality. Thus, it is not man's rational faculty that distinguishes him from the other animals, but his "special capacity of standing continually outside himself in terms of indefinite regression."⁵ This is, one way of stating the Biblical (that is, spiritual and monistic) view, in contradistinction to the classical (that is, rational and dualistic) view. And

it avoids the negative judgment placed on the body in consequence of the classical mind/body dualism. As Niebuhr puts it, "The Bible knows nothing of a good mind and an evil body."⁶ Indeed, the Biblical creation story in Genesis 1 is unequivocal in this regard in its assertion that "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good."⁷

The consequence of this conception of the world upon the view of human nature in Christian thought is to allow an appreciation of the unity of body and soul in human personality which idealists and naturalists have sought in vain. Furthermore it prevents the idealistic error of regarding the mind as essentially good or essentially eternal and the body as essentially evil. But it also obviates the romantic error of seeking for the good in man-as-nature and for evil in man-as-spirit or as reason. Man is, according to the Biblical view, a created and finite existence in both body and spirit.⁸

That man is a unity of body and spirit is, I submit, what Nietzsche is suggesting with his use of the word "body" (Leib).

II

In the two preceding chapters we glanced at Nietzsche's broodings on the origin of the scientific spirit (Wissenschaftlichkeit), his dissatisfaction with science (Wissenschaft) and its practitioners, "theoretical man,"⁹ and his conviction that man's rational faculties, while by no means unimportant, only brushed the

surface of the life of man. It is perhaps worth dwelling a bit longer on what tends to be a sore point of misunderstanding about Nietzsche, namely, that he was no irrationalist.

His was an intuitive mind, which, contrary to our popular prejudices, is not to say "unscientific." He had many good things to say about science and the scientific spirit, among the most revealing for his own outlook being these:

That which is best and healthiest in science, as in the mountains, is the keen air that blows in it.¹⁰

On the whole, scientific methods are at least as important a result of research as anything else. For the scientific spirit is based on insight into method....¹¹

He speaks elsewhere of the "strictness of science,"¹² which can be frightening to the uninitiated, but which the initiated treasure for the clarity, the lucidity it affords.

Nor are such sentiments limited to Nietzsche's so-called "middle positivistic period." Science is, throughout Nietzsche's work, a method, a way of doing one's intellectual work, a means, but never an end in itself. As we heard him say already, "science itself never creates values."¹³ Thus it is the belief of science in itself, and the moral trust fostered by

this belief that science is more than a method; that it can, after debunking our "childish" beliefs, put other beliefs in their place, which Nietzsche sees as having a pernicious effect both on science and upon the way we view and live our lives.

...there is no alternative; we must again do everything for ourselves, and only for ourselves. (We must), for example, measure science against ourselves with the question: what is science to us? Not, however: what are we to science?¹⁴

It is, in short, the tyranny of science, the uncritical belief in science, the inability to see science as a problem, to which Nietzsche objects.

John Wren-Lewis has recently taken up this point in his criticism of "the classical approach to the teaching of science (which) allows even some scientists ...to go on thinking of scientific theories as 'explanations of phenomena', in which the gods and spiritual forces of occult tradition are simply replaced by quanta, force-fields and the like, whereas a proper emphasis on method would make it clear that the modern theories are never more than models to suggest new lines of practical action, and therefore capable of being discarded at any time in favour of radically new models in a way which would be impossible if they were attempts to express the hidden truth behind phenomena."¹⁵

Wren-Lewis also places renewed emphasis on the view, the originality of which he erroneously (as we know, having listened to Nietzsche) attributes to C. P. Snow, that it is precisely the experimental method of modern science that is the crucial factor.

It does not mean 'proving your theories by experimental test'. It is a commonplace in philosophy that nothing can ever be proved by experimental test, because an infinite number of tests would be required. What you can do is to disprove theories, and the essential feature of the experimental method is that it sets up artificial situations especially designed to disprove the chosen theory if possible. This, and this alone, makes radically new departures and developments in theory possible, but it carries an implication - namely, that experience is itself reliable knowledge in a sense that none of our ideas can ever be.¹⁰

The concluding italicized words could have been written by Nietzsche himself.

Besides his positive utterances about science and the spirit of inquiry, there is also the negative evidence that Nietzsche, though he agreed that man is the sick animal, did not seek the origin of that sickness in man's propensity to think, calculate, conceptualize, deduce. The last century-and-a-half have seen men as dissimilar as Soren Kierkegaard, D. H. Lawrence, and Wilhelm Reich defend the thesis that it is precisely man's consciousness that is the culprit. In his review,

The Present Age, Kierkegaard begins, "Our age is essentially one of understanding and reflection, without passion...."¹⁷ His brilliant analysis of this passionless reflection discovers it to be envious ("the idea of reflection is...envy...."¹⁸) and "a snare in which one is caught...."¹⁹ Lawrence too, while not confining man's sickness strictly to reflection, believed that sin began with consciousness.

When Adam went and took Eve, after the apple, he didn't do any more than he had done many a time before, in act. But in consciousness he did something very different. So did Eve. Each of them kept an eye on what they were doing, they watched what was happening to them. They wanted to KNOW. And that was the birth of sin. Not doing it, but KNOWING about it. Before the apple, they had shut their eyes and their minds had gone dark. Now, they peeped and pried and imagined. They watched themselves. And they felt uncomfortable after. They felt self-conscious. So they said, "The act is sin. Let's hide. We've sinned."²⁰

Reich shared with Kierkegaard the Hegelian method of analysis, with Lawrence the idealization of the orgasm.

Philip Rieff has written, paraphrasing Reich:

...man began to think when he felt threatened by his own instinctual energies, perceiving them as alien. To protect himself against his own inner fright, the poor primitive hedged himself round with ideas. He began to philosophize, and so made himself ill. The turning of reasoning toward itself induced the first emotional blocking in man. In short, at the moment he began to philosophize, man became the sick animal, thinking his disease.²¹

For Nietzsche, as we sought to show in the preceding chapter, it is not thinking nor even the consciousness that encompasses thinking which is the source of man's disease. Man did not fall ill when he began to reflect, to know, to think, but when he was forced into the mould of sociability; in Nietzsche's language, when his will to power was compelled at birth to turn against itself, when conscience emerged as arbiter between his will to power and his new surroundings.

But let us end this parenthetical warning about branding Nietzsche an irrationalist and delve a bit more deeply into his reasons for thinking it necessary to "get beyond" rationality. Let us place rationality in its larger context and look at Nietzsche's views on consciousness, an exercise which will provide the necessary preliminaries for a look at what he means by "body."

To begin by restating the above warning in this broader context: Nietzsche is not a prophet of the unconscious, at any rate not in the negative sense usually implied by that label. His statements that consciousness is man's "scantiest and most unreliable organ,"²² that "consciousness is superficial,"²³ are to be read, not as negative praise of the unconscious, but as criti-

cisms of our "ridiculous over-estimation and misunderstanding of consciousness."²⁴

Consciousness is the latest development of the organism, and consequently also the most immature and powerless part of it. Countless errors spring from consciousness which cause an animal, a man to perish sooner than would be necessary, "in spite of fate," as Homer says. If the preserving bond of the instincts were not extremely more powerful, it (consciousness) could not serve the whole as regulator. With its wrong-headed judging and day-dreaming, with its superficiality and gullibility; in short, with its consciousness man would have to have perished. Or, rather, without the former, the latter would long since have ceased to exist. ...One thinks, here is the essence of man, that about him which is enduring, eternal, final, most original! One believes consciousness to be a firmly given quantity! Denies its growth, its failures! Takes it to be the "unity of the organism"! This ridiculous over-estimation and misunderstanding of consciousness results in the advantageous hindering of an overly-hasty development of consciousness. Because men believed themselves already in possession of consciousness, they took few pains to acquire it - and it is no different today! It is still an entirely new, barely recognizable task, only just beginning to dawn upon man: to embody (einverleiben) our knowledge and make it instinctive.²⁵

According to Nietzsche, consciousness is a product of human need, the need to communicate: "...the development of language and the development of consciousness...go hand in hand,"²⁶ and consequently, consciousness belongs not to man's individual existence but to his social existence. "Consciousness is there to the extent that consciousness is useful."²⁷ It follows, then, that consciousness,

as but one of the facets of the human need to communicate, cannot be appealed to as an arbiter of values; much less so rationality, which is but a part of consciousness.

...the largest part of conscious thinking must be classified as instinctual activity, even in the case of philosophical thinking. We will have to change our views on this, just as we changed our minds concerning heredity and "inherited characteristics." "Consciousness" is just as little opposed to the instincts in any decisive sense as the event of birth is of importance to the whole process and progress of heredity. Most of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly guided and canalized by his instincts. Even behind all logic and its apparent freedom of movement stand value judgments; or, to put it more plainly, physiological demands for preserving a certain type of life.²⁸

The unconscious veiling of physiological needs in the mask of the objective, the ideal, the purely intellectual, goes to alarming lengths. I have often asked myself whether, considering everything, all philosophy to-date has been no more than an exposition of the body and a misunderstanding of the body. ...It is possible to see all those audacious follies of metaphysics, especially its answer to the question concerning the value of existence, as symptoms of certain bodies....²⁹

Consciousness is a means, no more and no less; and insofar as it is useful as an aid to the enhancement of life, it should be employed. But on no account should it be mistaken for a criterion for assessing the value of life, not to mention the "highest" criterion. Even to conceive of it as a separate "organ" over against the

unconscious, except for purposes of analysis, distorts the wholeness of man and creates the illusion of divided life.

We philosophers are not at liberty to distinguish between body and soul, as ordinary people do; still less are we at liberty to distinguish between soul and intellect. We are not thinking frogs, not dispassionate objectivity- and recording-devices with bowels suspended. We must continually give birth to our thoughts in pain and impart to them, as a mother, everything we have in us of blood, heart, fire, joy, passion, torment, conscience, fate and destiny.³⁰

The antithesis, conscious/unconscious, was, of course, not invented by Freud. "The discovery of the unconscious by self-conscious man occupied some two centuries, roughly from 1700 to 1900."³¹ And psychoanalysis was, in a sense, the culmination of "the new interest in the problem of consciousness and the role of the unconscious,"³² which emerged in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The antithesis itself was, nevertheless, given currency by Freud and is today, as a result of his attempt to understand human mental processes in terms of this dichotomy, largely taken for granted. Freud's own definitions of "conscious" and "unconscious" were these:

Now let us call "conscious" the conception which is present to our consciousness and of which we are aware, and let this be the only meaning of the term "conscious."³³

The term unconscious...designates not only latent ideas in general, but especially ideas with a certain dynamic character, ideas keeping apart from consciousness in spite of their intensity and activity.³⁴

As the wording of the latter definition shows, for Freud, the unconscious "is inferred always in negative terms," it is "all that unconsciousness is not."³⁵

This division of man into two spheres and the concomitant belief, expressed in Freud's contention that the goal of psychotherapy is to make the unconscious conscious; that is, that the patient, knowing (read: conscious of, aware of) the good, will also do the good, reveals the indebtedness of psychoanalysis, indeed, of the whole of psychotherapy, to the classical doctrine of man.³⁶ Before taking a closer look at Nietzsche's body-monism, let us examine, first and briefly, the Greek origins of this dualism, and second, the Biblical origins of "western" monism.

III

The classical psyche/body dualism³⁷ received many different formulations, dating probably from Anaxagoras' distinction between mind and matter³⁸ and kept alive by thinkers who belong to what may be called, for our purposes, the Platonic-Enlightenment tradition.

Socrates endeavored unsuccessfully to convince his fellows "that the psyche was the seat of the moral

and intellectual faculties and of far greater importance than the body."³⁹ Plato seconded his master's conviction by harking back to the Pythagoreans and reaffirming their mystical-religious belief in the immortality of the soul. Even for Aristotle, though he did recognize that a study of life must begin not with metaphysics but with physics and physiology, "The doctrine of form and matter has the last word."⁴⁰ "...it is as if the body were the instrument through which a particular life or soul expresses itself."⁴¹ What is more, it was his belief in nous ("by reason I mean that by which the soul thinks and judges"⁴²) as the one faculty of the human soul that is separable from the body and that enters from the "outside" and is immortal and divine,⁴³ which both placed renewed emphasis on the Socratic notion of the supreme importance of the psyche and left the way open for a subsequent spiritualizing and intellectualizing of man accompanied by a devaluing of his body - a project, it must be admitted, carried out not only by humanists in the Platonic-Enlightenment tradition but by Christians as well.⁴⁴ Nietzsche summed up this project and its consequences in a brief outline headed "The colossal errors":

1. The absurd over-estimation of consciousness, making of it a unity, one reality: "spirit" (Geist), "soul," something that feels, thinks, wills.

2. the intellect as cause, particularly wherever purposefulness, system, co-ordination appear.
3. consciousness as the highest achievable form, as the highest type of being, as "God."
4. the will introduced wherever there is effect.
5. the "true world" as the world of the mind (geistige Welt), accessible through the facts of consciousness.
6. knowledge (Erkenntnis), wherever it appears, absolutely as a faculty of consciousness.

Consequences:

all progress is progress to consciousness; every retrogression, to unconsciousness (becoming unconscious was considered a relapse to appetites and senses, as a regression to bestiality).

one draws nearer to reality, to "true being," through dialectics; one moves away from it through the instincts, the senses, physics (Mechanismus).

to dissolve a man into spirit would be to make him God: intellect, will, goodness - one. all good must originate in spirituality, must be a fact of consciousness.

progress in bettering man can only be progress toward becoming conscious.⁴⁵

As we noted above, these errors are still very much with us today. We take the division of man into two spheres for granted both at a common sense level and in the study of human behavior. But, as one historian of ideas has recently argued,

It may...be wrong to think of two realms which interact, called the conscious and the unconscious, or even of two contrasted kinds of mental process, conscious and unconscious, each causally self-contained until it hands over to the other. There may exist, as I believe, a single realm of mental processes, continuous and mainly unconscious, of which

only certain transitory aspects or phases are accessible to immediate conscious attention.⁴⁶

The assumption that man is a unity in this sense was shared by Nietzsche and has its roots in the Biblical view of man.

In the interest of clarity, let us say what this Biblical view of man is. And let us do so by looking at the only New Testament writer who gave any theological significance to the doctrine of the body - Paul.⁴⁷ To call Paul's doctrine of man "Biblical" is not to suggest that he is the only New Testament writer who had thoughts about man, but it is nevertheless justified by the fact that "the basic categories with which he works derive from the Old Testament view of man and presuppose the questions and interests upon which that view rests."⁴⁸

Like Aristotle before him and Nietzsche after him, Paul's doctrine of man was physiological. But unlike Aristotle, for whom, as we have seen, the doctrine of form and matter was equally as important as physics and physiology, a part of Paul's theological legacy was the Hebrew notion of the wholeness of man. The Hebrews had but one word, basar, to refer to the whole man, bodily man, fleshly man. They had no conception of the Greek dichotomies of form and matter, the whole and its parts,

the body and the soul. In fact, there is no precedent in the Old Testament for Paul's decisive separation of the two words, "flesh" (sark) and "body" (soma); both derive from the Hebrew, basar, which "stands for the whole life-substance of men or beasts as organized in corporeal form."⁴⁹ The seeming simplicity of this outlook cannot be attributed to a naive psychology. Far from it. We are still "discovering" today what Hebrew psychology intuited many centuries ago! It was not naivete, but a different mentality, which needed only basar to talk about both sark and soma. For this mentality, "Man does not have a body, he is a body. He is flesh-animated-by-soul, the whole conceived as a psychophysical unity...."⁵⁰ Here we have the roots of that unity of body-and-soul which is the Biblical doctrine of man.

In Paul this unity does not break down, but multiplies. Basar, man as a wholeness, becomes both "flesh" and "body," each, however, not complementing the other but being itself the whole. Man as "flesh" refers to "the whole body, or, better, the whole person, considered from the point of view of his external, physical existence."⁵¹ Man as "flesh" is characterized by Paul as being both weak, impotent, infirm, and mortal, fleeting,

subject to death. Man as "flesh" is man as he differs from God. Man as "body," while being "in the flesh," that is, subject to weakness and death, carries the possibility (as man as solely "flesh" does not) of newness, which is to say, of strength and victory over death. Again, as with man as "flesh," the "body" is not something man has, but something he is. "Indeed, soma is the nearest equivalent to our word 'personality'."52

The difference between "body" and "flesh" lies in the alterability of the former. "Body" is not man as he differs from God, but man, as Genesis has it, created in God's image. "The body may in all respects be identified with the flesh of sin and death, but the two are not in all respects identical. ...in essence sark and soma designate different aspects of the human relationship to God. While sark stands for man, in the solidarity of creation, in his distance from God, soma stands for man, in the solidarity of creation, as made for God."53 Man as "flesh" can be changed to become man as "body." Or, to put it another way, the flesh-body can be transformed into the spirit-body - which, again, is not to say, with the Greeks, that man is a duality. No, man is still a unity, "flesh" and "body," flesh-body and spirit-body. "Each stands for the whole man differ-

ently regarded - man as wholly perishable, man as wholly destined for God."54

To say how Paul conceived this transformation would take us away from our theme, the body, and into a treatise on the doctrine of the Atonement. With this summary of the Biblical doctrine of man, let us move on and ask in what sense Nietzsche's doctrine of the body can be said to be a unity of body-and-soul.

IV

"Nietzsche views man largely in what I may call a physiological light."55 These words of William Salter go straight to the heart of Nietzsche's doctrine of the body. Nietzsche has been called a materialist; and in the general sense of one who concerned himself "only with the material world - the world of phenomena, the only world we know,"56 this is understandable and to the point, in that it serves the negative purpose of reminding us that Nietzsche conceived of materialism as an ungrounded belief - "the prejudice about matter."57 Yet it is also apt to obscure the positive point about the clue of the body.58

In order to view man in a physiological light, one must begin from the premise that "the sense organs are not phenomena in the manner of idealist philosophy."59

Earlier on Nietzsche has been quite explicit in explaining "Why we are not idealists."

Formerly philosophers were afraid of the senses. Have we perhaps forgotten this fear all too much? We are all sensualists today, we philosophers of today and tomorrow, not according to theory, but in practice; whereas those before us thought they could be lured by the senses away from their world, the cold realm of "ideas," onto a dangerous southern island where, they feared, their philosopher-virtues would melt away like snow in the sun. "Wax in the ears" was, back then, almost a prerequisite for philosophizing. A genuine philosopher no longer hears life, insofar as life is music; he denies the music of life - it is an old philosopher-superstition that all music is siren's music. Now we today are inclined to judge precisely in the opposite manner (which could be just as false), namely, that ideas, with all of their cold, anaemic appearance, and not even in spite of this appearance, are much more seductive than the senses. They have always lived from the "blood" of the philosopher, they always consumed his senses, and if you can believe me, his "heart" as well. These old philosophers were heartless; philosophizing was always a kind of vampirism. Do you not sense in figures such as Spinoza something deeply enigmatic and uncanny? Do you not see the drama being performed here, this ever-increasing pallor, the ever more ideal abandonment of the senses? Do you not suspect that somewhere in the background there is a long-hidden blood-sucker which began with the senses and now leaves behind only bones and clattering? I mean categories, formulas, words.... In sum: all philosophical idealism to-date was something of a sickness, where it was not, as in the case of Plato, the caution of an over-abundant and dangerous health, fear in the face of overpowerful senses, the prudence of a shrewd Socratic. Perhaps we moderns are simply not healthy enough to require Plato's idealism. And we do not fear our senses because

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As so often, Nietzsche leaves the sentence dangling by that telling dash which, far from leaving his reader suspended in uncertainty, reveals his intention beyond any reasonable doubt. Idealists at their best provide the best evidence that ideas too can be seductive.

Yet it would be rash, as Nietzsche is quick to warn, to rush from this insight, valid as it is, to the opposite extreme and uncritically embrace the senses. He is leading us to the conclusion that the easy either/or of senses and ideas, body and mind, is simply no longer a helpful or even defensible distinction. We must learn to take "Sensualism at least as a regulative hypothesis, which is not to say as heuristic principle."⁶¹

Dangerous distinction between "theoretical" and "practical," for instance, in Kant, but also in the ancients. They act as though pure intellectuality put the problems of knowledge and metaphysics before them; they act as though, regardless of the theoretical answer, the practice is to be judged according to its own standard.

Against the former assumption I direct my psychology of philosophers. Their estranged calculation and their "intellectuality" is only the last, palest impression of a physiological fact. All spontaneity is absolutely missing. Everything is instinct. Everything is canalized from the very beginning.

Of the second assumption I ask whether we do not know a way to good actions other than good thinking. The latter is an act; the former presupposes

thinking. Have we the ability to judge the value of a way of life other than as the value of a theory, by induction, by comparison? Naive men believe that here we are better off, here we know what is "good"; the philosophers repeat it after them. Our conclusion is that there is a belief present here, nothing more. ...Not to live by two different standards! Not to separate theory and practice!⁶²

We need one set of values, one standard for judging life; not a double standard, because life is not divisible but a unity. And to devise such a standard we must begin where we are, namely, with "a physiological fact," as Niétzsche just put it; which, let us keep reminding ourselves, is not to say that we should "let our senses have the last word" or "give free rein to our instincts," with all the chaos connoted by such statements. This would be to take our senses as our heuristic principle, an undertaking as wrongheaded as the more common adoption of pure intellectuality or pure spirituality as the sole guideline and final court of appeal in questions of value. No, each is too simple and dangerous on its own. We must attempt the far more complicated task of using our senses as a "regulative hypothesis"; we must listen to our bodies.

Point of departure: the body and physiology. Why? We get the right idea about the character of our individual-unity (Subjekt-Einheit), namely, as a ruler at the head of a commonwealth

(not as "souls or "life forces"); as well as about the dependence of this ruler on the ruled, and the conditions of the ranking order and division of labor advantageous to both the individual and the whole. We learn that the living unities come into being and die continually, that there is nothing eternal about the "individual" (Subjekt); that the struggle expresses itself in obeying and commanding, and that a dynamic setting-of-boundaries-to-power belongs to life. The certain ignorance in which the ruler is kept concerning single tasks, even disturbances of the whole community, belongs to the conditions under which ruling is possible. In short, we see that not-knowing, getting a rough picture of something, simplifying and falsifying, the perspectival too is to be valued. That which is most important, however, is that we understand the ruler and ruled to be of a kind, all feeling, willing, thinking; and that wherever we divine or see movement in the body, we learn to infer an accompanying invisible life. Movement is a symbol for the eye; it points to that which is felt, willed, thought.

Asking an individual about himself and all self-reflection of the spirit has its dangers in that it can be advantageous to give a false interpretation of oneself. Therefore we question the body and reject the evidence of the heightened senses. If you will, we aim to discover whether the ruled themselves cannot communicate with us directly.⁶³

In one of the very few references to the body in the massive corpus of secondary literature on Nietzsche, Karl Jaspers writes: "Nietzsche calls the form and life of man his body. This is not merely the anatomical corpus, and certainly not the cadaver, but the unconscious, all-encompassing vital functions in their entirety."⁶⁴ But Jaspers' positive comment is cancelled

by his assertion that "it is not clear what in the end is meant by 'body.'"⁶⁵ He endeavors to understand Nietzsche's utterances about the body methodologically, only to conclude that they add up to "only an inclination to allow a biological way of thinking constantly to pass for insight."⁶⁶

It is surely clearer than Jaspers' claims what Nietzsche means by "body." We can agree with Jaspers' positive observation that Nietzsche is speaking of man's life when he uses the word "body." (Etymologically, in both Old High German and Middle High German, Leib was synonymous with Leben - life. And aurally the relationship between the German Leib and the English, "life," is still preserved.) George Morgan has suggested that "body" may be taken metaphorically. "What we ordinarily call "the body" is only the best metaphor for the real interplay of forces which composes our nature. When Nietzsche speaks of "the body" it is well to remember what he may mean it in this metaphorical sense."⁶⁷ And, commenting further on Nietzsche's words which we cited above (in note 63), Morgan writes:

Thus Nietzsche uses the clue of the body to suggest a complex relational structure, something manifold and in perpetual flux, in short the hierarchical society already familiar to us from his theory of the living organism: the

self or "subject" is simply the ruling oligarchy in this society. But the members of the society borrow from "inner phenomenology"; they all in some sense "think" "feel," "will." This is evidently the modification of the old "soul hypothesis" which Nietzsche desires. Soul and body are no longer defined in antithetical terms, and the crucial problem is no longer how they interact but how both are related to the phenomena of sensation and inner consciousness.⁶⁸

The societal model Nietzsche provides in the passage to which Morgan is referring is decisive for our understanding of his concept of the body as a hierarchical relational structure in perpetual flux, and Morgan is surely right in reminding us of Nietzsche's metaphorical use of Leib. This metaphor guards against both the extremes of sensualism and idealism while incorporating the best of each. That is, the body is neither solely "the anatomical corpus,"⁶⁹ to borrow Jaspers' fitting phrase, nor intellect or spirit by itself. Zarathustra puts it this way:

"Body am I, and soul" - thus speaks the child.
And why should one not speak like children?

But the awakened and knowing say: body am I
entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a
word for something about the body.

The body is a great reason, a plurality with
one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a shep-
herd. An instrument of your body is also your
little reason, my brother, which you call
"spirit" - a little instrument and toy of your
great reason.

"I," you say, and are proud of the word. But greater is that in which you do not wish to have faith - your body and its great reason: that does not say "I," but does "I."

What the sense feels, what the spirit knows, never has its end in itself. But sense and spirit would persuade you that they are the end of all things: that is how vain they are. Instruments and toys are sense and spirit: behind them still lies the self. The self also seeks with the eyes of the senses; it also listens with the ears of the spirit. Always the self listens and seeks: it compares, overpowers, conquers, destroys. It controls, and it is in control of the ego too.

Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage - whose name is self. In your body he dwells; he is your body.⁷⁰

NOTES

- 1) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 769.
- 2) Ibid., p. 787.
- 3) Heinrich Heine, Werke, ed. Martin Greiner (2d ed. rev.; Köln & Berlin: Klevenheuer & Witsch, 1962), II, p. 711.
- 4) Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (Scribner Library paperback ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1964), I, pp. 1-2.
- 5) Ibid., p. 13.
- 6) Ibid., p. 7.
- 7) Genesis 1:31.
- 8) Niebuhr, I, p. 12.
- 9) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 10.
- 10) Ibid., p. 815.
- 11) Ibid., p. 728.
- 12) Ibid., II, p. 172.
- 13) Ibid., p. 891.
- 14) Ibid., III, p. 329.
- 15) John Wren-Lewis, "Does Science Destroy Belief?," Faith, Fact and Fantasy (Fontana paperback ed.; London: Collins, 1964), p. 24.
- 16) Ibid., p. 14. This subject is given a fuller treatment in Wren-Lewis's essay, "The Decline of Magic in Art and Politics," The Critical Quarterly (May 1960), pp. 7-23.
- 17) Soren Kierkegaard, The Present Age, trans. Alexander Dru (Fontana paperback ed.; London & Glasgow: Collins 1962), p. 34.

- 18) Ibid., p. 51.
- 19) Ibid., p. 65.
- 20) D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, cited in Sex, Literature, and Censorship, ed. Harry T. Moore (Compass Books paperback ed.; New York: Viking Press, 1959), p. 6.
- 21) Philip Rieff, The Triumph of the Therapeutic (London Chatto & Windus, 1966), p. 153.
- 22) Nietzsche, Werke, II p. 825.
- 23) Ibid., p. 1095.
- 24) Ibid., p. 44.
- 25) Ibid.
- 26) Ibid., p. 221.
- 27) Ibid., III, p. 499.
- 28) Ibid., II, p. 569.
- 29) Ibid., pp. 11-12.
- 30) Ibid., p. 12.
- 31) Lancelot Law Whyte, The Unconscious before Freud (Social Science paperback ed.; London: Associated Book Publishers, 1967), p. 63. Whyte presents convincing evidence for his thesis that "the idea of unconscious mental processes was, in many of its aspects, conceivable around 1700, topical around 1800, and became effective around 1900..." (Ibid.)
- 32) H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society (Vintage Book paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1958), p. 63.
- 33) Sigmund Freud, "A Note on the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis," A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. John Rickman (Doubleday Anchor paperback ed.; Garden City, N. Y. : Doubleday & Co., 1957), p. 47.

- 34) Ibid., p. 49.
- 35) Philip Rieff, Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer (Doubleday Anchor paperback ed.; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961), pp. 36-37.
- 36) Several notable attempts, some successful, some less so, have been made, since Freud, to heal this split. Among those making these attempts are men as different from each other as: C. G. Jung, with his process of individuation, of selfhood, of The Integrity of the Personality (the title of a study), (Pelican paperback ed.; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966) by a contemporary follower of Jung, Anthony Storr; Erik Erikson, with his psychology of the ego, which is in many ways similar to the psychology of the self just mentioned, but ultimately distinctly Freudian in orientation; N. O. Brown, who takes his cues from Freud in order to get beyond (or behind) him by postulating a pre-Oedipal mother as the dialectical unity "behind" the dualism. R. D. Laing, with his existential "science of persons," "persons" understood as a body/self unity. All the approaches here cited share the conviction, in Laing's words, that "we cannot give an adequate account of the existential splits unless we can begin from the concept of a unitary whole..." (The Divided Self (Pelican paperback ed.; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 19) They differ in their attitudes to a second contention, a again expressed by Laing (and shared by Brown):

The very existence of psychopathology perpetuates the very dualism that most psychopathologists wish to avoid and that is clearly false. Yet this dualism cannot be avoided within the psychopathological frame of reference except by falling into a monism that reduces one term to the other, and is simply another twist to a spiral of falsity. (Ibid., p. 24)

What is needed is a monism that would do justice to both terms of the dualism while, at the same time, obviating its debilitating divisiveness. My contention is that what Nietzsche meant by Leib provides the basis for such a monism.

- 37) To use the terms "psyche," "mind," "soul," interchangeably would be impermissible in a more detailed discussion of this dualism. I am using "psyche" here to refer, not to any one thinker but generally to the "actuality" and "form" side of the actuality/potentiality and form/matter dichotomies, respectively.
- 38) "...with him (Anaxagoras) for the first time a clear distinction was explicitly drawn between matter and mind." W. K. C. Guthrie, The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle (Harper Torchbook paperback ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 55.
- 39) Ibid., p. 87.
- 40) Ibid., p. 146.
- 41) Ibid., p. 144.
- 42) Aristotle, "Reason," Selections, ed. W. D. Ross (Modern Student's Library paperback ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1960), p. 212.
- 43) Ibid., p. 193: "It remains, then, for the reason alone to enter and alone to be divine, for no bodily activity has any connection with the activity of reason."
- 44) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 720.
- Religious Morality. The affect, the great appetite, the passions of power, of love, of revenge, of possession--the moralists want to extinguish them, pluck them out, "purify" their soul.
- The logic is this: The appetites often do grave harm, therefore they are evil, reprehensible. A man must get free of them before he can be a good man.
- 45) Ibid., p. 733.
- 46) Whyte, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

- 47) J. A. T. Robinson, The Body (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 48: "...the concept of the Body supplies the lynch-pin of Paul's thought." I am especially indebted throughout this discussion of the Biblical doctrine of man to Robinson's study.
- 48) *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 49) *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 50) *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 51) *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
- 52) *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 53) *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 54) *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32, note.
- 55) William Mackintire Salter, Nietzsche the Thinker (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1917), p. 108.
- 56) R. J. Hollingdale, Nietzsche. The Man and his Philosophy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 85.
- 57) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 1178. "Since him (Robert Mayer), there is no matter anymore, except as a popular image. He thought the atomic theory to its logical conclusion. ...there is nothing but energy (Kraft)." (*Ibid.*) Cf. note 57 of Chapter 5 above for Nietzsche's views on the dynamic of "power centers."

George Morgan says rightly of Nietzsche that "he is not a behaviorist, because his conception of the body is not materialistic. The passage which most explicitly attacks the old-fashioned "soul" also criticizes old-fashioned "matter," and goes on to explain that modifications of the soul hypothesis may still be legitimate in science. What he really rejects is the metaphysical entity supposed to be an eternal and indivisible monad." (What Nietzsche Means (Harper Torchbook paperback ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 85.)

Elsewhere, Nietzsche himself writes:

With regard to materialistic atomism, it belongs to the best-refuted things that exist. And perhaps there is no scholar in Europe today still so unscholarly as to attach significance to it, except as a handy abbreviation, thanks, first of all, to that Pole, Boscovich, who, along with the Pole, Copernicus, was the greatest and most successful opponent of appearance yet. While Copernicus persuaded us to believe, contrary to all common sense, that the earth does not stand still, Boscovich taught us to renounce our belief in the last thing on earth which remained "firm"--the belief in "substance," "matter," in that vestige of the earth, the little lump, atom. It was the greatest triumph over the senses yet achieved on earth. (Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 576;77)

- 58) In a half-playful, half-earnest discussion of various psychosomatic "ailments" (e.g., guilt, sin) and their "cures," Nietzsche writes:

A strong, healthy person digests his experiences (including deeds and misdeeds) as he digests his meals, even if he has to swallow a tough morsel. If he "cannot manage" an experience, this kind of indigestion is just as physiological as every other--and often, in fact, only one of the consequences of that other indigestion. (Just between ourselves, one can, with such a conception, still be the strongest opponent of all materialism). (Ibid., II, p. 870)

- 59) Ibid., II, p. 579.
 60) Ibid., pp. 247-48.
 61) Ibid., p. 579.
 62) Ibid., III, pp. 760-61.
 63) Ibid., p. 475.

- 64) Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity, trans. Charles F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmitz (Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 1965), p. 314.
- 65) Ibid.
- 66) Ibid., p. 315.
- 67) Morgan, op. cit., p. 88.
- 68) Ibid., p. 89.
- 69) For this, the German, Körper, would suffice; Nietzsche himself uses this term for that purpose.
- 70) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 300. Much of what Nietzsche says about the body brings to mind the more recent phenomenological philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, at the center of which is the perceiving, speaking, meaning-bestowing body. But a comparison of the two men would take us too far afield. Suffice it to cite three random statements from Merleau-Ponty which suggest the similarity.

We must reject that prejudice which makes "inner realities" out of love, hate, or anger, leaving them accessible to one single witness: the person who feels them. Anger, shame, hate, and love are not psychic facts hidden at the bottom of another's consciousness: they are types of behavior or styles of conduct which are visible from the outside. They exist on this face or in those gestures, not hidden behind them. ("The Film and the New Psychology," Sense and Non-Sense, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 52-53.)

...one will more surely get to know the essence of a society by analyzing interpersonal relations as they have been fixed and generalized in economic life than through an analysis of

the movements of fragile, fleeting ideas--
just as one gets a better idea of a man from
his conduct than from his thoughts. (Ibid.,
"Concerning Marxism," p. 108.)

In the last analysis, our bodies bear witness
to what we are; body and spirit express each
other and cannot be separated. (Ibid., "Faith
and Good Faith," p. 173.)

8. The rearing of conscience to integrity.

Remain faithful to the earth, my
brothers...¹

--Zarathustra

The eternal return is the will and
vision of an erotic attitude toward
being for which necessity and ful-
fillment coincide.²

--Herbert Marcuse

I

In Chapter 6 we sought to show how Nietzsche con-
ceived of the origin of conscience as a turning against
itself at birth of will to power, and of the growth of
conscience as dependent on the particular environment
into which a child is born. Conscience is an instinct,
but not immutable. It is there from birth, but must be
shaped, given some sort of form. Traditionally, this
form has been that of "bad conscience."

We had already noted and reviewed in Chapter 5
Nietzsche's scathing critique of our Western "environ-
ment," dominated by the ascetic Christian-Platonic moral
demand system, which has had as its ideal the extirpa-
tion of passion, the suppression of life, the chaining
of man's natural inclinations to bad conscience. Before
concluding Chapter 6 we heard Nietzsche suggest that
"A converse endeavor is conceivable...." It would con-
sist in the

associating of the unnatural inclinations - all those aspirations to a beyond, everything anti-sensual, anti-instinctual, anti-natural, anti-animal; in short, the hitherto existing ideals, which are altogether hostile to life and slanderous of the world - with bad conscience.³

Conscience is not only educable, it must be educated. The question is: on the basis of what values, in the name of what? "We must unlearn this bad conscience just as we learned it."⁴ That is to say, not in the name of the suppressing of life, but in the name of life itself..

We began to move away from the inevitable vagueness of "life itself" by attempting to pin down what this might mean more specifically for Nietzsche. We discovered in Chapter 7 that it had a bodily meaning. It will be our purpose in this chapter to examine its earthly meaning.

II

There was an emperor who always assured himself of the transitoriness of all things, in order not to take them too seriously and to live among them in peace. Everything seems to me, on the other hand, of much too much worth to be so fleeting. I seek an eternity for everything. My consolation is that everything that was, is eternal - the sea washes it up again.⁵

"Why does Nietzsche value this most dubious doctrine, which was to have no influence to speak of, so extravagantly?" Thus Walter Kaufmann on Nietzsche's teaching

of eternal recurrence. Professor Kaufmann's judgment is not untypical. It has been, in fact, common practice among critics to either ignore or dismiss this most important, if not most fundamental, element in Nietzsche's entire philosophy.⁶ However, in spite of its offence to our common sense, the fact remains that it is Nietzsche's most important teaching, and it behooves us to consider it seriously.

This is not as simple as it sounds. Nowhere does Nietzsche give us a concise exposition of this teaching. As usual, he makes many statements about it, some of which are unquestionably incompatible with others. One of the earliest statements, which takes the form of a cautious questioning, appears near the end of the original edition of The Gay Science in a paragraph headed, "The Heaviest Burden".

What if a demon crept after you into your loneliest loneliness one day or night and said to you: "This life, as you live it now and have lived it, you must live once more and still innumerable times more. And there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh and everything unspeakably small and great in your life must come to you again, and all in the same order and sequence. Just so, this spider and this moonlight between the trees; just so, this moment and I myself. The eternal hour-glass of existence will be turned over again and again - and you with it, you speck of dust!" Would you

not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment in which you would answer him: "You are a god, and I have never heard anything so divine!" If that thought gained power over you, it would change you, as you are, and perhaps crush you. The question concerning everything - "Do you want this once more and still innumerable times more?" - would lie as the heaviest burden on your behavior! Or how would you have to learn to love yourself and life, in order to long for nothing more than for this last eternal confirmation and sealing?⁷

Let us approach this "mightiest of thoughts" by considering in turn two of Nietzsche's own, apparently irreconcilable, statements about it. In his unpublished notes we find these sentences:

Let us think this thought in its most frightful form: existence, just as it is, without meaning and goal, but inevitably returning without a finale in nothingness - "eternal recurrence."

That is the most extreme form of nihilism: nothingness ("meaninglessness") eternally!⁸

And in glaring contrast, in the section on Thus Spoke Zarathustra in his work, Ecce Homo, Nietzsche calls eternal recurrence "the highest formula of affirmation that can ever be attained."⁹

As the most extreme form of nihilism, as perhaps, in fact, the inevitable consequence of the nihilism which he saw descending on man after the death of God, eternal recurrence appeared to Nietzsche as "the most

abysmal thought." It repelled him and frightened him. Why so? Why did he believe it to be so important, and thus, so devastating?

Nietzsche himself tells us exactly when and where the thought first occurred to him. Although he had been familiar since his youth with the classical Greek conception of the cyclical movement of the universe, the thought of eternal recurrence peculiar to him presented itself in August 1881.

It was jotted down on a piece of paper with the inscription: "6000 feet beyond man and time." I was walking that day through the forest by Lake Silvaplana. At a mighty, towering pyramidal boulder not far from Surlei I rested. There this thought came to me.¹⁰

The calmness of these words - "there this thought came to me" - must be attributed to the fact that Nietzsche is writing in retrospect. Lou Salomé and Franz Overbeck, probably the only two of Nietzsche's friends with whom he shared his overwhelming new thought, have recorded Nietzsche's original response to it as one of horror. Lou Salomé writes that he spoke about it to her "in a low voice, with every appearance of the most profound horror."¹¹ Similarly, Overbeck recalls that Nietzsche disclosed his revelation to him in whispers.¹² Indeed, Nietzsche has Zarathustra fear his own thoughts and speak softly about them. Zarathustra is talking to the

lame dwarf who symbolizes his archenemy, the spirit of gravity:

"Stop, dwarf!" I said. "It is I or you! But I am the stronger of us two: you do not know my abysmal thought. That you could not bear!"

Then something happened that made me lighter, for the dwarf jumped from my shoulder, being curious; and he crouched on a stone before me. But there was a gateway just where we had stopped.

"Behold this gateway, dwarf!" I continued. "It has two faces. Two paths meet here; no one has yet followed either to its end. This long lane stretches back for an eternity. And the long lane out there, that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they offend each other face to face; and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed above: 'Moment'. But whoever would follow one of them, on and on, farther and farther - do you believe, dwarf, that these paths contradict each other eternally?"

"Behold," I continued, "this moment! From this gateway, Moment, a long, eternal lane leads backward: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever can walk have walked on this lane before? Must not whatever can happen have happened, have been done, have passed by before? And if everything has been there before - what do you think, dwarf, of this moment? Must not this gateway too have been there before? And are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it all that is to come? Therefore - itself too? For whatever can walk - in this long lane out there too, it must walk once more.

"And this slow spider that crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things - must not all of us have been

there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane - must we not eternally return?"

Thus I spoke, more and more softly; for I was afraid of my own thoughts and the thoughts behind my thoughts.¹³

On the basis of these first-hand reports, it is hardly fair to disregard eternal recurrence as some sort of misleading illusion, as was common practice among Nazi "interpreters" of Nietzsche's works.¹⁴ Nietzsche was reluctant to speak of eternal recurrence at all until he could establish its scientific plausibility, on the basis of which it might be believed. Without a doubt, Nietzsche believed this possible. In fact, at one point he toyed with the idea of returning to the university for the express purpose of improving his inadequate knowledge of mathematics and the natural sciences. He called eternal recurrence "the most scientific of all possible hypotheses."¹⁵ This was by no means a hoax, and we are not at liberty to pass lightly over this aspect of his teaching.¹⁶ Although Arthur Danto is surely right in asserting that "very likely the exposition of his (Nietzsche's) reasons for believing it true are less important for the understanding of his thought than his reasons for supposing the belief in it to be important," an attempt to expound Nietzsche's own reasons for believing it true should

be made.¹⁷ Such an attempt has been made by Rose Pfeffer in a recent article bearing the title, "Eternal Recurrence in Nietzsche's Philosophy,"¹⁸

Near the beginning of Book III of The Gay Science, Nietzsche writes these words:

The total character of the world...is to all eternity chaos; not in the sense of the absence of necessity, rather the absence of order, structure, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic human categories are called. ...Let us beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is no one who commands, no one who obeys, no one who transgresses.¹⁹

The world is conceived of as chaotic, which means, as he goes on to explain, not that there is an absence of necessity, but that there is no pre-ordained order; there are no given laws in nature. This by way of background. The hypothesis itself is based on these presuppositions: time is infinite, space is finite, the amount of energy in the universe is finite, energy is conserved and incessantly active.²⁰

If these presuppositions are interpreted on the basis of mechanistic theories of explanation and classical atomism, then the conclusion could be drawn that Nietzsche's cyclical theory refers to particular fixed states which will, after a sufficiently long period of time, recur in exactly the same, identical way as they have already occurred an infinite number of times in the past.²¹

This quotation from Miss Pfeffer's article may indeed

be read as a paraphrase of the conclusion drawn by all other interpreters who have taken Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence seriously. But any such interpretation misconstrues Nietzsche's meaning by failing to take sufficiently into account his outright rejection of classical atomism and mechanism.²²

Miss Pfeffer submits persuasive evidence to support her contention that Nietzsche's conception of eternal recurrence was based on a dynamic theory of energy radically opposed to the materialistic theory of atomism which envisaged atoms as substantial particles.

Energy becomes the fundamental notion of the universe, displacing matter. Activity and process become the fundamental concepts. The universe becomes a field of force, a field of incessant activity. The principle of the conservation of energy, which Nietzsche accepts as the basis of his theory of eternal recurrence, expresses a law of conservation which takes place within change and process, a change that is not based upon a mechanistic, but a new, dynamic, energetic principle.²³

Nevertheless, it would appear that the question remains as to whether eternal recurrence refers to the return of identical states. But no. This question is now superfluous. "When it becomes meaningless to speak of a particular, definite, fixed state of the universe, it is equally meaningless to speak of the return of such a state."²⁴ In Nietzsche's own words: "The same quantity

of energy means something different on a different level of development.... Everything has been here before innumerable times, insofar as the total field of energy (Gesamtlage der Kräfte) always returns. Whether aside from this anything identical has existed, is entirely indemonstrable."²⁵ To be sure, Nietzsche does not always appear to be referring to different levels of development. Indeed, he speaks at times of a return to exactly the same life. But such inconsistency can hardly be considered unusual in an age of scientific revolution.²⁶

The eternal recurrence of the same is the return of the Gesamtlage der Kräfte in which energy is constantly formed and constantly released. It is the return of the dynamic pattern of nature and life which is eternally active and eternally the same. The principle of conservation does not refer to the conservation of a static, unchanging, fixed state, but it refers to the preservation of the "field of energy" which contains within it the elements of change and activity, of tension and release, repulsion and attraction, destruction and creation.²⁷

The principle of the conservation of force (energy) which Nietzsche takes as the basis for his theory of eternal recurrence is at least as old as Leibniz (with his concept of conatus), though it was not widely accepted as a valid hypothesis until the middle of the nineteenth century. Robert Mayer formulated it in his work, Die

organische Bewegung in ihrem Zusammenhange mit dem Stoffwechsel (1845), but only as it proved useful in scientific investigations in the 1840's and 1850's did it receive widespread recognition. Although it would be no more than conjecture to speak of a possible direct influence of Mayer on Nietzsche, "It cannot be by chance that the formulation of the idea of eternal recurrence appears in ever-increasing clarity from 1881, the year Nietzsche became acquainted with the work of R. Mayer..."²⁸ Whatever else Nietzsche may have thought of Mayer, the principle of the conservation of energy provided a base, already accepted by scientists, for his theory of eternal recurrence.

Perhaps for the purpose of clarity a word should be interjected about an aspect of Nietzsche's method which has, on the whole, been given too little consideration by critics,²⁹ and which we have thus far only mentioned but not explained.³⁰ By "perspective" Nietzsche means precisely what he says. As is nearly always the case, he intends the word to retain its common sense meaning: to view a thing from a particularly standpoint, to chart an object, as it appears to the eye, onto a surface - perspective. This perspectival attitude becomes radical when we realize that it is Nietzsche's

way of viewing everything! "All of life rests upon appearance, art, illusion, optics, the necessity of perspective and of error."³¹ Another way of saying that all of life is perspectival is to say that appearance is reality. The old duality, forwarded by Plato and perpetuated by Christianity, which divided the world into the real and the apparent is rejected by Nietzsche along with the body/soul dualism.

That the value of the world lies in our interpretation...that pervades my writings. The world with which we have to do is false, i.e. is no matter of fact, but a filling out and rounding off of a meager sum of observations; it is "in flux," as something becoming, as a falsehood which continually displaces itself anew, which never draws near to the Truth: for - there is no "Truth."³²

There is no Truth, but only truths, that is, "not necessarily the opposite of error but...only the position of different errors relative to one another."³³ "This is nothing but relativism," we may charge, "that can only lead to a dangerous subjectivism." "Relative to what," might be Nietzsche's rejoinder. "To some absolute standard which does not exist, and on the basis of which you depreciate this so-called world of mere appearance"? For this is precisely the point. As long as there is anything "real" to which we and our "apparent" world can never completely conform, we and our "apparent" world

will be disparaged in favor of it. That there may be some other world, Nietzsche does not deny. In fact, as we have already discovered, he admits that there is always that possibility. But, he adds, this is beside the point, for

one can do very little with that, much less hang happiness, salvation, and life on the thin thread of such a possibility. For one could testify to nothing but the otherness of the metaphysical world, an inaccessible and incomprehensible otherness; it would be a thing with negative characteristics. Even if the existence of such a world were proved beyond doubt, it would still certainly be the most irrelevant of all knowledge: even more irrelevant than the knowledge of the chemical analysis of water would be to the seaman facing the hazard of a gale.³⁴

So, the breakdown of the distinction between appearance and reality, and the disappearance of all absolute standards is not a cause for lament. On the contrary, it offers us the opportunity to see life as chaotic, that is, lacking any given order or purpose, and to understand its essentially perspectival nature; in short, it allows us to view life, not as a unit, but as a plurality, with endless possible interpretations. Granted, this is a shocking picture for anyone accustomed to thinking of life as an ordered whole, guided by some purpose. ¶There is, of course, the possibility of adroitly avoiding the consequences of this view by adopting it and then

opting for no perspective. This possibility Nietzsche calls the "liberal" or "broad-minded" approach!)³⁵ But it is, on the other hand, also liberating and exhilarating. As Nietzsche admits, "In truth, interpretation itself is a means of becoming master of something." ³⁶ --a thought bearing similarity to the belief expressed in the creation story in Genesis 2 that by giving the animals a name, Adam gained control over them.

After this brief digression into Nietzsche's perspectivism, perhaps we are in a position more favorable to an approach to that other extreme of his eternal recurrence, mentioned at the outset of this chapter. We now have some idea why he himself believed the theory of the eternal recurrence of all things to be "the most scientific of all hypotheses,"³⁷ but it remains to be asked why he was convinced of the importance of a belief in it. Concerning belief, in general, Nietzsche wrote in The Gay Science: "...the inner happiness and misery of men have come to them through their belief in this or that motive - not through that which was really the motive!"³⁸ He is not saying that motives are of no importance; but he is saying that the belief in a thing is more important for living than the thing itself. And he knew from his own experience that eternal recurrence, "the most abysmal thought," could become, if be-

lieved, "the highest formula of affirmation that can ever be attained."³⁹

As we have seen, there can be no higher or better life in another world, but only here. Nietzsche is concerned solely with this life, the here and now. And he is convinced that it is precisely in the here and now that the good life, the life-affirming life, the joyful life, is possible.

Have you ever said Yes to a single joy? O my friends, then you said Yes too to all woe. All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored; if ever you wanted one thing twice, if ever you said, "You please me, happiness! Abide, moment!" then you wanted all back. All anew, all eternally, all entangled, ensnared, enamored - oh, then you loved the world. Eternal ones, love it eternally and evermore; and to woe too, you say: go, but return! For all joy wants - eternity.⁴⁰

This is beautiful - but will it work? Such a blunt question must be put to Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence. Indeed, he surely would have expected it, pragmatist that he was. Is not such a view of life - immersion in the present, affirmation of the moment - necessarily terribly naive with regard to, say, suffering?

We cannot avoid this problem, nor can we assume that Nietzsche was personally unacquainted with suffering. He knew it well, as even the most cursory look at his life will show. It can hardly be disputed

that there is a certain ennobling quality in suffering, which Nietzsche rightly emphasizes. There is, however, also a devastating quality in it which, probably more often than not, simply drains its victim of any will to will anything. At his best, as in his teaching of amor fati (to which we are about to turn our attention), Nietzsche realizes this and takes it into account. Nevertheless, he does now and then indulge, however momentarily, in a glorification of pain and suffering which is characteristic of the very ascetic morality he was attempting to overcome. And for this indulgence he must be severely criticized. On the whole, he is on the right track; but the fact remains that we must be able to live through pain before we can rejoice in the moment and desire its return. And there are degrees of pain and depths of suffering that cannot be endured. In other words, before the Kingdom of God can come on earth, evil spirits must be driven out and broken bodies must be made whole - one of the most potent, though least dealt upon, aspects of Jesus' entire healing ministry.

This criticism notwithstanding, it is still possible to claim that Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence provides a way to the highest affirmation of this earthly, bodily existence attainable. And without the faintest intention of making the atheist of atheists

a "Christian-at-heart," it is possible to make the further claim that Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence is not unlike Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount.

If this seems an extravagant claim, its apparent extravagance doubtless derives from the fact that the symbol of the Kingdom has been deprived of its radical content by theologians anxious to accommodate it to our common sense. But it is as common sensical a teaching as Nietzsche's eternal recurrence! In the New Testament alone, the Kingdom is interpreted a number of different ways. It is mysteriously elusive; it is here, and yet it is not fully here. Christians have variously prayed for its coming, worked to establish it, and acknowledged its hidden presence.

Before looking at Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount, attention should be drawn to the two explicit references to the Kingdom of God in the Gospel of John. In chapter 3 Jesus tells Nicodemus that unless one is born anew, one can neither see nor enter into the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus, despite his expertise in matters religious, gets bogged down in a literal interpretation of Jesus' words about birth and thus misses his point altogether about repentance and newness.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is more explicit about what he means by the Kingdom. That is to say, in ethical terms, he describes in some detail just who is a citizen of this kingdom. First come the beatitudes, which are not to be allegorized or rationalized, but taken as they stand. The citizens of the Kingdom are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Furthermore, the Christian, far from longing for another life, is the salt of the earth; he is, in fact, the light of the world, and he should so shine that men may see his good works - which means no more than it says, i.e. not 'do good works in order that men may see them' (Matthew 6:1-6: "Beware of practicing your piety before men..."; "when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you...do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing..."; "when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray..."), but do good works, don't hide them, and don't be afraid of letting them be seen. Then comes the passage in which Jesus, so to speak, puts teeth into the law by prefacing a commandment with the words "You have heard that it was said," and then interpreting it for

the Christian - "But I say to you...." This is the section that ends with the words: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (v. 48) Again, an admonition that does not lend itself well to rationalization. There is also the oft-repeated, but nevertheless important, portion of the Lord's Prayer in which Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for the coming of the Kingdom on earth, and for the fulfillment of daily, bodily needs. Beware of allowing "things," possessions to gain control over you, do not be anxious, do not be hypocritical, ask and expect an answer, and judge a man according to his works, not his words.

The purpose of this extended paraphrase of the Sermon on the Mount is meant as a reminder that Jesus' description of the citizens of the Kingdom revolved around concrete and personal and earthy things such as bread and fear and belongings. And it is precisely here that the Kingdom and eternal recurrence are most similar.

To be sure, there are many differences, but both are sublime symbols of an affirmation of this life and a rejoicing in it. Both involve a choice, neither can be coerced. The Kingdom must be chosen by those who wish to be its citizens; the keys of the Kingdom are

forgiveness (Matthew 16:19), and the one stipulation for remaining a citizen is perfection, that is, attending to the earthly needs of yourself and your neighbor (John 3:11-13).

Eternal recurrence must be chosen, that is, it must be willed. The will must destroy revenge and recreate all "it was" into a "thus I willed it." Zarathustra tells us:

Will - that is the name of the liberator and joy-bringer; thus I taught you my friends. ...the will is a creator. All "it was" is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident - until the creative will says to it, "But thus I willed it." Until the creative will says to it, "But thus I willed it; thus shall I will it."⁴¹

We may recall from our previous discussion of will to power that Nietzsche's conception of "will" is by no means a superficial desiring-and-therefore-doing. His confidence in the creative and liberating capacities of the will do not spring from the pious belief in the will as something either simple and free or simple and bound, but from his deep appreciation for it as something infinitely complex and powerful enough to change and condition life and exult in it - by willing its eternal return. Nietzsche is not addressing something "other," something "beyond," when he affirms: "For I love you, O eternity!"⁴² And we err if we see in this, as Karl Jaspers does, evidence

that Nietzsche was aiming for "a godless philosophy of unhistorical transcendence."⁴³ Nothing could be wider of the mark. Godless, it most certainly is, but also radically historical and radically immanent! The eternity that Nietzsche loves is life itself, and his declaration of love is a "yes" to life in the shape of a willing of its eternal return.

Let us listen to this hymn to life, which is one of Nietzsche's most ecstatic - and revealing - expressions of eternal recurrence; "The Other Dancing Song." Life, Zarathustra's coquettish lover, is speaking thoughtfully and softly.

"O Zarathustra, you are not faithful enough to me. You do not love me nearly as much as you say; I know you are thinking of leaving me soon. There is an old heavy, heavy growl-bell that growls at night all the way up to your cave; when you hear this bell strike the hour of midnight, then you think between one and twelve - you think, O Zarathustra, I know it, of how you want to leave me soon."

"Yes," I answered hesitantly, "but you also know - " and I whispered something into her ear, right through her tangled yellow foolish tresses.

"You know that, O Zarathustra? Nobody knows that."

And we looked at each other and gazed on the green meadow over which the cool evening was running just then, and we wept together. But then life was dearer to me than all my wisdom ever was.

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

One!
 O man, take care!
 Two!
 What does the deep midnight declare?
 Three!
 "I was asleep--"
 Four!
 "From a deep dream I woke and swear:
 Five!
 "The world is deep,
 Six!
 "Deeper than day had been aware.
 Seven!
 "Deep is its woe!
 Eight!
 "Joy--deeper yet than agony;
 Nine!
 "Woe implores: Go!
 Ten!
 "But all joy wants eternity--"
 Eleven!
 "Wants deep, wants deep eternity."
 Twelve!⁴⁴

Nietzsche has prepared us for this dancing song by telling us that the path of eternity is bent,⁴⁵ and that the moment, Now, is but a point on the well-worn path which stretches both before us and behind us.⁴⁶

Still earlier we were given a taste of what was to reach its climax here. It was during Zarathustra's journey to man, his going under, when he met the old saint in the woods who advised him not to go down to man. "'Why,' asked the saint, 'did I go into the forest and the desert? Was it not because I loved man all-too-much? Now I love God; man I love not. Man is for me too imperfect a thing. Love of men would kill me!'" "But

when Zarathustra was alone, he spoke thus to his heart: 'Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard anything of this, that God is dead!' Then Zarathustra continued his descent to man, and began to teach the Übermensch.

I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of other-worldly hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary; so let them go.

Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing, and to esteem the entrails of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth.⁴⁷

One obvious question remains to be asked. What is to be our attitude to eternal recurrence? If we take Nietzsche's perspectivism as seriously as he took it, his interpretation must be taken as only one of many possible interpretations. Exactly! This objection must be levelled, but it by no means detracts from Nietzsche's teaching. As he wrote in Beyond Good and Evil: "Granted, that this is only one interpretation - and you will be eager enough to raise that objection? - well, all the better."⁴⁸ The only proper way to pose the question is to ask, as we did earlier, whether it

will work. Nietzsche's answer - and the answer of this treatment of eternal recurrence - is affirmative.

At any rate, the way to interpretation is open again. Whatever our particular perspective, regardless how strongly we believe in our interpretation of life, the liberating fact remains that the possibilities are many. As Nietzsche put it in The Gay Science:

We cannot see around our corner: it is hopeless curiosity to want to know what other kinds of intellect and perspective there might be....

But I think we are today at least far from the ridiculous presumptuousness of decreeing from our corner that one can have perspectives from this corner only. On the contrary, the world has become infinite to us once more: insofar as we cannot dismiss the possibility that it contains infinite interpretations. Once more the great horror grasps us - but who would want to deify this monster of an unknown world in the old way again? And perhaps worship the unknown as "the unknown person?" Oh, there are too many ungodly possibilities of interpretation included in this unknown, too much devilishness, stupidity, foolishness of interpretation - our own human, all-too-human interpretation itself, which we know...⁴⁹

III

Closely related to Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence and incomprehensible apart from it is his formula amor fati. "My formula for greatness in man is amor fati."⁵⁰ Such a statement is apt to seem strange, even absurd, coming from a man who conceives of life as

will to power. For by thus associating fate and will to power Nietzsche would seem to be doing no more than confronting us anew with the proverbial dilemma of the compatibility or incompatibility of determinism and free will. This, however, turns out to be a false first impression. And yet Nietzsche is not merely playing at paradoxes. In order to arrive at some clarity as to what he is suggesting with this seemingly strange juxtaposition, we must first ask how exactly he is using the word "fate," which should in turn throw some light on the relation of amor fati to the ethical significance of eternal recurrence.

Nietzsche broached the subject of fate as early as 1862 in two short essays, "Fate and History," and "Freedom of the Will and Fate."

Free will appears to be unfettered, capricious; it is the infinitely free, roving spirit. Fate, however, is a necessity.... Fate is the infinite power of resistance to free will. Free will without fate is just as unthinkable as spirit without substance, good without evil. For it is just the antithesis that creates the characteristic.⁵¹

In the second essay Nietzsche continues to ruminate, but now more explicitly psychologically.

In that fate is mirrored to man by his own personality, individual freedom of the will and individual fate appear as two equally-matched opponents....

Free will is but an abstraction which expresses the capacity to act consciously, whereas fate is understood as the principle which guides our unconscious actions. Action, as such, is always expressive of a simultaneous inner action, an aim of the will of which we need not be conscious. When acting consciously, we may allow ourselves to be guided by impressions just as much as when acting unconsciously, or just as little....

If, then, we take the concept of unconscious action to be more than a mere being-actuated by previous impressions, the rigid distinction between fate and free will disappears, and both concepts merge into the idea of individuality...

For the individual, the principle of individualization, of separation from the whole, of absolute limitlessness, is grounded in freedom of the will; fate, however, places man back into organic contact with the collective development and compels him, in that it tries to control him, to a free re-action. Absolute freedom of the will, void of fate, would make man into a god; the fatalistic principle, into an automaton.⁵²

While it is not possible to require of these early essays a mature formulation of the problem (Nietzsche was 17 at the time of their writing), they do afford some insight into how Nietzsche understands fate. The notes that are struck here - that fate is necessity, and that the rigid distinction between fate and free will is a spurious one - are sounded again and again throughout Nietzsche's later works, and especially in conjunction with amor fati.

My formula for greatness in man is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity.

Not simply to bear the necessary, still less to conceal it...but to love it.⁵³

Amor fati, loving one's fate, is not to be confused with fatalism. Nietzsche has this to say in a late unpublished note on the doctrine of Providence:

Even fatalism...is still a result of that longest belief in divine providence, an unconscious result; as if it did not depend on us how everything happens - as though we could simply allow things to run their course, every individual no more than a mode of the absolute Reality.⁵⁴

Earlier on, near the beginning of the third book of The Gay Science, in a passage we have already encountered, Nietzsche had warned his readers of the danger of failing to distinguish between necessity, law and order, and chance.

The total character of the world...is to all eternity chaos, not in the sense of the absence of necessity, rather the absence of order, structure, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic human categories are called. ...Let us beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is no one who commands, no one who obeys, no one who transgresses. When you know that there are no goals, then you know too that there is no chance; for only in a world of goals has the word "chance" a meaning.⁵⁵ (my italics)

There is no predetermined order in nature (and consequently no chance), but only necessity. What order there is depends on us and the shape we give the chaos that is the world. Again, it behooves us to remind ourselves that this is not merely so much paradoxical

munbo-jumbo. Nietzsche is saying something quite comprehensible, albeit not via a continuous reasoned argument but by a kind of intuitive sign-language. More about this presently.

How are we to take the second of the notes struck in the early essays - that fate and free will are, despite (or perhaps because of) their opposition, in fact, not two but one? At the end of the first of the 1862 essays Nietzsche had stated that free will without fate is unthinkable, that "it is just the antithesis that creates the characteristic," and he entertained the notion that "free will (is) nothing but the highest potency of fate." He leaves the notion undeveloped, except to conclude:

The history of the world is, then, the history of matter, if one stretches the meaning of this word to infinity. For there must be still higher principles in which all differences flow together in one great unity, in the face of which all development is a succession of steps; everything flowing toward one enormous ocean in which all the stages of the evolution of the world are rediscovered, reunited, melted together, a great unity.⁵⁶

For assistance in reading these signs, reasoned argument will not suffice. Only other signs can help. For this let us look to Heraclitus, who wrote: "The Lord (who is the oracle) at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but gives a sign";⁵⁷ Heraclitus, whose influ-

ence is felt already at this very early stage in Nietzsche's life and only increases with time. It would, in fact, not be an exaggeration to say that among the pre-Socratics who were of such great significance for Nietzsche, none was more highly praised, even consciously imitated, than Heraclitus.⁵⁸

Heraclitus has as his royal possession the highest power of intuitive thinking; while toward the other type of thinking, the one carried on with concepts and logical combinations, in other words toward reason, he reacts coolly, insensitively, even hostilely, and seems to feel pleasure when he can contradict it with a truth arrived at intuitively.⁵⁹

Significantly, Heraclitus begins by recommending to his readers, "Not on my authority, but on that of truth, it is wise for you to accept the fact that all things are one."⁶⁰ (my italics) Significant, because this claim links Heraclitus to his Milesian predecessors, Thales, Anaximander, and Anaxemines, who, each in his own way, sought to express their common belief that all things are one. Nietzsche put it this way in his lectures on the pre-Socratics:

Greek philosophy seems to begin with a nonsensical notion, with the proposition that water is the origin and womb of all things. Is it really necessary to stop here and take this seriously? It is, and for three reasons. First, because the proposition says something about the origin of all things. Second, because it does this without image or fable, And finally, third, because in it is contained the thought, if only embryonically, that "all things are one." The

first reason still leaves Thales in the company of the religious and superstitious; the second, however, takes him out of their company and shows him as a natural scientist; but on account of the third reason, Thales is the first Greek philosopher. ...Thales did not overcome the primitive level of physical insight of his time with the presentation of the unity-concept as his water-hypothesis, but rather leapt beyond its horizon. ...that which drove him to it was a metaphysical belief which owed its origin to a mystical intuition and which we encounter in every philosophy along with renewed attempts at a more suitable expression - the proposition that "all things are one."⁶¹

Anaximander takes Thales at his word; but, though "all things are one" is an adequate "physical" solution to the problem of the origin of the universe, it raises ethical questions not answered by Thales.

Thales expressed the desire to simplify the realm of the many and to reduce it to a mere unfolding or masking of the one and only existing quality, water. Anaximander advances two steps beyond him. First of all, he asks himself: "How is the many even possible, if there is but one eternal unity"? He takes the answer from the self-contradictory, self-consuming and self-negating character of the many. Its existence becomes for him a moral phenomenon; it is not justified, but expiates itself constantly through its passing. But then the second question occurs to him: "Why has all that came into being not long since passed away, since an eternity of time has already passed? Whence the ever-renewed stream of becoming"? And he can save himself from this question only through a mystical possibility: eternal becoming can have its origin only in eternal being; the conditions for the fall from that being to a becoming in injustice are always the same; the constellation of things is such that no end to the emergence of the individual from the womb of the "indefinite" can be conceived. Here Anaximander stopped....⁶²

In his intellectual history of the pre-Socratics, Nietzsche now moves directly to Heraclitus.

Into the midst of this mystical night in which Anaximander's problems were shrouded walked Heraclitus of Ephesus and illuminated them by a divine stroke of lightning. "I look at 'becoming,'" he calls, "and no one has watched this eternal rolling of waves and rhythm of things as attentively as I. And what did I see? Order, unfailing certainties, ever-like orbits of lawfulness.... Not the punishment of what has come to be, but the justification of becoming did I see...."

From this intuition Heraclitus inferred two interrelated negations, which only come to light when compared to the doctrines of his predecessor. First, he denied the duality of totally diverse worlds, a position which Anaximander had been forced to assume. He no longer distinguished a physical from a metaphysical world, a realm of definite qualities from a realm of indefinable indefiniteness. Now, after this first step, he could not be held back from a still greater boldness of negation: he denied being altogether. For this one world which he retained - sheltered by eternal unwritten laws, flowing back and forth with a brazen rhythmic beat - shows nowhere a persistence, an indestructibility, a bulwark in the stream. Louder than Anaximander, Heraclitus proclaimed: "I see nothing but becoming. Do not be deceived! It is in your near-sightedness, not in the nature of things, if you think you see firm land somewhere in the sea of becoming and passing away. You use names for things as though they possessed a fixed permanence; but even the stream into which you step a second time is not the same one you stepped into the first time."⁶³

The two negations - of duality and of being - are rendered positive by two ideas: the one, as we have seen, taken over from the Milesians, that "all things are one" (in

the case of Heraclitus, the "one" is, of course, fire: "All things are exchanged for fire, and fire for all things...."64); the other, original with Heraclitus, that "All things take place by strife."65 Once again, it would seem, we are confronted with a paradox. If it is not possible to "step twice in the same rivers; for other and yet other waters are ever flowing on";66 if there is only becoming, how can it be said that "War is father of all and king of all....,"67 that "...war is general and that justice is strife; all things arise and (pass away) through strife"?68 Do not war and strife presuppose at least two participants?

Heraclitus conceived of the process of becoming and passing away as a polarity, as the splitting of one force into two qualitatively different and opposed forces that strive to reunited

One quality continually separates into two and contends against itself; continually these opposites struggle to reunite. ...Out of the struggle of the opposites arises all becoming. The definite qualities which appear fixed to us express only the momentary predominance of one partner; but the battle is not ended, the contest continues eternally. Everything happens in conformity with this struggle, and precisely this struggle reveals eternal justice. It is a wonderful idea, drawn from the purest springs of Hellenism, which regards strife as the continuing sovereignty of a unified and strict justice, bound to eternal laws. Only a Greek was capable of finding such an idea at the basis

of a cosmology. It is Hesiod's good Eris declared to be the ruling principle of the world; it is the idea of the contest of the individual Greek and the Greek state, taken over from the gymnasium and the palestra, from the artistic agon, from the struggling of the political parties and cities with one another, and applied universally so that now the wheels of the cosmos turn on it.⁶⁹

Agon does not require two participants. What is more, "Opposition unites. From what draws apart results the most beautiful harmony."⁷⁰ That this is puzzling Heraclitus was aware: "Men do not understand how that which draws apart agrees with itself; harmony lies in the bending back, as for instance of the bow and of the lyre."⁷¹

The many observable qualities are neither eternal substances nor fantasms of our senses (Anaxagoras is later to imagine the former, Parmenides the latter); they are neither rigid, authoritarian being nor fleeting semblances in human minds. The third possibility, for Heraclitus the only possibility, cannot be guessed by dialectical shrewdness and calculation. For what he here invented is a rarity even in the realm of mystical incredibilities and unexpected cosmic metaphors. The world is the game Zeus plays; or, expressed in physical terms, of the fire with itself. The one is in this sense only, simultaneous with the many.⁷²

Or, to put it in Heraclitus' own words, which call to mind Jesus' teaching about the children, that "to such belongs the kingdom of God": "Lifetime is a child playing draughts; the kingdom is a child's."⁷³

Earlier,⁷⁴ we quoted the entire text of Zarathustra's

speech on the three metamorphoses of the spirit from "Thou shalt," to "I will," to "I am," the final stage being symbolized by the playing, yea-saying child.

The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed....75

It is in this sense that we are to take Nietzsche's words, "My formula for greatness in man is amor fati."76

One further attempt to achieve clarity with regard to this easily misapprehended teaching may be in order here, before passing on to its ethical implications. Now that we have some idea of Nietzsche's conception of fate as necessity, we can speak of amor fati as loving necessity, that is, the givenness of life. How are we to understand this?

In the second book of Human, All-too-Human Nietzsche offers his hypothesis as to "how the doctrine of the freedom of the will came into being."

Over one person stands necessity in the form of his passions, over another as the habit of listening and obeying, over a third as logical conscience, over a fourth as whimsy and mischievous pleasure in evasions. Yet each of these four will seek the freedom of his will precisely there where he is bound most securely. It is as though the silkworm were to seek the freedom of his will in spinning. Why is this? Evidently because everyone considers himself

freest where his zeal for life (Lebensgefühl) is strongest; that is, as I said, now in the passions, now in duty, now in knowledge, now in mischievousness. That wherein a man is strong, wherein he feels himself most alive, he believes automatically must also always be the element of his freedom....78

This would seem no more than a negative argument for a rigid determinism, as, indeed, would these words of praise:

Schopenhauer makes that admirable distinction with which he proved more right in the end than he himself could have known: "the insight into the strict necessity of human actions is the demarcation line which separates the philosophical minds from the others." He thwarted this mighty insight, to which he was open at times, with that moral prejudice which he still shared with moral men (not moralists) and which he quite harmlessly and piously expressed thus: "the final and true explanation of the inner being of the whole of things must necessarily be closely connected to that of the ethical significance of human actions" - which is by no means "necessary," but rather refuted on the basis of that proposition concerning the strict necessity of human actions, that is, the absolute un-freedom and un-responsibility of the will. ...To be sure, the escape hatches which the "philosophical minds," Schopenhauer included, left themselves must be recognized as useless. None leads into the open, into the clear air of the free will; each through which one has slipped up to now revealed behind it once again the brazen, blinking wall of fate. We are in prison; we can only dream, not make, ourselves free.79

However much determinists might like to claim Nietzsche for their own, in the end, he will elude them and prove himself too complicated for such easy pigeon-holing.

For him, the very argument concerning free will versus determinism rests on a false presupposition.

Oriental fatalism is based on the error that sets man and fate as two separate things over against each other. Man, it says, can struggle against fate, try to frustrate it, but ultimately it will always be triumphant; therefore it is most reasonable either to resign oneself or to live as one pleases. In truth, every man is a piece of fate. If he thinks he struggles against fate as stated above, fate fulfills itself even in this struggle. The struggle is imagined, but so is resignation in fate; all of these illusions are included in fate. The fear which most people have about the doctrine of the unfreedom of the will is fear of oriental fatalism. They think man will become weak, resigned and will stand before the future with folded hands because he is incapable of changing it. Or, on the other hand, that he will let loose all his capriciousness, because even this cannot make worse what is already determined. The folly of man is as much a part of fate as is his cleverness. Even that fear of belief in fate is fate.⁸⁰

Every man is a piece of fate; and fatalism is based on an error. A paradox? No, because of Nietzsche's conception of fate in terms of necessity. Amor fati is not an appeal to "resign oneself to one's fate." The very word "resign" suggests the false dichotomy posed by fatalism. There are no pre-ordained, established laws - neither in the religious-metaphysical sense of Providence nor in the natural-biological sense of determinism: "There are only necessities."⁸¹ Even in that early essay on "Fate and History," Nietzsche had wondered whether free will could not be understood to be "the

highest potency of fate."⁸² In the context, then, of Nietzsche's will to power monism, if there are only necessities (read: fate), that is, if life is fate, then fate is will to power.

The final (ethical) question is: how are we to take our will to power which is our fate? In short, what are we to do with our bodies and our earth? Amor fati - to love it. Not resignation, not acquiescence; this option is no option - spurious, illusory. There are only necessities, there is only fate, there is only will to power.

And yet, this is not a thing to be lamented (Nietzsche would say that even this lament is a piece of fate!). Nor is it to say that man is not responsible. He is responsible, but not for the old reasons. Fatalism (belief in Providence, determinism) was criticized by Nietzsche precisely on these grounds, namely for its unsupported and unsupportable belief that the shape of things and the course they take does not depend on us, "as though we could simply allow things to run their course, every individual no more than a mode of the absolute Reality."⁸³ Yet how can a man be both a piece of fate and still responsible?

For an answer to this question we must draw upon our previous analysis of will to power,⁸⁴ bearing in

mind always that fate is will to power. Nietzsche's will to power monism, we said, is a diatomic monism, a two-in-oneness, a breaking off and turning against itself of will to power, echoes of which we have just heard from Heraclitus.⁸⁵ That portion of will to power which breaks away at birth becomes, with time, embodied (einverleibt) as the instinct of conscience, a "memory of the will," the ability "to be responsible and with pride, and thus also the ability to say "yes" to oneself."⁸⁶ and thus also the ability to say "yes" to oneself."⁸⁶ be molded and shaped; it must be taught this memory, it must develop this ability. Life is fate, is will to power, is one, conceived of, however, dynamically; not as the union of the opposites ("how can opposites be in harmony except unwillingly?"), but, as in Heraclitus, "an attunement of opposite tensions, like that in a bow...a continuous tug-of-war....,"⁸⁷ agon, the contest, strife.

It is against this background that we may appreciate the ethical impact of amor fati. To learn to see the necessary as the beautiful, and not merely to accept it but to love it, is to beautify it.

I want more and more to learn to see the necessary in things as the beautiful - thus will I be one of those who makes things beautiful. Amor fati, that is to be my love from now on.⁸⁸

Clearly, Nietzsche is not advocating that we love every-
thing that comes (this would betray a belief in a
straight-forward, rigid determinism), but that we love
the necessary in whatever comes. And just as clearly,
he believes it possible to bestow beauty on a thing by
loving it.

Remain faithful to the earth, my brothers,
with the power of your virtue. Let your gift-
giving love and your knowledge serve the mean-
ing of the earth. Thus I beg and beseech you.
Do not let them fly away from earthly things
and beat with their wings against eternal walls.
Alas, there has always been so much virtue that
has flown away. Lead back to the earth the
virtue that flew away, as I do - back to the
body, back to life, that it may give the earth
a meaning, a human meaning.89

NOTES

- 1) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 338.
- 2) Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (Vintage paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1955), p. 111.
- 3) Nietzsche, Werke, p. 836.
- 4) Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Musanion Ausgabe), (München, 1920-29), XI, p. 364.
- 5) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 680.
- 6) The most fundamental being will to power.
- 7) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 202-203.
- 8) Ibid., III, p. 853.
- 9) Ibid., II, p. 1128.
- 10) Ibid.
- 11) Lou-Andreas Salomé, Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken (Vienna, 1894), p. 321.
- 12) Carl Bernoulli, Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche. Eine Freundschaft (Jena, 1908), II, p. 217.
- 13) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 408-409.
- 14) See, for example, Alfred Bäumler, Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker (Leipzig, 1931).
- 15) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 853.
- 16) F. A. Lea, in his The Tragic Philosopher (London: Methuen, 1957), while rightly stressing the moral basis of all objections to eternal recurrence, rejects Nietzsche's various attempts to prove his idea scientifically with the words, "These are of no importance." (p. 216) Walter Kaufmann also dismisses these attempts, more subtly, but none-

- theless just as unequivocally, by suggesting that "eternal recurrence was to Nietzsche less an idea than an experience," by which Kaufmann apparently means some sort of redemptive religious experience. (Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Meridian Books paperback ed.; Cleveland & New York: The World Publishing Co., 1956), p. 279).
- 17) Arthur C. Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 203. Professor Danto does, in fact make an elaborate attempt (cf. pp. 203-209) to construct from Nietzsche's scattered notes on the subject a scientific model. Cf. Chapter 5, note 57 above in this connection.
- 18) Rose Pfeffer, "Eternal Recurrence in Nietzsche's Philosophy," Review of Metaphysics, (December, 1965), pp. 276-300.
- 19) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 115-16.
- 20) "The total amount of energy (All-Kraft) is limited, not 'infinite.' Let us beware of such conceptual excesses! Consequently, the number of states (Lagen), combinations, changes, and evolutions (Entwicklungen) of this energy is tremendously great and practically immeasurable, but in any case finite and not infinite. But the time through which this total energy works is infinite. That means the energy is forever the same and forever active. An infinity has already passed away before this present moment. That means that all possible developments must have taken place already. Consequently, the present development is a repetition, and thus also that which gave rise to it, and that which arises from it and so backward and forward again! Insofar as the totality of states of energy (die Gesamtlage aller Kräfte) always recurs, everything has happened innumerable times." Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Grossoktavausgabe), (Leipzig, 1901-13), XII, p. 51. The translation is Arthur Danto's, op. cit., p. 205.

"...the world, as power, should not be conceived of as unlimited, for it cannot be so conceived - we forbid ourselves the concept of unlimited power as irreconcilable with the concept 'power.'" Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 459.

"This world: a monster of power, without beginning, without end, a firm, brazen bulk of power, which neither increases nor decreases, which does not exhaust itself but only changes itself; as a whole, unalterably vast, a household without expenses and damages, but also without increase and income; surrounded by 'nothing' but its own limit, nothing blurred, wasted, nothing infinitely expanded, rather a specific power placed in a specific space; and not a space that would be 'empty' somewhere, rather as power everywhere, as a game of powers and waves of powers at the same time one and many, here accumulating and at the same time there, diminishing; a sea of violent and surging powers, eternally changing, eternally returning, with mighty years of recurrence, with the ebb and flow of its formation, drifting out of the simplest into the most manifold, from the stillest, most rigid, coldest out into the shiniest, wildest, most self-contradictory, and then from fullness, back to the simple out of the game of contradictions back to the joy of harmony, affirming itself even in this similarity of its pathway and years, blessing itself as that which must eternally return, as a becoming that knows no satiety, no boredom, no fatigue...." Ibid., pp. 916-17.

- 21) Pfeffer, op. cit., pp. 278-79.
- 22) Cf. Nietzsche, Werke, III, pp. 704, 776-78.
- 23) Pfeffer, op. cit., pp. 279-80.
- 24) Ibid., p. 281.
- 25) Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Grossoktavausgabe), (Leipzig, 1901-13), XVI, p. 115.

- 26) Miss Pfeffer draws attention to the fact that Nietzsche was by no means unaware of the struggle going on in the nineteenth century between the mechanistic and dynamic conceptions of the world. He mentions explicitly the names of Faraday, Boscobich, Caspari, Zoellner, and Robert Mayer. Pfeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 280.
- 27) *Ibid.*, p. 282.
- 28) A. Mittasch, "Friedrich Nietzsches Verhältnis zu Robert Mayer," Blätter für deutsche Philosophie, Band 16, Heft 1/2, (Berlin, 1942), p. 156.
- 29) The one exception being Professor Danto who devotes an entire chapter of his book to this subject.
- 30) See particularly note 57 of Chapter 5 above.
- 31) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 215.
- 32) *Ibid.*, III, p. 497.
- 33) *Ibid.*, p. 915.
- 34) *Ibid.*, I, p. 452.
- 35) Cf. George A. Morgan, What Nietzsche Means (Harper Torchbook ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 367
- 36) Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Grossoktavausgabe), (Leipzig, 1901-13), XVI, p. 118.
- 37) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 853.
- 38) *Ibid.*, II, p. 68.
- 39) *Ibid.*, p. 1128.
- 40) *Ibid.*, p. 557.
- 41) *Ibid.*, pp. 394-95.
- 42) *Ibid.*, pp. 473-76.

- 43) Jaspers believes the clue lies in Nietzsche's use of the word "eternal." But this is surely unfair, doubly so in view of the fact that Jaspers is judging Nietzsche by Kierkegaardian standards.

Kierkegaard distinguishes three ways of conceiving the moment in relation to eternity: If the moment is not essential, then eternity appears from the rear, as the past (just as the path of a man who walks without direction and goal appears only behind him, as the distance covered). If the moment is essential, but merely as a decision, then the future is eternity. But if the moment itself is eternity, then eternity is 'the future returning as the past.'

For Kierkegaard, the last way is the Christian way. And since the Christian conception seems to jibe with what Nietzsche means by "eternity," Jaspers concludes that Nietzsche must be a Christian after all! Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity, trans. Charles F. Walraff and Frederick J. Schmitz (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1965), p. 366.

- 44) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 472-73.
- 45) Ibid., p. 463.
- 46) Ibid., p. 408.
- 47) Ibid., pp. 278-80.
- 48) Ibid., p. 586.
- 49) Ibid., p. 250.
- 50) Ibid., p. 1098.
- 51) Nietzsche, Historische-Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke, (München: C. H. Beck, 1934), II, p. 59.
- 52) Ibid., pp. 60-62.
- 53) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1098.

- 54) Ibid., III, p. 632.
- 55) Ibid., II, pp. 115-16.
- 56) Nietzsche, Historische-Kritische..., II, p. 59.
- 57) Milton C. Nahm (ed.), Selections from Early Greek Philosophy (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947), pp. 89-90, Fragments 11 and 15.
- 58) See, for example, Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 664, 848-49, 851, and especially p. 1111:

The affirmation of passing away and destruction; that which is decisive for a Dionysian philosophy; the yea-saying to opposition and strife; becoming, along with a radical rejection of the concept of 'being'--in all this I must, by all means, recognize that from all that has been thought which bears the closest affinity to my thinking. The doctrine of "eternal recurrence," that is, of the unquestionably and indefinitely repeated cycle of all things--this doctrine of Zarathustra's could, after all, already have been taught by Heraclitus. At any rate, the Stoics, who inherited nearly all of their basic ideas from Heraclitus, show signs of it.

There are, of course, also important differences between Heraclitus and Nietzsche, one of which deserves mention, namely, their attitudes toward the senses. Nietzsche, writes of Heraclitus,

When the rest of the philosophic folk rejected the testimony of the senses because they showed multiplicity and change, he rejected their testimony because they showed things as if they had permanence and unity. Heraclitus too did the senses an injustice. They lie neither in the way the Eleatics believed, nor as he believed--they do not lie at all. What we make of their testimony, that alone introduces lies; for example, the lie of unity, the lie of thinghood, of substance, of permanence. "Reason" is the cause of our falsification of the testimony of the senses. Insofar as the senses show becoming, passing away, and change, they do not lie.

But Heraclitus will remain eternally right with his assertion that being is an empty fiction. The "apparent" world is the only one: the "true" world is merely added by a lie. (Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 957-58).

- 59) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 370.
- 60) Milton C. Nahm (ed.), Selections..., p. 89, Fragment 1.
- 61) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 361.
- 62) Ibid., p. 368. Nietzsche uses das Unbestimmte to render Anaximander's "boundless" (aperion); I have rendered das Unbestimmte as "the indefinite," following Marianne Cowan's translation of Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks (Gateway paperback ed.; Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1962).
- 63) Nietzsche, Werke, III, pp. 369-70.
- 64) Milton C. Nahm (ed.), Selections..., p. 90, Fragment 22.
- 65) Ibid., p. 91, Fragment 46.
- 66) Ibid., Fragments 41-42.
- 67) Ibid., Fragment 44. It is perhaps worth drawing attention to the precedent set here by Heraclitus in using the word "war" in the sense of agon, contest, strife.
- 68) Ibid., p. 92, Fragment 62.
- 69) Nietzsche, Werke, III, pp. 371-72.
- 70) Milton C. Nahm (ed.), Selections..., p. 91, Fragment 46.
- 71) Ibid., Fragment 45. The taughtly-spanned bow was, as we may recall from our discussion of Goethe in Chapter 2, to become Nietzsche's image of greatness in men.

- 72) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 374.
- 73) Milton C. Nahm (ed.), Selections..., p. 93, Fragment 79.
- 74) See Chapter 3, section II above.
- 75) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 294.
- 76) Ibid., III, p. 1098.
- 77) Ibid., II, p. 161.
- 78) Ibid., I, p. 877.
- 79) Ibid., pp. 756-57.
- 80) Ibid., pp. 905-906.
- 81) Ibid., II, p. 116.
- 82) Nietzsche, Historische-Kritische..., II, p. 59.
- 83) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 632.
- 84) See Chapter 5 above.
- 85) Nietzsche, Werke, III, pp. 371-72.
- 86) Ibid., II, p. 802.
- 87) W.C.K. Guthrie, The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle (Harper Torchbook ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 44..
- 88) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 161.
- 89) Ibid., p. 338.

IV. The Übermensch and the Neighbor

9. Dionysus versus the Crucified

Behold, I teach you the Übermensch.
The Übermensch is the meaning of the
earth.¹

--Zarathustra

My philosophy is aimed at a gradation,
not at an individualistic ethic.²

--Nietzsche

I

"Has anyone understood me? - Dionysus versus the Crucified."³ With this almost plaintive question, Nietzsche both virtually sums up his work in capsule form and brings it to a close. The question is plaintive because so much depends on its answer. For if we do not understand the formula, "Dionysus versus the Crucified," we do not understand Nietzsche. It is as simple as that. Who is "the Crucified"? Who, indeed, is "Dionysus"?

II

To take the first question first, "the Crucified" is the Christ, God on the Cross; and "God on the Cross is a curse on life...."⁴ Nietzsche has prepared us for this judgment with his analysis of guilt and bad conscience⁵ which culminated in the discovery of "the paradoxical and ghastly expedient which brought temporary relief to suffering humanity, Christianity's stroke

of genius: God sacrificing himself for man...."⁶ In short, God on the Cross is the logical and necessary outcome of what Nietzsche called "slave revolt in morals."⁷

In Chapter 6, in which we dealt with Nietzsche's analysis of the origin of morality and conscience, we sought to avoid getting trapped into a facile disregard of this highly unlikely (at any rate, unprovable) historical hypothesis which claimed to have traced the origins of our value judgments to a primal horde of masters and slaves, by drawing attention to its usefulness as a psychological hypothesis. We may now take one further step - still being guided by Nietzsche's admission that the "two basic types" can be found "even within the same man, within one soul"⁸ - and ask how the slave revolt in morals works itself out in history, in society. We know where it leads - to a curse on life, God on the Cross. But what path was followed by those men - not ideal types, not "slaves" as opposed to "masters", but ordinary flesh-and-blood men with both master instincts and slave instincts warring within them? It was the path of ressentiment.⁹

The slaves' revolt in morals begins with this, that ressentiment itself becomes creative and

gives birth to values: the ressentiment of those who are denied the real reaction, that of the deed, and who compensate with an imaginary revenge. Whereas all noble morality grows out of a triumphant affirmation of oneself, slave morality immediately says No to what comes from outside, to what is different, to what is not oneself: and this No is its creative deed. This reversal of the value-positing glance - this necessary direction outward instead of back to oneself - is of the nature of ressentiment: to come into being, slave morality requires an outside world, a counterworld; physiologically speaking, it requires external stimuli in order to react at all: its action is at bottom always a reaction.¹⁰

Slave morality is typified by the fact that it rests upon a "no"; its creative act is a re-action. Slave morality is ascetic morality.

The ressentiment of the noble man, if it occurs in him at all, discharges and expends itself in an immediate reaction, and therefore does not poison....¹¹

Master morality is characterized by its spontaneity, by a "yes" resulting from a fullness, an overflow of life. Master morality is a morality of affirmation and fulfillment. Here, then, is Nietzsche's view of (Jewish) Christian-Platonic morality, and his own alternative.

Let us recapitulate briefly. Life is one, a will to power monism. But, in man, it is to be understood as a diatomic monism, a two-in-oneness, in that man as will to power is forced to turn in upon himself so that he may learn to live with his fellows. That part of will to power which breaks away and turns upon itself

at birth becomes embodied (einverleibt) as an instinct, the instinct of conscience. This new instinct functions to guide the will to power as it rushes forward and reaches out to incorporate and give form to all that it encounters, its unceasing attempt at self-affirmation. Of course, man encounters obstacles and is thwarted in this attempt by other men and things. The instinct of conscience seeks to canalize man's self-affirmation. But how? In what direction? Along what path?

Theoretically, there are as many paths as there are consciences. However, every conscience is formed by the environment in which it grows. Thus, practically, the conscience of each child begins to be molded by what Freud called "the parents' influence," that is,

not merely the personalities of the parents themselves but also the racial, national and family traditions handed on through them as well as the demands of the immediate social milieu which they represent. In the same way, an individual's super-ego in the course of his development takes over contributions from later successors and substitutes of his parents, such as teachers, admired figures in social life or high social ideals.¹²

We noticed already¹³ that up to this point, Nietzsche's theory of conscience and Freud's theory of super-ego correspond exactly. We also noticed, however, that

here their paths diverge in radically different directions: Freud's leading to heightened restraint in the form of a restrictive, no-saying super-ego, and thus ultimately to pessimism; Nietzsche's leading to a new affirmation of the body and the earth which formed the basis for a conscience based on integrity, a remissive conscience. The difference is not in the form or the function of the controlling mechanisms of super-ego and conscience, but rather in the content, in the end they serve. The former deflects, denies gratification; the latter canalizes - toward the body and the earth, toward gratification. The former is the ascetic formula, the latter the formula of fulfillment.

Perhaps the best metaphor, aside from "canalizing," for expressing Nietzsche's meaning is "bridling." It is not a question of a choice between Freud's bridled id and Nietzsche's unbridled will to power, though this is the impression that still haunts all too many interpretations of Nietzsche. (Nietzsche criticized Schopenhauer's concept of the will precisely because of its alleged blindness, its absolute abandon and goallessness.) As we have tried to show, he never advocated "turning loose" one's will to power. Indeed, he would have considered such a program nonsensical and, for that matter, im-

possible to implement. The controlling mechanism of conscience is, after all, an inescapable part of the human "equipment." Conscience, as Nietzsche understood it, is an integral part of man, not to be wished away by the longing to return to nature or the glorification and imitation of the primitive.¹⁴ "Bestiality" with reference to man is a misnomer. Man's inhumanity to man is not a regression to animality. As we are beginning to discover, animals know better.¹⁵ Conscience is that part of will to power which serves as its canalizer, its bridle. Nietzsche is not saying "no" to conscience and morality, but to a conscience based on continence and an ascetic morality.

Nietzsche's critique of the continence and asceticism which are our heritage is, on the whole, just and to the point. The shriller his polemic becomes, however, the more apparent becomes his omission of one important positive aspect of asceticism in the past which deserves mention here. John Wren-Lewis has written of it in this fashion:

The fallacy lies in the implicit assumption that because puritanism and flight from the flesh are seen as neurotic today, the mood was therefore always neurotic. ...ours is the first culture

in human history in which it is possible to avoid puritanism and world denial without sacrificing personal sensitivity.¹⁶

As long as the earth was something over against man, incalculable, violent, uncontrollable; as long as the body was a burden, it was gratuitous to ask men to affirm the earth and their bodies. That is to say, as long as personal values and organic values were necessarily at odds and considered unalterable, an affirmation of "life," of "reality," in short, of personal life, entailed, just as necessarily, a denial of organic values - the earth and the body. Only in our time, only, one might say, since Nietzsche, has it been possible to say "yes" to the Leib (Leben), the unity of body-and-soul (person). Lebensphilosophie would have been unthinkable before this.

The vital thing is that the scientific and technological revolution has brought about an entirely new attitude to physical life, in that today we take it for granted that evil physical conditions can be remedied, whereas in all previous civilizations it was taken for granted that they were part of the unalterable pattern of nature.¹⁷

It seems almost incredible that this psychological force could have eluded a psychologist of Nietzsche's stature. But obviously it did. Nevertheless, his fundamental insight into the detrimental effects of asceticism in the present remains unassailable. And he did offer a positive alternative (as that other master psychologist,

Freud, did not - only more asceticism). Denial of the earth and the body is not only expendable today, it is neurotic. This brings us back to ressentiment and its effects.

Will to power, aggression (in the psychological sense) is "natural"; indeed, without it there would be no life. Ressentiment, rancorous, envious aggression, is neurotic; it is the "most dangerous explosive" which "steadily accumulates and accumulates."¹⁸ It cannot be denied, however, or wished away. If it finds no release, it poisons its bearer (masochism); if it is finally discharged after long repression, its issue is vehement and venomous (sadism).

The originators and bearers of ascetic morality (Nietzsche's "ascetic priests") intuited that man is a problem to himself. They did not know why. There was no psychological analysis of man such as we have seen done by Nietzsche to guide them. Yet they sensed what we now know, namely, that "All instincts which do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward. This is what I call man's introjection (Verinnerlichung)."¹⁹ And this introjection of instincts, this turning in of will to power upon itself is "natural" - as long as the new instinct of conscience to which this introjection

gives birth does not subserve a repressive morality. But, as we have just seen, asceticism was a necessary component of life-affirmation until only relatively recently in our past; and asceticism, by its very nature, is repressive. Refused satisfaction, man's instincts seethe and simmer and become what they otherwise are not - explosive. This is the dilemma which the ascetic priest faced and sought to untangle.

To discharge this explosive in such a way that it does not blow up the flock and the shepherd, that is his real feat as well as his highest usefulness. Were one to sum up the value of priestly existence in a simple formula, one could say: the priest is the diverter of resentment.²⁰

Ascetic morality both creates resentment and directs it to a new outlet, albeit a dangerous outlet.

"I suffer; someone must be responsible for that." So thinks the ailing sheep. But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to him, "You are right, my sheep! Someone must be responsible. But you yourself are that someone; you alone are to blame. You alone are to blame for yourself!" That is quite daring, quite false. But at least one thing is thus achieved - the direction of resentment is, as I said, thereby changed.²¹

This reversal of resentment gave rise, as we know from a previous discussion,²² to bad conscience and guilt. Man was preserved, but at the high cost of the sacrifice of his body and this earth.

So that it could say No to everything on earth that represents the ascending tendency of life, to that which has turned out well, to power, to beauty, to self-affirmation, the instinct of ressentiment, which had here become genius, had to invent another world from whose point of view this affirmation of life appeared as evil, as the reprehensible as such.²³

Nietzsche's doctrine of the body, with its affirmation of the oneness of life, is expressly designed to counteract this split in life. And his alternative to ascetic man, epitomized for him by the image of "the Crucified," is the Übermensch, symbolized by Dionysus.

III

Who is Dionysus? Nietzsche has already provided us with one answer to this question.²⁴ In The Birth of Tragedy Dionysus was introduced as the companion and opponent of Apollo. This early work was designed to ignore morality; or, rather, it was meant as "a valuation and doctrine of life diametrically opposed to it, a purely artistic, antichrist doctrine. ...I called it Dionysian."²⁵ In an effort to clarify his use of these images, Nietzsche speaks of Apollo in terms of dream and of Dionysus in terms of intoxication (Rausch).²⁶

Apollonian-Dionysian. There are two conditions in which art itself appears in man like a natural force and has man at its disposal whether he wishes it or not: first, as the compulsion

to vision, and, on the other hand, as the compulsion to orgy. Both conditions are played out in everyday life, only weaker: in dream and in intoxication.

But the same opposition endures between dream and intoxication. Both release in us artistic powers, each, however, different ones: dream, those of seeing, connecting, poetizing; intoxication, those of gesture, passion, song and dance.²⁷

Nietzsche attempts to explain the birth of tragedy (Apollonian art) out of the spirit of music (Dionysus), out of the contest (agon) between Dionysus and Apollo. We concluded earlier on²⁸ that Nietzsche is operating with a dualistic hypothesis in The Birth of Tragedy. And, indeed, this conclusion still holds. He speaks several times of the struggle between the two deities as being between "two hostile principles."²⁹ Still more explicit are these words:

In contrast to all who are intent upon deriving the arts from one principle as the necessary fountainhead of every work of art, I keep my gaze fixed on those two artistic deities of the Greeks, Apollo and Dionysus, and perceive them to be the lively and vivid representatives of two realms of art, dissimilar in their deepest being and highest goals.³⁰

This dualism goes to the very roots of Nietzsche's early aesthetics.

And yet, as we also noted previously, the monism which becomes more explicit in the later works is already

here in embryo. It cannot stand alone at this early stage for two reasons. First, Nietzsche has as yet been unable to free himself from the thought-world of Schopenhauer and Kant, dominated, as it is, by a strict dualism of will and idea, phenomena and noumena (Dionysus and Apollo). Second, as long as Dionysus is conceived of as intoxication, formlessness, loss of individuality; in short, as unbridled will to power, Apollo, regardless how repressive he may be - and the order he imposes is strict and ruthless - must hold him in check. However, as soon as it becomes clear that Dionysus is not the titan, the barbarian, the demon he was thought to be - and this is the liberating consequence of Nietzsche's psychological investigations - there is no longer any need for Apollo. Indeed, to hold to him after making such a discovery would be both foolish and cruel. This is but another way of saying what we have already said in the preceding section: denial of Dionysus - of the body, the earth, will to power - however necessary for the Greeks, is not necessary today; it is neurotic. For them, it served a positive purpose; for us, it impedes that purpose. As Apollo was seen by Nietzsche to be superfluous, he receded into the background and ultimately out of view. The Dionysus of the late works and

of the formula, "Dionysus versus the Crucified," both is and is not the Dionysus of The Birth of Tragedy. In that he is seen to be guided by his own inner "bridle" (conscience), he is that same Dionysus. In that he is inextricably bound to a repressive taskmaster outside himself (Apollo), he is not the same. As one recent commentator has put it, to see in the Dionysus of the late Nietzsche "a synthesis of Apollo and Dionysus is to sacrifice insight for peace of mind."³¹

"The Crucified" is the symbol of extreme denial and curtailment of life - for the purpose of preserving life, to be sure,³² but ascetic in its very essence nonetheless. "Dionysus," on the other hand, symbolizes affirmation and fulfillment of life: "it is explicable only in terms of an excess of energy";³³ "in the Dionysian symbol, the greatest affirmation possible is attained."³⁴ "The Crucified" is the symbol of a morality whose creative act is a "no" to life; "Dionysus," a "yes." With this last statement, we have moved back once again from the realm of images and symbols and metaphors to the ethical world. And to speak of ethics is to speak of men; or, in this instance, of Übermenschen.

IV

We do Nietzsche and ourselves an injustice if we shy away from treating his concept of the Übermensch with seriousness because of its alleged implausibility or its checkered past in the hands of propagandists. We have endeavored throughout to show that each of the key positive (as opposed to critical) concepts in Nietzsche's work - will to power and conscience, the body and the earth, eternal recurrence and amor fati - was concerned with man. The Dionysian Übermensch is no exception.³⁵ Indeed, it can be said to be the culmination of all that has gone before. If "Dionysian" is Nietzsche's symbol for his positive alternative to "the Crucified," the Übermensch is its ethical counterpart.

Looking back on his masterpiece, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche wrote: "My concept 'Dionysian' here achieved its highest embodiment."³⁶ Zarathustra is the teacher of the Übermensch. Here is the beginning of his first speech to the people gathered in the marketplace:

I teach you the Übermensch. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?

All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man? What is the

ape to man? A laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the Übermensch: a laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. You have made your way from worm to man, and much in you is still worm. Once you were apes, and even now, too, man is more ape than any ape.

Whoever is the wisest among you is also a mere conflict and cross between plant and ghost. But do I bid you become ghosts or plants?

Behold, I teach you the Übermensch. The Übermensch is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the Übermensch shall be the meaning of the earth! I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them go.

Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing, and to esteem the entrails of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth.

Once the soul looked contemptuously upon the body, and then this contempt was the highest: she wanted the body meager, ghastly, and starved. Thus she hoped to escape it and the earth. Oh, this soul herself was still meager, ghastly, and starved: and cruelty was the lust of this soul. But you, too, my brothers, tell me: what does your body proclaim of your soul? Is not your soul poverty and filth and wretched contentment?

Verily, a polluted stream is man. One must be a sea to be able to receive a polluted stream without becoming unclean. Behold, I teach you the Übermensch: he is this sea; in him your great contempt can go under.

What is the greatest experience you can have?

It is the hour of the great contempt. The hour in which your happiness, too, arouses your disgust, and even your reason and your virtue.

The hour when you say, "What matters my happiness? It is poverty and filth and wretched contentment. But my happiness ought to justify existence."

The hour when you say, "What matters my reason? Does it crave knowledge as the lion his food? It is poverty and filth and wretched contentment."

The hour when you say, "What matters my virtue? As yet it has not made me rage. How weary I am of my good and my evil! All that is poverty and filth and wretched contentment."

The hour when you say, "What matters my justice? I do not see that I am flames and fuel. But the just are flames and fuel."

The hour when you say, "What matters my pity? Is not pity the cross on which he is nailed who loves man? But my pity is no crucifixion."

Have you yet spoken thus? Have you yet cried thus? Oh, that I might have heard you cry thus!

Not your sin but your thrift cries to heaven; your meanness even in your sin cries to heaven.

Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the frenzy with which you should be inoculated?

Behold, I teach you the Übermensch: he is this lightning, he is this frenzy.³⁷

The doctrine of the Übermensch is, admittedly, a doctrine, an ethical ideal; but not in the sense of being a figment of Nietzsche's imagination, a construction

from the whims and wishes of one man which other men are expected to live up to. On the contrary.

The word Übermensch as the mark of type of man who has turned out best, in contrast to "modern" men, "good" men, to Christians and other nihilists...has been understood almost invariably with complete innocence in terms of the values the exact opposite of which were embodied in the figure of Zarathustra; that is, as an "idealistic" type of a higher kind of man, half "saint," half "genius."³⁸

The Übermensch is not to be mistaken for an "idealistic" saint/genius. Nor should this doctrine be confused with Carlyle's great-men theory, which Nietzsche more than once disdainfully rejects as a "hero cult,"³⁹ a prostration before the hero and the genius.⁴⁰ (In an interesting parallel in The Antichrist, which will receive our attention in the following chapter, Nietzsche rejects, no less disdainfully, Renan's attempt to see Jesus as a hero and a genius).⁴¹ But if the Übermensch is not a hero or a genius, neither are those whom Zarathustra calls "higher men" Übermenschen.

Verily, you who are good and just, there is much about you that is laughable, and especially your fear of that which has hitherto been called the devil. What is great is so alien to your souls that the Übermensch would be awesome to you in his kindness. And you who are wise and knowing, you would flee from the burning sun of that wisdom in which the Übermensch joyously bathes his nakedness. You highest men whom my eyes have seen, this is my doubt concerning you and

my secret laughter: I guess that you would call my Übermensch - devil.

Alas, I have wearied of these highest and best men: from their "height" I longed to get up, out, and away to the Übermensch.⁴²

If these are all things the Übermensch, is not, what, then, is he? Man is a certain kind of being, a human being (Mensch). The human being is a step "beyond" the animal: not "higher than," in the sense of progress, nor merely "different from," but "beyond" in the non-judgmental sense of more highly developed, more complex. The Übermensch - literally, over-man, above-man, beyond-man, more-than-man - is beyond man, but in the distinct sense that man is beyond animals, and no other. The Übermensch is a kind of Mensch (man), just as man is a kind of animal.

Has there, in fact, ever been an Übermensch?

Zarathustra says no.

Never yet has there been an Übermensch. Naked I saw both the greatest and the smallest man: they are still all-too-similar to each other. Verily, even the greatest I found all-too-small.⁴³

Nevertheless, some five years later Nietzsche was to write in Twilight of the Idols:

Goethe - not a German event, but a European one: a magnificent attempt to overcome the eighteenth century by a return to nature, by an ascent to the naturalness of the Renaissance -

a kind of self-overcoming on the part of that century. He bore its strongest instincts within himself: the sensibility, the idolatry of nature, the anti-historic, the idealistic, the unreal and revolutionary (the latter being merely a form of the unreal). He sought help from history, natural science, antiquity, and also Spinoza, but, above all, from practical activity; he surrounded himself with limited horizons; he did not retire from life but put himself into the midst of it; he was not fainthearted but took as much as possible upon himself, over himself, into himself. What he wanted was totality: he fought against the sundering of reason, sensuality, feeling, will (preached with the most abhorrent scholasticism by Kant, the antipode of Goethe); he disciplined himself to wholeness, he created himself.

...Goethe conceived a human being who would be strong, highly educated, skillful in all bodily matters, self-controlled, reverent toward himself, and who might dare to afford the whole range and wealth of being natural, being strong not from weakness but from strength, because he knows how to use to his advantage, even that from which the average nature would perish; the man for whom there is no longer anything that is forbidden - unless it be weakness, whether called vice or virtue.

Such a spirit who has become free stands amid the cosmos with a joyous and trusting fatalism, in the fall however, is the highest of all possible, and I have baptized it with the name of the whole 44 a faith, however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus. 44

Without wishing to ignore Zarathustra's denial that there has ever been an Übermensch, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that here in this portrait of Goethe

is included all that Nietzsche claimed for his Dionysian Übermensch. To equate the two - Goethe and the Übermensch - without this portrait, however, is apt to be misleading; Goethe means different things to different people. Nietzsche is pointing to Goethe as a kind of living model of the Übermensch, of his conviction that "great men arise from the presence of opposites and a consciousness of them - the tautly-spanned bow."⁴⁵

Finally, then, Nietzsche is saying two things with regard to his ethical ideal. First, the evolution of man cannot be spoken of as "progress." The "higher men," the good and just, the wise and knowing, those who supposedly represent the best that man can do, Zarathustra calls all-too-human. Second, there is, however, the real possibility of man overcoming his all-too-humanness.

Mankind does not represent a development toward something better or stronger or higher in the sense accepted today. ...further development is altogether not according to any necessity in the direction of elevation, enhancement, or strength.

In another sense, success in individual cases is constantly encountered in the most widely different places and cultures: here we really do find a higher type, which is, in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of Übermensch. Such

fortunate accidents of great success have always been possible and will perhaps always be possible. And even whole families, tribes, or peoples may occasionally represent such a bull's-eye.⁴⁶

The creation of the Übermensch is a human possibility.

In the quotation immediately preceding we are faced, however, with the social-historical misconception which has detracted from this decisive aspect of Nietzsche's work and generally raised havoc with his whole positive ethical alternative to the ascetic ideal. It is what might be called Nietzsche's aristocratic bias, expressed in this terse note: "Not 'mankind' (Menschheit), but the Übermensch is the goal!"⁴⁷

V

In the course of a caustic polemic directed at Hegel and the Hegelians, Nietzsche wrote, in his early essay on the value of history for life, "According to him (Eduard von Hartmann), we are approaching 'that ideal condition in which the human race makes its history with full consciousness'; ...If we once reach it, the word 'world-process' will never pass any man's lips again without a smile." He continues:

There will come a time when we will wisely abstain from all constructions of the world-process as well as of the history of mankind, a time in which one will no longer regard the masses at all, but once again individuals, who build a kind of bridge across the wild stream of becoming. They do not continue a process, but live timelessly

and contemporaneously.... It is the task of history to act as messenger for them, thus continually providing occasion for and lending strength to the creation of great men. No, the goal of mankind cannot lie in its end, but only in its highest examples.⁴⁸

It is not possible to glean Nietzsche's aristocratic bias from this passage. The point here is a more conventional one, namely, that greatness, of whatever kind (Nietzsche is not specific here), is to be found in individuals rather than among the many. The emphasis is less on who the great men are than on where they are apt to appear, if and when they do appear. And Nietzsche's conviction is, contra Hegel and the Hegelians, not at the end of a process, "but only in its highest examples."⁴⁹ Here is the precedent for the claim already cited⁵⁰ which appeared fourteen years later in The Antichrist.

Who, then, are these individuals, these highest examples?

These are the real human beings, the no-longer-animals, the philosophers, artists and saints. In their appearance and through their appearance, nature, which never leaps, makes it sole leap, and it is a leap of joy. For it senses that it has, for the first time, reached its goal, there, namely, where it comprehends that it must learn not to have goals, and that it has raised the stakes of the game of life and becoming too high.⁵¹

It would seem that Nietzsche is herewith excluding all but a very few from the possibility of ever becoming "no-longer-animals"; only a handful of "such fortunate

accidents" can become "truly human beings," thereby gaining entry into the philosopher-artist-saint elite. This is partially true. We must, however, not content ourselves with naming these "higher types"; we must ask why Nietzsche considers each of them "a higher type, which is, in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of Übermensch."52

The philosopher and the artist serve the same purpose. Nature needs them, as it were,

for a metaphysical purpose, namely, for its own enlightenment concerning itself; so that finally it will be confronted with a pure and finished image of that which it never was able to see clearly in the turbulence of its becoming - in short, for its own self-knowledge.53

Nietzsche is not speaking of philosophers and artists in a general, vague sense. He is, in fact, operating with a very specific criterion: only those human beings who hold a mirror up to nature to facilitate self-knowledge are truly philosophers and artists. The saint, too, is a truly human being, though his function is different from that of the philosopher and the artist.

...finally, nature needs the saint, in whom the ego fuses completely and ceases partially or wholly to experience its ailing life as individual, but rather as the most intense feeling of solidarity, of compassion, of oneness with all that is alive - the saint, in whom that miracle of transformation occurs, on whom the game of becoming never descends, this final and highest incarnation toward which all nature strives for its redemption from itself.54

Whereas the philosopher and the artist are defined by their ability to lead us to self-knowledge, to see ourselves as separate, as individual egos, the saint represents the next and final step - unthinkable without first achieving self-knowledge - the step to "the most intense feeling of solidarity, of compassion, of oneness with all that is alive...."⁵⁵ With this delineation of the functions of philosophers and artists, on the one hand, and saints, on the other, as the midwives of self-knowledge and fellow-feeling, respectively, we may better understand why it is only partially true to say that the philosopher-artist-saint elite is limited to the very few.

There is no doubt, we are all related and bound to him (the saint), just as we are related to the philosopher and the artist....⁵⁶

Only when we ourselves, in this life or a future one, gain admission to that noble order of the philosopher, the artist, and the saint, will we be given a new goal for our love and our hate. Meanwhile, we have our task and our sphere of duties, our hate and our love.⁵⁷

We are all related to Übermensch; what is more, we are ourselves potentially Übermensch. Until we become Übermensch ourselves, we have our own tasks and duties.

And what do these consist of?

Above all, one thing is certain. These new duties are not the duties of a solitary. Rather, one belongs with them in a mighty mutuality which is held together, not by outward forms and

rules but by a fundamental idea. It is the fundamental idea of culture, insofar as it sets every one of us but one task: to promote the creation of the philosopher, the artist, and the saint within ourselves and without, and thus to work toward the consummation of nature.⁵⁸

Once again, Nietzsche makes it clear that our task entails promoting the creation (Nietzsche's word is Erzeugung - procreation) of the philosopher, the artist and the saint within ourselves and without.

Nevertheless, his belief that only a few would ever actually attain this status of the truly human, no-longer-animal, is equally clear. Why is this?

We have drawn attention to Nietzsche's conviction, deriving from Heraclitus and the Greek conception of agon, that "great men arise from the presence of opposites and a consciousness of them - the tautly-spanned bow."⁵⁹ We saw that these truly human beings could be conceived only singly, as individuals. That is, becoming an Übermensch is an individual feat, not a group activity, which is, however, not to say that Übermenschen are solipsists - a not uncommon criticism of Nietzsche by hostile and friendly commentators alike.⁶⁰ Übermenschen can only come into being and continue to exist in dependence both on their fellow-Übermenschen and on the rest of mankind (Menschen). What is more, the ultimate "stage" in the development of the Übermensch is, as we

have just seen, represented by the saint, in whom is achieved, not solitude, but "the most intense feeling of solidarity, of compassion, of oneness with all that is alive...."⁶¹

Nietzsche's psychological analysis, culminating in the discovery of the instinct of conscience, indigenous to every man from birth, would seem to corroborate his claim that becoming an Übermensch is an individual but not isolated achievement, in that every individual, every conscience, is shaped by those on whom one depends from birth. But it would also seem to follow that this dependence is personal and interpersonal, i.e. mutual, and that the road to becoming an Übermensch is open to every human being. Why, then, did Nietzsche not draw these conclusions? Why, if every man is potentially an Übermensch, did Nietzsche speak in terms of an elite? His elitist ethic is a consequence of his aristocratic bias.

It is not that Nietzsche has no theory of society. On the contrary, he has worked one out in some detail. It would be well to have it before us.

The order of castes, the supreme, the dominant law, is merely the sanction of a natural order, a natural lawfulness of the first rank, over which no arbitrariness, no "modern idea" has

any power. In every healthy society there are three types which condition each other and gravitate differently physiologically; each has its own hygiene, its own field of work, its own sense of perfection and mastery. Nature, not Manu, distinguishes the pre-eminently spiritual ones, those who are pre-eminently strong in muscle and temperament, and those, the third type, who excel neither in one respect nor in the other, the mediocre ones & the last as the great majority, the first as the elite.

The highest caste - I call them the fewest - being perfect, also has the privileges of the fewest: among them, to represent happiness, beauty, and graciousness on earth. Only to the most spiritual human beings is beauty permitted: among them alone is graciousness not weakness. Fulchrum est paucorum hominum: the good is a privilege. On the other hand, there is nothing that they may be conceded less than ugly manners or a pessimistic glance, an eye that makes ugly - or indignation at the total aspect of things. Indignation is the privilege of the chandalas; pessimism too.

"The world is perfect" - thus says the instinct of the most spiritual, the Yes-saying instinct; "imperfection, whatever is beneath us, distance, the pathos of distance - even the chandala still belongs to this perfection." The most spiritual men, as the strongest, find their happiness where others would find their destruction; in the labyrinth, in hardness against themselves and others, in experiments; their joy is self-conquest; asceticism becomes in them nature, need, and instinct. Difficult tasks are a privilege to them; to play with burdens which crush others, a recreation. Knowledge - a form of asceticism. They are the most venerable kind of man; that does not preclude their being the most cheerful and the kindest. They rule not because they want to but because they are; they are not free to be second.

The second: they are the guardians of the law, those who see to order and security, the noble

warriors, and above all the king as the highest formula of warrior, judge, and upholder of the law. The second are the executive arm of the most spiritual, that which is closest to them and belongs to them, that which does everything gross in the work of ruling for them - their retinue, their right hand, their best pupils.

In all this, to repeat, there is nothing arbitrary, nothing contrived; whatever is different is contrived - contrived for the ruin of nature. The order of castes, the order of rank, merely formulates the highest law of life; the separation of the three types is necessary for the preservation of society, to make possible the higher and the highest types. The inequality of rights is the first condition for the existence of any rights at all.

A right is a privilege. A man's state of being is his privilege. Let us not underestimate the privileges of the mediocre. As one climbs higher, life becomes ever harder; the coldness increases, responsibility increases.

A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base; its first presupposition is a strong and soundly consolidated mediocrity. Handicraft, trade, agriculture, science, the greatest part of art, the whole quintessence of professional activity, to sum it up, is compatible only with a mediocre amount of ability and ambition; that sort of thing would be out of place among exceptions; the instinct here required would contradict both aristocratism and anarchism. To be a public utility, a wheel, a function, for that one must be destined by nature: it is not society, it is the only kind of happiness of which the great majority are capable that makes intelligent machines of them. For the mediocre, to be mediocre is their happiness; mastery of one thing, specialization - a natural instinct.

It would be completely unworthy of a more profound spirit to consider mediocrity as such an objection. In fact, it is the very first

necessity if there are to be exceptions: a high culture depends on it. When the exceptional human being treats the mediocre more tenderly than himself and his peers, this is not mere politeness of the heart - it is simply his duty.⁶²

Here we have an extension of the earlier master/slave hypothesis in accordance with which Nietzsche analyzed the various moral codes of past and present.⁶³ Here also is further evidence against Nietzsche's alleged solipsism and for the interdependence of the castes - their arrangement in a hierarchy, an order of rank and a division of labor most advantageous to the thriving of the community as a whole. What is most striking about this passage, however, is its similarity to Nietzsche's description of his hierarchical-relational theory of the living organism.⁶⁴ Indeed, so similar are the two descriptions that we are justified in seeing the former, the theory of society, as exactly analogous to the latter, the theory of the psyche. As a psychologist, Nietzsche is a master; as a theorist of society, he is unreliable. This is, of course, not new, but merely a restatement of the criticism already voiced in our analysis of Toward a Genealogy of Morals.⁶⁵ Just as we were left unconvinced by Nietzsche's claim to have traced our value judgments to an original pre-historic value-bestowing horde of masters and slaves, so also is our

suspicion confirmed in the passage above (note 62) that he believed in the "naturalness" of an elitist organization of society.

Nietzsche was intent on restoring psychology to its rightful place as "queen of the sciences...."⁶⁶ We are, therefore, not justified in requiring of him a theory of society or a political theory. On the other hand, it is equally unjustifiable, on the basis of Nietzsche's own confession that he is "the last antipolitical German," to relegate him to an ineffectual supra-historical, supra-social realm.⁶⁸ It has been our contention throughout that Nietzsche was concerned with men and the values by which they live - ethics. Indeed, Nietzsche's own most persistent question to morality and science and history and whatever else he encountered was: what is its value for life? While admitting that he was no sociologist or political philosopher, it is doubtful that he would have wanted his own philosophy to be judged by any but the most telling critical standards: "The only possible way to criticize a philosophy and the only one that proves anything, namely, to see whether it is possible to live by it...."⁶⁹

To the question - is it possible to assent to Nietzsche's formula, "Dionysus versus the Crucified,"

and to live by his positive ethical alternative to the life-denying Christian-Platonic ideal? - we are constrained to return a negative answer. Neither "the Crucified" nor "Dionysus" provides an adequate ethical guide; the former, for the many reasons which make up Nietzsche's own critique; the latter, because of its one-sidedness, its total lack of mutuality. This is not to fly in the face of our previous defence of Nietzsche against the charge of solipsism. His "society" is based on interdependence, to be sure; it crumbles away if any one caste is missing or weak. But this dependence is not mutual, it is hierarchical. Those who constitute this "society" are not persons, not neighbors, but functionaries of a particular caste. "A high culture," we heard Nietzsche say, "is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base; its first presupposition is a strong and soundly consolidated mediocrity."⁷⁰ As long as society is thought to exist for the purpose of producing "higher types," and as long as "higher types" are defined as "exceptions," as those who, so to speak, stand on the shoulders of the many, then keeping the many mediocre will be indispensable to the continued life of the society. In Nietzsche's own words, "The inequality of rights is the first condition for the existence of any rights at

all."⁷¹ But as soon as it becomes apparent that the achieving of "height" does not entail standing on the shoulders of others, as soon as it can be shown that all men are potentially Übermenschen - and, ironically, it would be difficult to imagine a more democratic theory of the human psyche than Nietzsche's - the order of rank is seen to be redundant. Genuine mutuality becomes possible for the first time.

Nietzsche's aristocratic bias led him to characterize relations between members of society in terms of domination, control, ruling, governing, mastering, in the case of relations between the elite and the mediocre; and in terms of respect in the case of relations between members of the elite. The former relations stand out for their one-sidedness (the ruled do not react, as far as the rulers are concerned, but are only "ruled"), the latter for their lack of mutuality (no member of the elite receives, but only "acts").

We must continually remind ourselves that it is not malice on Nietzsche's part, but a misuse of his otherwise valid and valuable psychological insights into man's behavior which causes his model of society to be so inadequate. But for all his skillful exposure of the ulterior motives buried behind much pity and meekness,

real human goodness, mercy, love and self-denial are conspicuous for their absence from his "society." We might say of Nietzsche what he, in his polemical essay on the Bildungsphilister said about David Strauss: "it should have been his task seriously to explain and derive the phenomena of human goodness, mercy, love and self-denial, which after all exist as a matter of fact, from his...presuppositions...."⁷² Nietzsche was unable to account for these phenomena on the basis of his own presuppositions. That is, they were not derivable from his aristocratic ethic of the Dionysian Übermensch. My own contention is, however, that he did, in the end, account for them, in his puzzled and puzzling treatment of Jesus.

NOTES

- 1) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 280. In an effort to overcome the popular connotations of the word "superman," Walter Kaufmann has, in his translation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, rendered Übermensch as "overman." This term is also useful in imparting to the reader the beauty and lightness of Nietzsche's style and the cleverness and intricacy of his virtually constant punning and coining of words to express his meaning. Since, however, we are here less constrained by questions of style and primarily interested in getting at the content of Nietzsche's ethical ideal, I have left Übermensch in the original German.
- 2) Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Grossoktavausgabe), (Leipzig, 1901-13), XV, p. 354.
- 3) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1159.
- 4) *Ibid.*, III, p. 773.
- 5) See Chapter 6, section II above.
- 6) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 832.
- 7) *Ibid.*, p. 782.
- 8) *Ibid.*, p. 729.
- 9) "We do not use the word 'ressentiment' because of a special predilection for the French language, but because we did not succeed in translating it into German. Moreover, Nietzsche has made it a terminus technicus. In the natural meaning of the French word I detect two elements. First of all, ressentiment is the repeated experiencing and reliving of a particular emotional response reaction against someone else. The continual reliving of the emotion sinks it more deeply into the center of the personality, but concomitantly removes it from the person's zone of action and expression. It is not a mere intellectual recollection of the emotion and of the events to which it 'responded'--it is a re-experiencing of the emotion itself, a

renewal of the original feeling. Secondly, the word implies that the quality of this emotion is negative, i.e., that it contains a movement of hostility. Perhaps the German word 'Groll' (rancor) comes closest to the essential meaning of the term. 'Rancor' is just such a suppressed wrath, independent of the ego's activity, which moves obscurely through the mind. It finally takes shape through the repeated reliving of intentionalities of hatred or other hostile emotions. In itself it does not contain a specific hostile intention, but it nourishes any number of such intentions. Max Scheler, Ressentiment, trans. William W. Holdheim (New York: The Free Press, 1961), pp. 39-40.

- 10) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 782.
- 11) Ibid., p. 784.
- 12) Sigmund Freud, An Outline of Psychoanalysis, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 4.
- 13) See Chapter 6, section II above.
- 14) In Twilight of the Idols, Nietzsche writes, with reference to Rousseau: "I too speak of a 'return to nature,' although it is really not a going back but an ascent--up into the high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness where great tasks are something one plays with, one may play with." (Werke, II, p. 1022).
- 15) For evidence of this, see the comparative studies of animal behavior done by Konrad Lorenz, especially King Solomon's Ring, trans. Marjorie Kerr Wilson (University paperback ed.; London: Methuen, 1961), and On Aggression, trans. Marjorie Latzke (University paperback ed.; London: Methuen, 1967).
- 16) John Wren-Lewis, "The Passing of Puritanism," The Critical Quarterly (January, 1964), p. 296.
- 17) Ibid., p. 297.
- 18) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 868.
- 19) Ibid., p. 825.
- 20) Ibid., p. 868.

- 21) Ibid., p. 869.
- 22) See Chapter 6 above.
- 23) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1184.
- 24) See Chapter 5, section II above.
- 25) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 215.
- 26) Ibid., p. 21.
- 27) Ibid., III, p. 788.
- 28) See Chapter 5, section II above.
- 29) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 35.
- 30) Ibid., p. 88.
- 31) Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1959), p. 175. There is here an implicit critique of Walter Kaufmann's position which claims precisely such a synthesis. I share Brown's critique of Kaufmann, but not his reasons for criticizing. Brown makes a case for the creation of a Dionysian ego, that is, a bodily (i.e. not solely genital) consciousness. But the body as he conceives it, as has only become fully apparent in his most recent work, Love's Body (New York: Random House, 1966), is a pre-Oedipal, indeed, intrauterine, mystical body, not Nietzsche's Leib.
- 32) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 899: "Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, animal-man, has had no meaning at all."
- 33) Ibid., p. 1030.
- 34) Ibid., p. 1109.
- 35) Zarathustra's journey to man virtually begins with the confession, "I love man." (Ibid., p. 278)
- 36) Ibid., p. 1134.
- 37) Ibid., pp. 279-81.

- 38) Ibid., pp. 1100-1101.
- 39) Ibid., p. 1101.
- 40) See especially in this regard, "The Hero-cult and its fanatics." (Ibid., pp. 1188-89)
- 41) Ibid., pp. 1190-91.
- 42) Ibid., p. 398.
- 43) Ibid., p. 351.
- 44) Ibid., pp. 1024-25.
- 45) Ibid., III, pp. 449-50.
- 46) Ibid., II, p. 1166.
- 47) Ibid., III, p. 440.
- 48) Ibid., I, p. 270.
- 49) Ibid.
- 50) See note 46 above.
- 51) Nietzsche, Werke, I, p. 324.
- 52) Ibid., II, p. 1166.
- 53) Ibid., I, p. 326.
- 54) Ibid.
- 55) Ibid.
- 56) Ibid.
- 57) Ibid., p. 327.
- 58) Ibid., pp. 325-26.
- 59) Ibid., III, pp. 449-50.

- 60) Even as friendly a critic as Albert Camus could say of Nietzsche that "He confused freedom and solitude, as do all proud spirits." (The Rebel, trans. Anthony Bower (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1959), p. 75).
- 61) Nietzsche, Werke, I. p. 326.
- 62) Ibid., II, pp. 1226-28.
- 63) See Chapter 6, section II above.
- 64) See Chapter 7, note 63 above.
- 65) See Chapter 6, section III above.
- 66) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 587.
- 67) Ibid., p. 1073.
- 68) This is the course Walter Kaufmann follows in his otherwise admirable attempt to vindicate Nietzsche from the unfounded interpretations of his works in terms of Realpolitik. See especially, in this regard, his Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Meridian Books paperback ed.; Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., June 1963), p. 104!

Nietzsche and Hegel were both primarily concerned about the realm of Absolute Spirit, i.e. art, religion, and philosophy, and both evaluated the State in terms of its relation to these higher pursuits. Hegel had praised the State because he thought that it alone made possible these supra-social enterprises; Nietzsche condemned the State as their arch-enemy. Each considered customary morality essentially social and hence bracketed it with the State. Hence Hegel affirmed it, while Nietzsche criticized it, but they agreed in their firm opposition to Kant's doctrine of the primacy of moral values.

Kaufmann's view is that "For Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche --no less than Schopenhauer and Burckhardt--history is decidedly not the ground of happiness," (Ibid., p. 121), an assumption diametrically opposed to the assumption on which this interpretation is based.

69) Nietzsche's Werke, I, p. 356.

70) Ibid., II, p. 1227.

71) Ibid.

72) Ibid., I, p. 168.

10. Jesus

Discord must be chained to concord,
strife must become the slave of unity
and love.¹

--Wayland Young

And goodness is achieved not in a
vacuum, but in the company of other
men, attended by love.²

--Saul Bellow

I

"Christianity" has become something entirely
different from that which its originator did
and wanted.³

"What to do, in order to have faith?" - an
absurd question. What is missing in Christian-
ity₄ is precisely everything that Jesus bid one
do.⁴

Christianity is a practice, not a doctrine.
It tells us how we are to act, not what we
should believe.⁵

Christians have never done the deeds which
Jesus prescribed for them....
The Buddhist acts differently from the non-
Buddhist; the Christian acts like everybody
else and has a Christianity of ceremonies and
moods.⁶

The exemplary life consists of love and
humility; depth of feeling, which excludes not
even the lowliest; of absolute renunciation of
self-justification, self-defence and victory,
in the sense of personal triumph; of the belief
in happiness here on earth in spite of need,
resistance and death; of forgiveness, the ab-
sence of anger and contempt; of not desiring
to be rewarded; of being bound to no one; of
being a slave to no man, in the most spiritual
sense; a very proud life, intent upon poverty
and service.⁷

In these random quotations from the unpublished notes, we have virtually a summary of Nietzsche's views on Jesus and Christianity. The emphasis is on action, a way of life, Praxis, deeds - Jesus' deeds. As the final quotation shows, Nietzsche is explicit about what he considers the Christian life to consist of. Yet, however useful this cursory summing up may be toward setting the stage for this chapter, it will not stand alone without the likelihood of being misunderstood. Before we can hope to appreciate the radicality of Nietzsche's views, we must ask, quite simply: who, for Nietzsche, was Jesus?

II

Nietzsche, while being practically illiterate theologically,⁸ was, perhaps by virtue of his training in philology, not unaware of the problems involved in any attempt to discover who Jesus was. We know from his own admission that he had read the lives of Jesus of both Strauss and Renan (whom he calls "that buffoon in psychologeis" for introducing "the two most inappropriate concepts possible into his explanation of the Jesus type: the concept of genius and the concept of the hero...."⁹). But neither was it the philological problem, as such, presented by the Gospels which concerned him.¹⁰

What concerns me is the psychological type of the Redeemer. After all, this could be contained in the Gospels, however mutilated or overloaded with alien features: as Francis of Assisi is preserved in his legends, despite his legends. Not the truth concerning what he did, what he said, how he really died; but the question whether his type can still be exhibited at all, whether it has been "transmitted."¹¹

In his first Life of Jesus (1835-36), "Strauss made everything, without exception, historically uncertain,"¹² to cite Karl Barth's unequivocal judgment. Nietzsche took Strauss's critical findings seriously; in fact, so seriously, that what were for Strauss historically uncertain documents became for Nietzsche "saints' legends," and the application of scientific methods to them "mere scholarly idleness."¹³ As early as 1866 Nietzsche wrote, in a letter to his friend, von Gersdorff: "If Christianity means 'faith in a historical event or in a historical person,' then I have nothing to do with this Christianity. On the other hand, if it means simply to be in need of redemption, then I can esteem it highly...."¹⁴

This early emphasis on redemption will prove significant later on. Indeed, it is the first clue to Nietzsche's conception of the Redeemer type.

If redemption is a clue to Nietzsche's view of Jesus, let us ask: redemption from what? What does it mean to be in need of redemption?

We know a state in which the sense of touch is pathologically excitable and shrinks from any contact, from grasping a solid object. One should translate such a physiological habitus into its ultimate consequence....

The instinctive hatred of reality: a consequence of an extreme capacity for suffering and excitement which no longer wants any contact at all because it feels every contact too deeply.

The instinctive exclusion of any antipathy, any hostility, any boundaries or divisions in man's feelings: the consequence of an extreme capacity for suffering and excitement which experiences any resistance, even any compulsion to resist, as unendurable displeasure (that is, as harmful, as something against which the instinct of self-preservation warns us); and finds blessedness (pleasure) only in no longer offering any resistance to anybody, neither to evil nor to him who is evil - love as the only, as the last possible, way of life.

These are the two physiological realities on which, out of which, the doctrine of redemption grew. ...The fear of pain, even of infinitely minute pain - that can end in no other way than in a religion of love.¹⁵

Nietzsche's answer to the question about redemption is a psychological answer (he calls it, true to his "bodily" approach, "physiological"). To be in need of redemption is, in short, to be neurotic; it is the direct consequence of a pathological inability to bear even the minutest pain. It is, in Nietzsche's terminology, decadent; that is, a symptom of declining, waning life.

But Nietzsche is doing more than answering the question about redemption. The conclusions he has drawn

from his reading of the Gospels amount no longer to the mere possibility of gleaning the psychological type of the Redeemer from these "saints' legends" in spite of them, but to an affirmation that the Redeemer type is, in fact, preserved there, though "only in extensive distortion."¹⁶ Nietzsche is quick to admit that the type might have been preserved without distortion, which is to say that "as a type of decadence, the type might actually have been peculiarly manifold and contradictory."¹⁷ Though possible, Nietzsche considers it unlikely, for in order for this to be the case, two equally unlikely assumptions would have to be made: that the record is absolutely trustworthy, and that the type shows no "traces of the milieu in which he moved as a foreign figure."¹⁸ On the trustworthiness of the record, we have already heard Nietzsche's view; as to the milieu in which Jesus moved:

That queer and sick world into which the Gospels introduce us - as in a Russian novel, a world in which the seum of society, nervous disorders, and "childlike" idiocy seem to be having a rendezvous - must at all events have coarsened the type: in order to be able to understand anything of it, the first disciples, in particular, first translated into their own crudity an existence which was wholly embedded in symbols and incomprehensibilities - for them the type did not exist until it had been reshaped in better-known forms. The prophet, the Messiah, the future judge, the moral teacher, the miracle man, John the Baptist - each another chance to misconstrue the type.

...It is regrettable that a Dostoevsky did not live near this most interesting of all decadents - I mean someone who would have known how to sense the very stirring charm of such a mixture of the sublime, the sickly and the childlike.

...Meanwhile there is a gaping contradiction between the sermonizer on the mount, lake, and meadow, whose appearance seems like that of a Buddha on soil that is not at all Indian, and that fanatic of aggression, that mortal enemy of theologians and priests, whom Renan's malice has glorified as le grand maitre en ironie. I myself have no doubt that the generous dose of gall (and even of esprit) first flowed into the type of the Master from the excited state of Christian propaganda....

To repeat, I am against any attempt to introduce the fanatic into the Redeemer type.¹⁹

The coarsening of the Redeemer type by the milieu in which Jesus moved was, according to Nietzsche, a paradigm of what was to come: "the history of Christianity, beginning with the death on the cross, is the history of the misunderstanding, growing cruder with every step, of an original symbolism."²⁰ Here is a further clue to what was hinted at above in the reference to Jesus' life as "an existence which was wholly embedded in symbols and incomprehensibilities,"²¹ namely that redemption, and thus the Redeemer type, are conceivable and explicable only symbolically: the problem is one of symbolism, and Jesus is "a symbolist par excellence...."²²

If I understand anything about this great symbolist, it is that he accepted only inner realities as realities, as "truths" - that he understood the rest, everything natural, temporal, spatial, historical, only as signs, as occasions for parables.²³

Symbolism is, indeed, the second major key to Nietzsche's conception of Jesus as a psychological Redeemer type. For this type, inner realities are the only realities; being a Christian is thus a matter of the heart.

The "glad tidings" are precisely that there are no longer any opposites; the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children....²⁴

In the whole psychology of the "evangel" the concept of guilt and punishment is lacking; also the concept of reward. "Sin" - any distance separating God and man - is abolished; precisely this is the "glad tidings" Blessedness is not promised, it is not tied to conditions: it is the only reality - the rest is a sign with which to speak of it.²⁵

The deep instinct for how one must live, in order to feel oneself "in heaven," to feel "eternal," while in all other behavior one decidedly does not feel oneself "in heaven" - this alone is the psychological reality of "redemption." A new way of life, not a new faith.²⁶

Blessedness is the only reality, and the purpose of living a Christian life, of "evangelical practice," is, in the language of the theological tradition associated with Paul, Augustine and Luther, justification; in Nietzsche's words, "that one feels 'divine,'

'blessed,' 'evangelical,' at all times a 'child of God.'"²⁷ Which is not to say, however, that this inner reality has no outward and visible manifestation. On the contrary.

The consequence of such a state projects itself into a new practice, the genuine evangelical practice. It is not a "faith" that distinguishes the Christian; the Christian acts, he is distinguished by acting differently: by not resisting, either in words or in his heart, those who treat him ill; by making no distinction between foreigner and native, between Jew and non-Jew ("the neighbor" - really the coreligionist, the Jew); by not growing angry with anybody, by not despising anybody; by not permitting himself to be seen or involved at courts of law ("not swearing"); by not divorcing his wife under any circumstances, not even if his wife has been proved unfaithful. All of this at bottom one principle; all of this, consequences of one instinct.²⁸

Thus, the evangelical practice is two-pronged: it is both the way to blessedness, the inner reality - justification; and a consequence of it, outward - in the theological language of the Reformation, sanctification. Nietzsche himself says as much. Nevertheless, he also insists with regard to the outward manifestation of the inner reality that "one should beware of finding more than a sign language in this, a semeiology, an occasion for parables."²⁹ However much we might wish to derive an ethic from Nietzsche's "doctrine of sanctification," we can do so only by doing violence to his conception of a very private psychological type of the Redeemer.

This "bringer of glad tidings" died as he had lived, as he had taught - not to "redeem men" but to show how one must live. This practice is his legacy to mankind: his behavior before the judges, before the catchpoles, before the accusers and all kinds of slander and scorn - his behavior on the cross. He does not resist, he does not defend his right, he takes no step which might ward off the worst; on the contrary, he provokes it. And he begs, he suffers, he loves with those, in those, who do him evil. The words to the thief on the cross contain the entire Gospel, "That was truly a godlike man, a child of God," says the thief. "If this is what you feel," answers the Redeemer, "then you are in paradise, you are a child of God." Not to resist, not to be angry, not to hold responsible - but to resist not even the evil one - to love him.³⁰

All this, however, not for others, but solely for himself, that is, for his own redemption. For Nietzsche, the only valid way to speak of an ethic with regard to Jesus is in the context of symbolism. That is to say, Jesus is not to be understood as living for others in any conventional religious or ethical sense (he neither died for others³¹ nor lived for others), but as living and dying before others - as a model, in short, as a type. The ethical inference, if indeed it can be called that, being this: as he lived and felt himself "redeemed," "in paradise," so should you live if you desire to feel yourself "redeemed." Jesus' example is his legacy, but only in this distinct sense.

...only Christian practice, a life such as he lived who died on the cross, is Christian.

Such a life is still possible today, for certain people even necessary: genuine original Christianity will be possible at all times.

Not a faith, but a doing; above all, a not doing of many things, another state of being.³²

What are the "glad tidings"? True life, eternal life, has been found - it is not promised, it is here, it is in you: as a living in love, in love without subtraction and exclusion, without regard for station. Everyone is the child of God - Jesus definitely presumes nothing for himself alone - and as a child of God everyone is equal to everyone.³³

Not a being for others, but a state of blessedness - these are the glad tidings. And the bringer of these tidings is neither hero nor genius, but "a symbolist par excellence...."³⁴ "Spoken with the precision of a physiologist, even an entirely different word would still be more fitting here - the word idiot."³⁵

III

In what possible way could Nietzsche be using the word "idiot"? Solely for its shock value? As Walter Kaufmann has written, "That the book (The Antichrist) is meant to be shockingly blasphemous scarcely needs saying."³⁶ And the use of the word "idiot" in referring to Jesus did indeed shock, not his readers, however, but his sister, who suppressed the phrase, "the word idiot," when she published the book in 1895 (Nietzsche had prepared it for publication in 1888). Not until 1931 was

the phrase made public,³⁷ and then, as evidence that Nietzsche was insane when he wrote The Antichrist. Then, in 1938, Karl Jaspers mentioned in a lecture "Nietzsche means idiot in the sense in which Dostoevsky calls his Prince Myshkin an idiot."³⁸ Though he leaves this conviction unsubstantiated, Jaspers surely has a point. Walter Kaufmann has since drawn attention to the sudden significance which the word "idiot" assumes in Nietzsche's work after his discovery of Dostoevsky in early 1887.³⁹ Although it is impossible to know for certain whether Nietzsche ever, in fact, read The Idiot, there was a French translation of the novel available at this time.⁴⁰ In his letters, beginning with one dated Nice, 23 February 1887, references to Dostoevsky and works other than The Idiot appear with frequency. Having discovered a French translation of Notes from Underground in a bookstore, Nietzsche writes to Overbeck: "The instinct of kinship (or what should I call it?) expressed itself at once; I was overjoyed."⁴¹ Less than two weeks later he writes to Peter Gast about his recent discovery, praising Dostoevsky both as psychologist (specifically, in his The House of the Dead) and as artist (in The Insulted and the Injured), and calling The House of the Dead "one of the

'most human books' that exists." Here again, he mentions "the sudden sense of having encountered a brother."⁴² For Nietzsche to admit having found a psychologist who is his peer is rare indeed; but he goes even further, which is nothing short of astonishing. In Twilight of the Idols he confesses that Dostoevsky, "this profound human being," is "the only psychologist, incidentally, from whom I had something to learn...."⁴³ And from Turin, shortly before his collapse, Nietzsche writes Georg Brandes (20 October 1888), thanking him for his efforts to introduce his works to a wider audience:⁴⁴

Oh how diligent you are! And I, idiot, do not even understand Danish! That one can, as you say, "come to life again in Russia," I have no doubt. I count some Russian book or other, above all Dostoevsky (in French translation, for heaven's sake, not German!!), among my greatest reliefs.⁴⁵

It is true, as Walter Kaufmann has said, that Nietzsche's "whole attitude toward Jesus hinges upon 'something' which he 'learned' from Dostoevsky."⁴⁶ Further, on the basis of the overwhelming circumstantial evidence here assembled, it is surely possible to claim that that "something" was the psychological type of the Redeemer - in the person of Prince Myshkin.

We have it from Dostoevsky himself that his intention in writing The Idiot was "to depict a positively good man." Therein lie both the strength of the novel as a whole and

the magnificence of Myshkin as a character, on the one hand, and, on the other, the failure of the prince as an ethical guide.

I have long been haunted by a certain idea, but I was afraid of making a novel out of it, because the idea is very difficult and I am not ready for it. The idea is - to create a positively good man.⁴⁷

"A certain idea" - if it is possible to pick out one motif which informs Dostoevsky's work from beginning to end, it must surely be the recurring motif of "the idea." One critic has written of it as Dostoevsky's "fundamental equation: man=idea." That is to say, the dominant figures in his novels "face us not as theorizing individuals but as personified ideas in action, or to use the French philosophical form, as idées-forces...their psychological life appears entirely adapted and subordinated to a fixed idea, as it were."⁴⁸ That they do not appear as mere phantoms but as human beings, alive, aware and acting, is due to the massive achievement of Dostoevsky's art. Prince Myshkin is, to be sure, the personification of an idea; his creator says as much in the letter cited above. But, thanks to Dostoevsky's artistry, he is also a man. Indeed, Dostoevsky has been so successful in creating "a positively good man" as to leave us with but one conviction: if this is positive goodness, we shall

have to reject it. But is it positive goodness? From what did Dostoevsky derive his idea of goodness? "There is only one positively good man in the world - Christ..."⁴⁹ To facilitate a proper appraisal of Nietzsche's conception of Jesus as the psychological type of the Redeemer, let us look at Dostoevsky's conception of Christ as the only one positively good man in the world.

Prince Myshkin is variously described to us as being simple-hearted, absent-minded, naive, meek, gullible, unsuspecting, awkward, honest, innocent, inarticulate, noble, childlike, boundlessly trustful, morbidly sensitive, as having no sense of proportion but a seemingly infinite capacity for bearing persecution and for forgiveness - whatever the misdeed and regardless whether it was innocently performed or maliciously premeditated. In the words of Princess Byelovsky to Lizaveta Prokofyevna as she took leave after that scandalous incident in which Myshkin broke the valuable china vase and fell victim to a fit of epilepsy: "Well, there's good and bad in him. And if you care to know my opinion, there's more bad than good. You can see for yourselves what he is, a sick man!"⁵⁰

In a passage which George Steiner has called "one of the very great passages in The Idiot - indeed, in the history of the novel,"⁵¹ we get a glimpse of the prince

at his best. Varya has just denounced Nastasya Filippovna as a "shameless woman" for announcing that she has no intention of marrying her brother, Ganya, but goading him nevertheless into offering to pay one hundred thousand roubles for her:

Everything danced before Ganya's eyes, and, completely forgetting himself, he struck at his sister with all his might. He would have hit her on the face, but suddenly another hand caught Ganya's. Myshkin stood between him and his sister

"Don't, that's enough," he brought out insistently, though he was shaking all over with violent emotion.

"Are you always going to get in my way?" roared Ganya. He let go Varya's arm and, mad with rage, gave Myshkin a violent slap in the face with the hand thus freed.⁵²

And yet this episode is so powerful and rings so true virtually because it is here wrenched out of its context. In the body of the novel, as the awareness of Myshkin's "goodness" mounts, it is accompanied by an oppressive tension. Those around him cannot endure this kind of perfection. Aglaia reveals something to Myshkin which impresses him so much that he vows to remember it and "thing it over":⁵³ "You have no tenderness, nothing but truth, and so you judge unjustly."⁵⁴ Aglaia is certainly too harsh in accusing Myshkin of lacking in all tenderness, as we shall see in some scenes below, but she has

touched on something important in the second part of her indictment. Earlier on, before reciting the poem about the "poor knight," Aglaja had spoken of her deep respect for the poem because it "simply describes a man who is capable of an ideal, and what's more, a man who having once set an ideal before him has faith in it, and having faith in it, gives up his life blindly to it."⁵⁵ Precisely this, Myshkin's blind faith in the ideal of compassion, "the fundamental idea of Christ,"⁵⁶ is what causes him to be unjust and, ultimately, to destroy those he loves.

We are discussing Dostoevsky's conception of Christ. Myshkin, taking leave of Rogozhin one evening and wanting not to leave him in a gloomy and irritable mood (they had been looking at a copy of a Holbein portraying Jesus just after he had been taken from the cross) blurted out "As to the question of faith....," and proceeded to recount in rapid succession four conversations he had had in two days the previous week. Of the final one, he said:

...when I was going back to the hotel, I came upon a peasant woman with a tiny baby in her arms. She was quite a young woman and the baby was about six weeks old. The baby smiled at her for the first time in its life. I saw her crossing herself with great devotion. "What are you doing, my dear?" (I was always asking questions in those days.) "God has just such gladness every time he sees from heaven that a sinner is praying to Him with all his heart, as a mother has when she sees

the first smile on her baby's face." That was what the woman said to me almost in those words, this deep, subtle and truly religious thought - a thought in which all the essence of Christianity finds expression; that is the whole conception of God as our Father and of God's gladness in man, like a father's in his own child - the fundamental idea of Christ!⁵⁷

The fundamental idea of Christ is love, as pity,⁵⁸ as compassion. The prince thought to himself, "Compassion was the chief and perhaps only law of all human existence."⁵⁹ With these few sentences Dostoevsky has set the stage for much of what follows.

An important part of what follows is Myshkin's love for Nastasya, the "shameless woman,"⁶⁰ and its incompatibility with his love for Aglaia. From his first glimpse of Nastasya in the portrait, Myshkin is captivated by her, but in a strange way. Near the end of the raucous scene in which the men assembled jest and several of them haggle over Nastasya, Myshkin declares with grave seriousness his desire to marry her.

"Nastasya Filippovna," said Myshkin softly and as it were with compassion, "I told you just now that I would take your consent as an honour, and that you are doing me an honour, not I you. You smiled at those words, and I heard people laughing about us. I may have expressed myself very absurdly and have been absurd myself, but I thought all the time that I...understood the meaning of honour, and I am sure I spoke the truth. You wanted to ruin yourself just now irrevocably; for you'd never have forgiven yourself for it afterwards. But you are not to blame for anything.

...You are proud, Nastasya Filippovna; but perhaps you are so unhappy as really to think yourself to blame. You want a lot of looking after, Nastasya Filippovna. I will look after you. ...I shall respect you all my life, Nastasya Filippovna."⁶¹

Myshkin wants to marry Nastasya because he sees that she needs to be respected, she needs to be looked after. We are reminded of "the fundamental idea of Christ."

The prince is more explicit later on. He tells Rogozhin: "...to my mind, she needs great care...I don't love her with love, but with pity."⁶² And Rogozhin admits in frustration, "...I can't make it out. One might almost believe that your pity is greater than my love."⁶³ Just as Myshkin loved the young girl in the Swiss village who had been seduced by a French salesman - "I was not in love with Marie, but simply very sorry for her"⁶⁴ - so now he loved Nastasya. "That face, even in the photograph, had aroused in him a perfect agony of pity: the feeling of compassion and even of suffering over this woman never left his heart...."⁶⁵ For him there seemed no conflict between his love for Nastasya and his love for Aglaia whom, indeed, he was to marry. They were, to him, "two different sorts of love."⁶⁶ But, of course, Aglaia could not be expected to see it that way. Her natural reaction was to arrange the fateful meeting at which she would confront Nastasya with the letters she had addressed to Aglaia,

urging her to marry Myshkin, and charge her with deceptive meddling and match-making. At the meeting Aglaia slips all too quickly into name-calling and abuse. "Aglaia was absolutely carried away by the impulse of the moment, as though she were falling down a precipice and could not resist the dreadful joy of vengeance."⁶⁷ At last, Nastasya can bear no more. She turns and bursts into a violent tirade:

"Here he is! Look at him!" she cried to Aglaia, pointing to Myshkin. "If he doesn't come to me at once, if he does not take me, and doesn't give you up, take him for yourself, I give him up, I don't want him."

Both she and Aglaia stood, as it were, in suspense and both gazed like mad creatures at Myshkin. But he, perhaps, did not understand all the force of this challenge; in fact, it's certain that he didn't. He only saw before him the frenzied, despairing face, which, as he had once said to Aglaia, had "stabbed his heart for ever." He could bear no more and he turned, appealing and reproachful to Aglaia, pointing to Nastasya Filippovna.

"How can you! You see what an...unhappy creature she is!"

But he could utter nothing more, petrified by the awful look in Aglaia's eyes. That look betrayed such suffering and at the same time such boundless hatred that, with a gesture of despair, he cried out and ran to her, but it was already too late. She could not endure even the instant of his hesitation. She hid her face in her hands, cried, "Oh, my God!" and ran out of the room....⁶⁸

The prince stayed to comfort Nastasya who was, by now, hysterical.

In the ensuing fortnight he repeatedly, though unsuccessfully, attempted to see Aglaia in the firm conviction that she would understand. But she left Pavlovsk with her family shortly thereafter without seeing him. On the day of her departure, Yevgeny Pavlovitch paid a visit to Myshkin to inform him of the fact. In the course of their conversation, Pavlovitch uttered what Dostoevsky's narrator calls "some forcible and psychologically deep words":⁶⁹

"If you like, I will analyse you to yourself on my fingers, I will show you to yourself as in a looking-glass, I know so exactly how it all was, and why it all turned out as it did. As a youth in Switzerland you yearned for your native country, and longed for Russia as for an unknown land of promise. You had read a great many books about Russia, excellent books perhaps, but pernicious for you. You arrived in the first glow of eagerness to be of service, so to say; you rushed, you flew headlong to be of service. And on the very day of your arrival, a sad and heartrending story of an injured woman is told you, you a virginal knight - and about a woman! The very same day you saw that woman, you were bewitched by her beauty, her fantastic, demoniacal beauty (I admit she's a beauty, of course). Add to that your nerves, your epilepsy, add to that our Petersburg thaw which shatters the nerves, add all that day, in an unknown and to you almost fantastic town, a day of scenes and meetings, a day of unexpected acquaintances, a day of the most surprising reality, of meeting the three Epanchin beauties, and Aglaia among them; then your fatigue and the turmoil in your head, and then the drawing-room of Nastasya Filippovna, and the tone of that drawing-room, and...what could you expect of yourself at such a moment, what do you think?" "...Good heavens, of

course, one can understand it. But that's not the point, dear prince, the point is whether there was reality, whether there was genuineness in your emotions, whether there was natural feeling or only intellectual enthusiasm. What do you think; in the temple the woman was forgiven - just such a woman, but she wasn't told that she'd done well, that she was deserving of all respect and honour, was she?..."

"Yes, all that may be so. Maybe you're right ..." Myshkin muttered again, "she certainly is very much irritated, and you're right, no doubt, but..."

"Deserving of compassion? That's what you mean to say, my kind-hearted friend? But how could you, out of compassion, for the sake of her pleasure, put to shame another, a pure and lofty girl, humiliate her in those haughty, those hated eyes? What will compassion lead you to next? It's an exaggeration that passes belief!...."

"Yes, yes, you're right. Ach, I feel that I am to blame!" Myshkin replied, in unutterable distress.

"But is that enough?" cried Yevgeny Pavlovitch, indignantly. "Is it sufficient to cry out: 'Ach, I'm to blame?' You are to blame, but yet you persist! And where was your heart then, your 'Christian' heart?...."

"Oh, yes, I am to blame! Most likely it's all my fault. I don't know quite how, but I am to blame.... There's something in all this I can't explain to you, Yevgeny Pavlovitch. I can't find the words, but...Aglaia Ivanovna will understand! Oh, I've always believed that she would understand

"No, prince, she won't understand. Aglaia Ivanovna loved you like a woman, like a human being, not like an abstract spirit. Do you know what, my poor prince, the most likely thing is that you've never loved either of them!"⁷⁰

Aglaia could not understand; she was destroyed by Myshkin's attempt to love "two at once."⁷¹

But, of course, the destruction does not end here. The wedding is arranged; to the last, Myshkin is intent upon caring for Nastasya. "His conviction of Nastasya Filippovna's condition did not waver...he loved her truly and sincerely, and in his love for her there was an element of tenderness for some sick, unhappy child, who could not be left to shift for itself."⁷² Not until it is too late, not until the prince is informed that Nastasya has, on the way to the church, run away with Rogozhin, does he begin to realize what he has done. He hurries to Petersburg the following day in a frantic attempt to locate Nastasya and Rogozhin. With the passing of each hour, his search becomes more frenzied until late in the evening, aimlessly wandering through the streets, he feels his elbow nudged and hears the whisper, "'Lyov Nikolayavitch, follow me, brother, I want you.;" It was Rogozhin."⁷³ They go together and in secret to Rogozhin's rooms where the prince is shown the lifeless body of Nastasya.

Rogozhin insists that the two friends sleep the night side by side, and makes up a bed of cushions beside the deathbed.

...when after many hours the doors were opened and people came in, they found the murderer completely unconscious and raving. Myshkin was sitting beside him motionless on the floor, and every time the delirious man broke into screaming or babble, he hastened to pass his trembling hand

softly over his hair and cheeks, as though caressing and soothing him. But by now he could understand no questions he was asked and did not recognize the people surrounding him; and if Schneider himself had come from Switzerland to look at his former pupil and patient, remembering the condition in which Myshkin had sometimes been during the first year of his stay in Switzerland, he would have flung up his hands in despair and would have said as he did then, "An idiot!"⁷⁴

Once before already, at the close of the scene of the clash between Nastasya and Aglaia, we saw the prince

sitting by Nastasya Filippovna, with his eyes fastened upon her, stroking her head and cheeks with both hands, as though she were a little child. He sighed in response to her laughter and was ready to cry at her tears. He said nothing, but listened intently to her broken, excited, incoherent babble. He scarcely took it in, but smiled gently to her, and as soon as he fancied she was beginning to grieve again, or to weep, to reproach him or complain, he began at once stroking her head again, and tenderly passing his hands over her cheeks, soothing and comforting her like a child. ⁷⁵

This scene, in turn, was prefigured in Nastasya's "picture."

Artists always paint Christ as He appears in the Gospel stories. I would paint Him differently. I would imagine Him alone, His disciples must have sometimes left Him alone. I would leave only a little child beside Him. The child would be playing beside Him, perhaps be telling Him something in his childish words. Christ has been listening, but now He is thoughtful, His hand still resting unconsciously on the child's fair little head. He is looking into the distance at the horizon; thought, great as the whole world, dwells in His eyes. His face is sorrowful. The child leans silent with his elbow on Christ's knee, his cheek on his little hand and his head turned upwards, and looks intently at Him, pondering as little children sometimes ponder. The sun is setting.... That is my picture.⁷⁶

These scenes, standing out as they do, and containing a single motif which recurs again and again, point to "the fundamental idea of Christ"⁷⁷ which it was Dostoevsky's intention to make flesh in the person of Prince Myshkin. That he succeeded, we do not wish to dispute. On the contrary. But, as we suggested at the outset of this section, the success of the novel in portraying positive goodness, in Dostoevsky's sense, spells simultaneously the failure of Myshkin as an ethical guide.

Nicholas Berdyzev has written, "Dostoevsky understood Christianity as the religion of love that it is...of unbounded love."⁷⁸ But Dostoevsky was honest enough to make his drama of unbounded love a tragedy. We err, however, if we see The Idiot as an indictment of love; it is unbounded love that is tragic. In short, the protective, pitying love and the indiscriminant, undistinguishing forgiveness of the prince, which cause one critic to see Myshkin laboring under a "psychosis of humility."⁷⁹

"Everyone deceives you like a...like a...And aren't you ashamed to trust him? Surely you must see that he's cheating you all round?"

"I know very well he does deceive me sometimes," Myshkin brought out reluctantly in a low voice, "and he knows that I know it..." and he broke off.

"Knows it and goes on trusting him! That's the last straw!"⁸⁰

Again, it is not his trust that is reprehensible, but that he trusts, loves, and persists in offering forgiveness boundlessly and in spite of the fact that he knows he is being deceived and used.

John Middleton Murry, calling Myshkin "the incarnation of pity," says of him, "He is perfect man, but this perfection is a denial of humanity."⁸¹ Berdyaev writes, in a similar vein:

It is he who explains all the riddles, especially those of two women, Aglaia and Nastasya Filipovna; he helps them, he is full of prophetic foresight and intuitive clear-sightedness, and he gives himself up entirely to human relationship. The storm whirls around him, but he lives in a rapture of quietness.⁸²

Both Nastasya and Aglaia fear Myshkin, a revealing fact in that it suggests that Dostoevsky himself was aware that the prince would have to share some of the responsibility for the havoc raised by his perfection.⁸³ Aglaia tells him during the outing to the Pavlovsk bandstand, "I am afraid of you...."⁸⁴ And in the stillness of the room, beside Nastasya's deathbed, Rogozhin, though not comprehending, related to Myshkin, "it was you she was afraid of."⁸⁵ Aglaia was doubtless merely frightened by his "strangeness"; Nastasya, however, could not tolerate his pity for her. In the end, it is her words which remind us of Pavlovitch's "deep words" to Myshkin⁸⁶ and

which may stand as a judgment on this "perfect man":

Can one love every one, all men, all one's neighbors? I have often asked myself that question. Of course not. It's unnatural indeed. In abstract love for humanity one almost always loves no one but oneself.⁸⁷

This brings us back to the psychological type of the Redeemer and a statement of Nietzsche's which suggests yet another possible meaning of the word "idiot."

Christianity is possible as the most private form of existence. It presupposes a narrow, withdrawn, completely unpolitical society - It belongs in the convent.⁸⁸

This allusion to Christianity - and here Nietzsche means Christianity in the positive sense, as "a practice, not a doctrine"⁸⁹ - as something private could be taken to mean "subjective," were it not for the subsequent qualifying statement which defines "private" as withdrawn, in the sense of "unpolitical." This opens the way to another use of the word "idiot" first pointed out in a little-known essay by Martin Dibelius.

We should remember that the Greek word, idiotes, that was taken over into Latin as idiots, denotes the private person in contrast to the statesman, the layman in contrast to the artist, the ignorant in contrast to the learned. ...the word idiot has been understood and passed on as signifying a man without culture.⁹⁰

And, more specifically, with regard to the psychological type of the Redeemer: Jesus, he who was

infected with an instinctive hatred of all reality, who resisted not, who proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven is in us, who was a stranger to the state, to culture, to society - this Jesus could very well have been called an "idiot" by Nietzsche in the (above) sense....91

Dibelius's reminder casts a revealing light on Nietzsche's use of the word "idiot." That Nietzsche juxtaposes "private" and "political" in this way and implies their mutual exclusiveness, suggests that he is taking for granted, not the modern but the ancient, specifically, Greek distinction between private and political (or public). This would not seem a far-fetched claim to make of Nietzsche, student of Greece that he was. And it would fit into place beside his social, or, to substitute the ancient equivalent for this modern term, political theory of a hierarchical caste system which is essentially Platonic in structure.⁹² Finally, in a similar instance in The Antichrist, Nietzsche describes the Jewish-Christian community out of which Jesus (this, according to Nietzsche, supremely private man) emerged and which survived him as "an absurdly unpolitical community"⁹³ (that is to say, in the Greek sense, a community centered around the home and the family rather than around the public (political) institutions based on ties other than kinship, in which the part of life which is uniquely human, as opposed to the merely necessary and

useful, is lived). Hannah Arendt writes of this Greek notion:

...a life spent in the privacy of "one's own" (idion), outside the world of the common, is "idiotic" by definition.... In ancient feeling the privative trait of privacy, indicated in the word itself, was all-important; it meant literally a state of being deprived of something, and even the highest and most human of man's capacities.⁹⁴

In this sense, Nietzsche is saying, Jesus lived "the most private form of existence."⁹⁵ And as long as he remained within the narrow confines of his own "absurdly unpolitical community,"⁹⁶ he was in no danger. But when he crossed over into the public (political) realm of Rome, he became "a political criminal...This brought him to the cross...."⁹⁷ Similarly, one can imagine Nietzsche seeing the seeds of the tragedy of Prince Myshkin in the introduction of this private person into a political community. Christianity is possible, as Nietzsche put it, only "in the convent,"⁹⁸ not in the world.

The kingdom of heaven is a state of the heart (it is said of the children, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"); not something that is "above the earth." The Kingdom of God is not "to come" chronologically-historically; not according to the calendar, something that would be there one day but not the previous day. Rather, it is a "change of heart in the individual," something that comes at any time and is at all times not yet there.⁹⁹

IV

There is a very great deal in Nietzsche's picture of Jesus that is intriguing, even enticing. And we can certainly agree with the principle which guides it throughout, "that the real human being is worth much more than the 'wished for' human being of any prevailing ideal."¹⁰⁰ It is undoubtedly this "realness" of Jesus as a human being which makes Nietzsche's picture so appealing. Overbeck said of it:

All previous attempts to make a human figure of him (Jesus) appear ridiculously abstract and as no more than an illustration of rationalistic dogmatics beside Nietzsche's achievement and the way in which, in it, that which is human in the man springs forth out of that which is peculiar.¹⁰¹

It is true. Nevertheless, we must, in the end, however reluctantly, register our "no" to this Jesus as being identical to the Jesus of the New Testament record. But there must be reasons for this "no."

It is difficult to fault Nietzsche's account of who Jesus was because, contrary to all other authors of "lives of Jesus," he claimed no historical authenticity for his picture. After admitting that he does not approach the Gospels as a critical philologist,¹⁰² Nietzsche adds:

What do I care about the contradictions in the "tradition"? How can one call saints' legends "tradition" in the first place? The biographies of saints are the most ambiguous kind of literature there is: to apply scientific methods to

them, in the absence of any other documents, strikes me as doomed to failure from the start - mere scholarly idleness.¹⁰³

Similarly, in a letter of the same period, Nietzsche writes Overbeck that he has read Renan's Origines, only to wonder "whether history is even possible. What does one wish to establish? Something that, even at the time of its occurrence, was not 'established'?"¹⁰⁴ We can perhaps detect in Nietzsche's way of putting the question echoes of Jacob Burckhardt's reaction against the conception of history as scientific historiography being given currency by his mentor, Leopold von Ranke. That is to say, when Nietzsche wonders "whether history is even possible," he is doubting that it is possible to show what actually happened (wie es eigentlich gewesen).¹⁰⁵ With regard to the question of who Jesus was, Nietzsche is subscribing to the findings of Strauss's first Life of Jesus, findings which were, by and large, unaccepted in theological circles well into the twentieth century.¹⁰⁶

What concerns him is "Not the truth concerning what he did, what he said, how he really died";¹⁰⁷ not the "life of Jesus," of which he writes: "The attempts I know to read the history of a 'soul' out of the Gospels seem to me proof of a contemptible psychological frivolity."¹⁰⁸ His interest in the psychological type of the Redeemer is

thus not aimed at reconstructing Jesus' psyche out of the Gospels but at getting at the man Jesus by, as it were, reading between the lines of the Gospels; that is, by taking into account the ascription to Jesus on the part of his followers and admirers of words and characteristics which were very likely alien to the man himself. This psychological type, we have already heard Nietzsche say, "could be contained in the Gospels despite the Gospels, however mutilated or overloaded with alien features."¹⁰⁹ Such an approach, needless to say, does not facilitate a "presuppositionless" reading of the Gospels any more than any other approach. And the phrase, "the psychological type of the Redeemer," reveals the three assumptions on which Nietzsche's reading is based, the first being negative, the latter two, positive: that the element of aggressive fanaticism was "introduced" into the tradition by Jesus' followers;¹¹⁰ that it was the way Jesus lived and died that is significant ("only Christian practice, a life such as he lived who died on the cross, is Christian");¹¹¹ and that both the key to this way of life and its consequence is redemption (thus, "the Redeemer"). The way of life he found to be "Not a faith, but a doing; above all, a not doing off many things...."¹¹² And redemption he called "a state of the heart... a change

of heart in the individual."¹¹³ Therefore, the genuine Christian way of life is also "the most private form of existence."¹¹⁴

In spite of himself, Nietzsche has, with this last judgment, denied Jesus full humanity. For to be fully human is to be active; and action, "the capacity of beginning something anew,"¹¹⁵ that uniquely human activity (in contrast to labor and work) requires plurality, that is, other men. Finally, "this plurality is the condition - not only the conditio sine qua non, but the conditio per quam - of all political life."¹¹⁶ In denying the life Jesus lived, the Christian way of life, a public (political) existence to be lived alongside and in conjunction with its private existence, Nietzsche has flown in the face of his own efforts to see Jesus as fully human.

This is in keeping with his overall view that Jesus was a decadent, in the sense of waning life - "neurotic, epileptic, visionary...."¹¹⁷ Nietzsche calls Jesus' commandment, "'resist not evil' - the most profound word of the Gospels, their key in a certain sense."¹¹⁸ However, this was not really construed by Nietzsche as a matter of choice, but as "the inability for resistance... not being able to be an enemy."¹¹⁹ He also emphasizes that "the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children....";¹²⁰

but this he conceives as "an infantilism that has receded into the spiritual,"¹²¹ a case of retarded puberty. "Not to resist, not to be angry, not to hold responsible - but to resist not even the evil one - to love him."¹²² But again, there is no alternative; it is merely "love as the only, the last possible, way of life."¹²³ It is as though Nietzsche's descriptions of Jesus are true to the New Testament record, whereas his reasons for these descriptions bear no resemblance whatever to the Jesus whose story is told there.

What Nietzsche could not allow, and what must be allowed if Jesus is not to be deprived of his full humanity, is that there is such a thing as goodness which is of value in itself and is not derivative of some ulterior motive. For him, "altruistic acts are only a species of egoistic ones";¹²⁴ good deeds, as such, are unthinkable. Thus, a significant aspect of Jesus' action, of the newness of his way of life, Nietzsche is unable to concede.

Goodness in an absolute sense, as distinguished from the "good-for" or the "excellent" in Greek and Roman antiquity, became known in our civilization only with the rise of Christianity. Since then, we know of good works as one important variety of human action.¹²⁵

And goodness is achieved not in a vacuum, but in the company of other men, attended by love.¹²⁶

In characterizing Jesus' way of life as "the most private form of existence,"¹²⁷ Nietzsche has forfeited his right to the claim that "such a life is still possible today, for certain people even necessary: genuine, original Christianity will be possible at all times."¹²⁸ The two claims are mutually exclusive. It is true that genuine goodness does not seek to display itself. "The one activity taught by Jesus in word and deed is the activity of goodness, and goodness obviously harbors a tendency to hide from being seen or heard."¹²⁹ Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them..."¹³⁰ But he also said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."¹³¹ There is a difference between vainglorious vaunting of oneself and visible goodness, and it is a crucial one. That a good deed is witnessed does not detract from its goodness. In spite of the fact that Nietzsche saw the visibility of Jesus' way of life as being purely symbolic in nature, he did make a valid deduction from his assumption that Christianity is a way of life, namely that Christians should have something to show for their Christianity, that they should act differently.¹³²

Nietzsche was certain that it was Jesus' way of acting that was new. And yet, by condemning it to privacy, he denied it precisely what it must have to survive - other men. He succeeded with his picture of Jesus only in portraying a kind of negative goodness,¹³³ goodness as a last resort. All the clues to positive goodness are contained in Nietzsche's thought, but he did not develop them in connection with Jesus.¹³⁴

Action, understood as "the capacity of beginning something anew,"¹³⁵ is, despite its uniquely human character, implicated in the predicament of all life, a predicament which inevitably involves two risks - the risk of unpredictability and the risk of irreversibility. Even non-human higher animals are at the mercy of the unpredictability and irreversibility of the life process. In our analysis of Nietzsche's theory of the origin of conscience,¹³⁶ we stressed the fact that that which distinguishes man from all other animals is his ability to make and keep promises; the faculty by which, in certain instances, the natural, healthy device of animal forgetfulness may be suspended. We sought to show that this was conceived by Nietzsche, not as a passive inability to be done with something, but "an active not wishing to be done with something, a veritable memory of the will

...."137 This memory of the will is the result of a long, cruel training in "the custom character of morality,"¹³⁸ which prepared the way for "this liberated one who really can make promises"¹³⁹ by, first of all, curing him of his unpredictability. It was by virtue of this new predictability that there arose in man "the extraordinary privilege of responsibility...this power over himself and his fate...."¹⁴⁰ Here, in this description of man as he who has earned "the right to make promises,"¹⁴¹ Nietzsche has discovered a remedy against one of the risks involved in all action - unpredictability. What is more, this remedy arises out of the action itself; it need not be sought and imposed from outside the realm of human action.

The second of the clues to positive goodness contained in Nietzsche's work is his exposure of, on the one hand, ressentiment as the negative, rancorous desire for revenge; and, on the other hand, punishment as compensation for wrong done.¹⁴² The positive counterpart to Nietzsche's uncovering of ressentiment and punishment is forgiveness, which he found in Jesus' way of life.

...in retrospect one understood Jesus to have been in rebellion against the existing order. Until then this warlike, this No-saying, No-doing trait had been lacking in his image; even more, he had been its opposite.

Evidently the small community did not understand the main point, the exemplary character of this

kind of death, the freedom, the superiority over any feeling of ressentiment: a token of how little they understood him altogether! After all, Jesus could not intend anything with his death except to give publicly the strongest exhibition, the proof of his doctrine. But his disciples were far from forgiving this death - which would have been evangelic in the highest sense - or even from offering themselves for a like death in gentle and lovely repose of the heart. Precisely the most unevangelical feeling, revenge, came to the fore again. The matter could not possibly be finished with this death: "retribution" was needed, "judgment" (and yet, what could possibly be more unevangelical than "retribution," "punishment," "sitting in judgment"!). Once more the popular expectation of a Messiah came to the foreground; a historic moment was envisaged: the "kingdom of God" comes as a judgment over his enemies.

But in this way everything is misunderstood: the "kingdom of God" as the last act, as a promise! After all, the evangel had been precisely the presence, the fulfillment, the reality of this "kingdom." Just such a death was this very "kingdom of God." Now for the first time all the contempt and bitterness against the Pharisees and theologians were carried into the type of the Master - and in this way he himself was made into a Pharisee and theologian! On the other hand, the frenzied veneration of these totally unhinged souls no longer endured the evangelic conception of everybody's equal right to be a child of God, as Jesus had taught: it was their revenge to elevate Jesus extravagantly, to sever him from themselves - precisely as the Jews had formerly, out of revenge against their enemies, severed their God from themselves and elevated him. The one God and one Son of God - both products of ressentiment.143

Whether or not we agree with the details of this view of Jesus' death (gentle and lovely repose of the heart?) and the reaction to it, Nietzsche's main point is a

forceful one: forgiveness was the clue. Thus, the resentment and everything to which it gave birth was, "forgive the expression - like a fist in the eye - oh, what an eye! - of the evangel...."¹⁴⁴ Forgiveness, as an active not-desiring-retribution, is the remedy to the second risk involved in all genuine action - irreversibility. And it too does not descend upon human affairs from outside them, but arises out of them.

We began by claiming that all the clues to positive goodness are contained in Nietzsche's thought, though left undeveloped in connection with Jesus. Goodness, that action which was new in Jesus, has been discussed here in terms of binding and loosing, promising and forgiving, undoing the past, thereby making the future possible. The former is to be found in Nietzsche's conception of conscience as that which bridles, canalizes, binds; in short, as that which makes a man predictable, in the sense of worthy of trust. The latter is the positive correlate of his critique of resentment and punishment as the human emotion and activity which forbid the release of victims of wrongs committed.

The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility - of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not, and could not, have known what he was doing - is the faculty of forgiving. The remedy for unpre-

dictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises. The two faculties belong together in so far as one of them, forgiving, serves to undo the deeds of the past... and the other, binding oneself through promises, serves to set up in the ocean of uncertainty, which the future is by definition, islands of security without which not even continuity, let alone durability of any kind, would be possible in the relationships between men.

Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever.... Without being bound to the fulfillment of promises, we would never be able to keep our identities.... Both faculties, therefore, depend on plurality, on the presence and acting of others, for no one can forgive himself and no one can feel bound by a promise made only to himself; forgiving and promising enacted in solitude or isolation remain without reality and can signify no more than a role played before one's self.¹⁴⁵

These words of Hannah Arendt could have been written by Nietzsche himself, except for the fact that he relegated Jesus and his way of life to privacy.

Nietzsche's picture of Jesus as anti-realist, symbolist, witness only to inner truths, "a mixture of the sublime, the sickly, and the childlike";¹⁴⁶ in short, as idiot, has the effect of clearing the air surrounding the question as to who Jesus was. Ultimately, we must confess that neither the Redeemer type nor Prince Myshkin can be identified with the Jesus of the

New Testament record. But we make our confession humbly, knowing that our "no" is in no small measure contingent upon and conditioned by these two magnificent attempts to steer us toward asking the right questions, questions of value, ethical questions, and toward the man, Jesus.

NOTES

- 1) Wayland Young, Eros Denied (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 287.
- 2) Saul Bellow, Dangling Man (Penguin paperback ed.; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1964), p. 75.
- 3) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 652.
- 4) Ibid., p. 657.
- 5) Ibid., p. 640.
- 6) Ibid., p. 659.
- 7) Ibid., p. 656.
- 8) By which I mean simply that there is no evidence - neither in the records which have survived of what he read, nor in his own works - that he devoted much time to explicitly theological studies. The conversation carried on over many years during his long friendship with Franz Overbeck should, however, be recalled. See Chapter 1, Section III above.
- 9) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1190.
- 10) Ibid.
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) Karl Barth, From Rousseau to Ritschl, trans. Brian Cozens (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 381.
- 13) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1190.
- 14) Ibid., III, pp. 962-63.
- 15) Ibid., II, p. 1191.
- 16) Ibid., p. 1192.
- 17) Ibid., p. 1193.
- 18) Ibid.

- 19) Ibid., pp. 1192-93. There is in this last statement an implicit rejection of the late Strauss, the Strauss of The Old Faith and the New, who was the brunt of Nietzsche's polemic in 1873. In this book, Strauss concluded that Jesus was a spiritual fanatic. See Chapter 4, Section III above.
- 20) Ibid., p. 1198.
- 21) Ibid., p. 1192.
- 22) Ibid., p. 1194.
- 23) Ibid., p. 1196.
- 24) Ibid., p. 1193.
- 25) Ibid., p. 1195.
- 26) Ibid., p. 1196.
- 27) Ibid., p. 1195.
- 28) Ibid.
- 29) Ibid., p. 1194.
- 30) Ibid., p. 1197.
- 31) Ibid., p. 1189: "He died for his guilt. All evidence is lacking, however often it has been claimed, that he died for the guilt of others."
- 32) Ibid., p. 1200.
- 33) Ibid., p. 1191.
- 34) Ibid., p. 1194.
- 35) Ibid., p. 1191.
- 36) Walter Kaufmann, The Portable Nietzsche (New York: Viking Press, 1954), p. 568.
- 37) By Josef Hofmiller, in his "Nietzsche," Süddeutsche Monatshefte (München, 1931), p. 82.

- 38) Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche and Christianity, trans. G. B. Ashton (Gateway paperback ed.; Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961), p. 22.
- 39) Indeed, I can recall no mention of the word "idiot" in Nietzsche's writings prior to this time. Cf. Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche. Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Meridian paperback ed.; Cleveland & New York: The World Publishing Co., June 1963), p. 396, note 2; and W. Kaufmann, The Portable..., p. 601, note 1, for a listing of the locations of the word in Nietzsche's writings. In preparing previously published material for inclusion in Nietzsche contra Wagner, Nietzsche even went to the extent of inserting the word "idiot" at two points. Nor does this single word provide the only clue to the likelihood of Dostoevsky's influence, as witness, for example, this unpublished note of the period in question: "'Become as little children' - the re-relatedness: Francis of Assisi, neurotic, epileptic, visionary, like Jesus." (Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 641)
- 40) L'Idiot, 2d ed., (Paris, April 1887). I have been unable to trace the exact date of the first edition; nevertheless, even this second edition would have been circulating at a time when the name of Dostoevsky and the word "idiot" began to appear with frequency in Nietzsche's writings.
- 41) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 1250.
- 42) Ibid., p. 1254.
- 43) Ibid., II, p. 1021. See also the letter to Georg Brandes dated Turin, 20 November 1888, in which Nietzsche says of Dostoevsky, "I esteem him as the most valuable psychological material I know - I am, in a peculiar way, grateful to him even though he goes against my most basic instincts. About the same relationship that I have with Pascal, whom I dearly love because he has taught me such a great deal: the only logical Christian." (Ibid., III, pp. 1334-35). See Chapter 2, Section II above on Pascal as Nietzsche's brother-enemy.
- 44) Brandes lectured on Nietzsche in Copenhagen in 1888 and introduced him to a number of his acquaintances in Scandinavia.

- 45) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 1326. Cf. also the letter to Strindberg, in which Nietzsche uses the word "idiot" yet again, this time in an allusion to the problem of the criminal and decadence, a problem he had discussed, calling Dostoevsky as his witness, in Twilight of the Idols. (Ibid., III, p. 1336; cf. II, pp. 1020-22).
- 46) Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche..., p. 291.
- 47) Jessie Coulson, Dostoevsky. A Self-Portrait (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 168. I have altered the translation slightly, using, instead of "a wholly beautiful human character," Ronald Hingley's "a positively good man." (The Undiscovered Dostoevsky (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962), p. 111).
- 48) A. Steinberg, Dostoevsky (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1966), p. 64.
- 49) J. Coulson, op. cit., p. 169.
- 50) Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Idiot, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: The Modern Library, 1935), p. 528. Referred to hereafter as Idiot.
- 51) George Steiner, Tolstoy or Dostoevsky (Peregrine paperback ed.; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1967), pp. 149-50.
- 52) Idiot, p. 109.
- 53) Ibid., p. 407.
- 54) Ibid., p. 406.
- 55) Ibid., p. 235.
- 56) Ibid., p. 208.
- 57) Ibid.
- 58) In a translator's note on Berdyaev's discussion of the latter extreme of Dostoevsky's two principles of love, sensuality and pity, Donald Attwater writes, "The primary meaning of the Russian word zhalost

(or jalost) is 'pity.' Here it is used in a very common sense (especially in the popular language) to mean a mixture of love, pity, and protectiveness, somewhat the feeling of a parent for his helpless child." (Nicholas Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, trans. Donald Attwater (Meridian paperback ed.; Cleveland & New York: The World Publishing Co., November 1962), p. 116).

- 59) Idiot, p. 218.
- 60) Ibid., p. 108.
- 61) Ibid., pp. 158-59.
- 62) Ibid., p. 196.
- 63) Ibid., p. 201.
- 64) Ibid., p. 66.
- 65) Ibid., p. 332.
- 66) Ibid., p. 557.
- 67) Ibid., p. 542.
- 68) Ibid., p. 545.
- 69) Ibid., p. 550.
- 70) Ibid., pp. 553-56.
- 71) Ibid., p. 557.
- 72) Ibid., p. 562.
- 73) Ibid., p. 575.
- 74) Ibid., p. 583.
- 75) Ibid., pp. 545-46.
- 76) Ibid., p. 433.
- 77) Ibid., p. 208.

- 78) N. Berdyaev, op. cit., p. 127.
- 79) Murray Krieger, "Dostoevsky's 'Idiot': The Curse of Saintliness," in Dostoevsky, ed. Rene Wellek (Spectrum paperback ed.; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 48.
- 80) Idiot, p. 302.
- 81) John Middleton Murry, Fyodor Dostoevsky (London: Martin & Secker, 1916), pp. 155 and 152.
- 82) N. Berdyaev, op. cit., p. 43.
- 83) Murray Krieger claims "to find the novel casting some of the blame on Myshkin...." (Op. cit., p. 40).
- 84) Idiot, p. 330.
- 85) Ibid., p. 579.
- 86) See note 70 above. See also Chapter 4, note 38 for Zarathustra's warning: "Woe to all who love without having a height that is above their pity!"
- 87) Idiot, p. 432.
- 88) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 588.
- 89) Ibid., p. 640.
- 90) Martin Dibelius, "Der 'psychologische Typus des Erlösers' bei Friedrich Nietzsche," in Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, 22 Jahrgang, Heft 1, 1944 (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag), pp. 65-67.
- 91) Ibid., p. 73.
- 92) See Chapter 9, Section V.
- 93) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1189.
- 94) Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Doubleday Anchor paperback ed.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1959), p. 35.

- 95) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 588.
- 96) Ibid., II, p. 1189.
- 97) Ibid.
- 98) Ibid., III, p. 588.
- 99) Ibid., p. 643.
- 100) Ibid., p. 673.
- 101) Quoted in Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche, Eine Freundschaft (Jena: Diedrichs, 1908), II, p. 250.
- 102) See note 10 above.
- 103) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1190.
- 104) Ibid., III, p. 1250.
- 105) This is not to say that Nietzsche would share Burckhardt's pessimism, anymore than he was convinced by Schopenhauer's pessimism (which, in truth, are one and the same). It is only to suggest that, despite his expressed admiration for Ranke both as a man of integrity and as a scholar, Nietzsche felt obliged to reject his (and, before him, Hegel's) efforts to systematize history. On Nietzsche's differences with Hegel's view of history, see Chapter 2, Section II above. On Burckhardt's pessimism, see his "On Fortune and Misfortune in History," in The Philosophy of History in Our Time, ed. Hans Meyerhoff (Doubleday Anchor paperback ed.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1959), pp. 272-90.
- 106) It was probably Albert Schweitzer's Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung (1926) which finally made it impossible to ignore the problematic nature of the Gospels as historical documents.
- 107) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1190.
- 108) Ibid.
- 109) Ibid.

- 110) See note 19 above.
- 111) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1200.
- 112) Ibid.
- 113) Ibid., III, p. 643.
- 114) Ibid., p. 588.
- 115) H. Arendt, op. cit., p. 11.
- 116) Ibid., p. 10.
- 117) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 641.
- 118) Ibid., II, p. 1191. As, of course, did Tolstoy. But there the similarity between the two men on this matter ends. Cf. Tolstoy's "My Religion," Religion from Tolstoy to Camus, ed. Walter Kaufmann (Harper Torchbook paperback ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 45-66.
- 119) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1191. Only once, and that in an unpublished note, does Nietzsche imply that not resisting evil is a matter of choice and done out of strength, not weakness: "Christ's example: he does not resist those who do him evil; he does not defend himself. He does more: he 'turns the other cheek'.... He forbids his disciples to defend him; he makes it clear that he could have help, but does not want it." (Ibid., III, p. 659).
- 120) Ibid., II, p. 1193.
- 121) Ibid.
- 122) Ibid., p. 1197.
- 123) Ibid., p. 1191.
- 124) Ibid., III, p. 615.
- 125) H. Arendt, op. cit., p. 65.
- 126) S. Bellow, op. cit.

- 127) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 588.
- 128) Ibid., II, p. 1200.
- 129) H. Arendt, op. cit., p. 66.
- 130) Matthew 6:1.
- 131) Matthew 5:16.
- 132) See note 6 above: "The Buddhist acts differently from the non-Buddhist; the Christian acts like everybody else and has a Christianity of ceremonies and moods."
- 133) Ronald Hingley writes, similarly, "Despite his formula 'positively good man,' what Dostoevsky in fact created was a negatively good man." (Op. cit., p. 155).
- 134) In any case, not consciously and overtly. See, however, our comparison of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence: Chapter 8, Section II above.
- 135) H. Arendt, op. cit., p. 11.
- 136) See Chapter 6, Section II above.
- 137) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 800.
- 138) Ibid., I, p. 1019.
- 139) Ibid., II, p. 801.
- 140) Ibid.
- 141) Ibid., p. 799.
- 142) For a discussion of the former, see Chapter 9, Section II above; for the latter, Chapter 6, Section II.
- 143) Nietzsche, Werke, II, pp. 1202-203.
- 144) Ibid., p. 1196.
- 145) H. Arendt, op. cit., pp. 212-13.
- 146) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1193.

Conclusion.

We began where Nietzsche began - with the death of God. And we followed him to its consequences, allowing ourselves to be guided by Camus's claim that Nietzsche's atheism is "constructive and radical."¹ Constructive, in the sense of creating positive alternatives; and radical, in the literal sense of beginning at the beginning, going back to the roots. Again and again we heard what might be called the refrain of Nietzsche's philosophy:

...there is no alternative; we must again do everything for ourselves, and only for ourselves. (We must), for example, measure science against ourselves with the question: what is science to us? Not, however: what are we to science?²

And not only science, but also truth, art, history, morality - what is the value of each of these things for life? Not, what are we to them? - as though we were but so much grist for the mill of such endeavors. But, what are they to us? - a scale of priorities which informs Nietzsche's work throughout and which goes a long way toward explaining his psychological approach to man as a problem. If we are to measure things against ourselves, we must know who we are, what man is.

Nietzsche found man to be a strange mixture of

"spontaneous, aggressive, assailing, interpretive, directive, shaping powers,"³ and forces of "self-denial, self-consumption, self-contradiction."⁴

...with the phenomenon of an animal turned in upon itself, taking sides against itself, something so new and deep, so unprecedented, puzzling, confusing and promising appeared on earth that the earth itself was substantially altered. ...he (man) aroused an interest, created a tension a hope, almost a certainty, as though something were being heralded in him, something prepared; as though man were not a goal, but a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise.⁵

There are, in man, Nietzsche is saying, grounds for hope. Not the facile, strained and jubilant optimism of the Bildungsphilister who mistake the debunking of once-strong beliefs for freedom, but an interest, a tension, a hope, almost a certainty based on man - what he is, and what he can become by virtue of what he is. The grounds for hope lie in the fact that the human being, as distinct from all other beings, and because of his new "memory of the will,"⁶ his "extraordinary privilege of responsibility,"⁷ in short, his conscience, is capable of action, of beginning something anew.

But say, my brothers, what can a child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? This child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed....⁸

And this new beginning, this ability to be responsible by making and keeping promises, is not a formless, blind Schopenhauerian striving which must be contained and guided by some limiting authority imposed from outside itself, but, by virtue of its "built-in" bridle, contains within itself its "criterion of values as well."⁹ What that criterion is depends on the dominant values of the "environment" into which the child is born. The liberating fact remains, nevertheless, that those values are not given in an absolute sense and, thus, immutable. On the basis of this discovery, Nietzsche made his plea for a moral demand system and a conscience directed toward fulfillment rather than the continence of the ascetic ideal.

Alongside this hopeful doctrine of man runs Nietzsche's master/slave theory of morality, his oligarchical theory of the body, and his caste theory of society (the "body politic") - all, essentially, Platonic,¹⁰ and all, in truth, one theory.

...Platonic rulership, whose legitimacy rested upon the domination of the self, draws its guiding principles - those which at the same time justify and limit power over others - from a relationship established between he and myself, so that the right and wrong of relationships with others are determined by attitudes toward one's self, until the whole of the public realm is seen in the image of "man writ large," of the right order between man's individual capacities of mind, soul, and body.¹¹

This throws a revealing light on Nietzsche's puzzlement over Jesus and his inability to see the goodness of his way of life as anything but negative. The whole theory of self-overcoming, self-discipline, harshness toward oneself, is conspicuous not only for being conceived in terms of a relationship "between me and myself," but also for its emphasis on mastery and domination, power over oneself. It stands as well as perhaps the prime example of the pernicious effect of the method of analogy on Nietzsche's work, in that self-mastery became, by extension of necessity, domination of others - precisely that domination which is no longer necessary after Nietzsche's discovery of man's instinct of conscience! This essentially medieval method,¹² together with Nietzsche's medieval version of the theory of the body politic,¹³ made it virtually impossible for what we have just called his hopeful doctrine of man to develop. A doctrine of man which holds that there develops in every man a conscience, a potentiality for action, that is, for making and keeping promises, in short, for responsibility - this doctrine of man is incompatible with one which holds that "The order of castes, the supreme, the dominant law, is merely the sanction of a natural order, a natural

lawfulness of the first rank...."¹⁴ Nietzsche's positive efforts contain bits of both of these irreconcilables. The latter was a part of his intellectual heritage, and he believed it instead of criticizing it. The former he discovered in the course of his psychological experimentation, and it is the beginning, however fragmentary, of a doctrine of man and an ethic - after the death of God.

Perhaps the most fruitful approach to Nietzsche's positive work is a paraphrase of his own words about Thales' water-hypothesis:¹⁵ Nietzsche's philosophy seems to begin with a nonsensical notion, with the proposition that will to power is the origin and womb of all things. Is it really necessary to stop here and take this seriously? It is, because in it is contained the thought, however embryonically, that "all things are one." Nietzsche intuited what Heraclitus (and his Milesian precursors) and the Hebrews before him had sensed. This monism had flowered in the West as Hebrew-Christian monotheism, subsequently degenerating into what Nietzsche once called the "pitiful god of Christian monotonotheism,"¹⁶ and ending with the death of God. Nietzsche's Dionysian monism stands in this tradition, at its best. He came to see that both the classical dualistic way of conceiving life

and the exclusively monistic way were useless for explaining adequately human conduct, including man's ability to be responsible and his propensity to destruction - of self and others. Accordingly, we saw him move from a dualism in which Apollo imposed his "control" on Dionysus from "outside," and at the price of Dionysus' life itself (redemption by illusion, repressive sublimation), to a will to power monism in which Dionysus could do without Apollo (the ascetic ideal) because he was seen to carry within himself the seeds of a built-in bridle, canalizer, capable of giving order to Dionysus' impulsiveness a different (non-repressive, remissive) order from that imposed by Apollo, but order nonetheless; not chaos, as the preachers of continence had held. Here in Dionysus is the synthesis of the best of Western monism and Western dualism, in a diatomic monism: all things are one, and all things take place by strife - ant-agon-ism.

However, this is not the final step in this hopeful development. We have just said that in Nietzsche's diatomic monism are the seeds of responsibility. Every man is potentially responsible, that is, he has, from birth, as a part of his "human equipment," a conscience, in embryo. But, as we have attempted to show,¹⁷ it must develop. Under the tutelage of the ascetic ideal, it

developed in the direction of a denial of life - a development necessary for the preservation of life in the past which, in the present, works for its destruction. Yet, Nietzsche could claim, "A converse endeavor is conceivable...."¹⁸ He left us with this claim and his fragmentary attempt to take the final step, to work out this converse endeavor. His Dionysian monism, grounded in this life, this world, our bodies, and the earth (eternal recurrence, amor fati), is immensely helpful - as far as it goes. It will not suffice without being coupled with an inverted version of his portrayal of negative goodness in Jesus.

The significance of Jesus' way of life rests, indeed, as Nietzsche knew, in the way he lived. But that way was not a way to the "feeling redeemed" of those who followed it, nor was it an exclusively private way, as Nietzsche believed.

The moral code...inferred from the faculties of forgiving and of making promises, rests on experiences which nobody could ever have with himself, which, on the contrary, are entirely based on the presence of others.¹⁹

This way of life is, of course, diametrically opposed, indeed, the only alternative we have, to the domination of self and others.

...readiness to forgive and to be forgiven, to make promises and to keep them.. These moral precepts are the only ones that are not applied to action from the outside, from some supposedly higher faculty or from experiences outside action's own reach. They arise, on the contrary, directly out of the will to live together with others in the mode of acting and speaking, and thus they are like control mechanisms built into the very faculty to start new and unending processes.²⁰

The death of God is not necessarily a liberating event. That it can have nihilistic consequences, that men may abdicate the right to responsibility which now falls to them as a consequence of the death of God, goes without saying. But there will probably never be a shortage of those who will be eager to remind us of the possible perils involved. Nietzsche, while by no means ignorant of those perils, has sought to anticipate them and "defuse" them by pointing the way to the possibility of assuming this new right. God's death means that men are on their own - for good and for ill. Again, not a necessarily liberating fact. But Nietzsche has given us cause to hope and shown us that the way to responsibility, that uniquely human privilege, lies in the rearing of conscience to integrity and in the creation of new values aimed at the affirmation, fulfillment, and enhancement of life; in short, in a readiness to make and to keep promises. To this must be added what Nietzsche was able to account for only negatively, namely, a readiness to forgive and to be forgiven.

NOTES

- 1) Albert Camus, The Rebel (trans. Anthony Bower), (Vintage Books paperback ed.; New York: Random House, 1956), p. 66.
- 2) Nietzsche, Werke, III, p. 329.
- 3) Ibid., II, p. 820.
- 4) Ibid., I, p. 212.
- 5) Ibid., II, p. 826.
- 6) Ibid., p. 800.
- 7) Ibid., p. 801.
- 8) Ibid., p. 294.
- 9) Ibid., p. 801.
- 10) Walter Kaufmann has made a convincing case for the extensive influence of Plato on Nietzsche. See his Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Meridian Books paperback ed.; Cleveland & New York: The World Publishing Co., June 1963), et passim.
- 11) Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Doubleday Anchor paperback ed.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1959), pp. 213-14.
- 12) See Chapter 9, note 65 above.
- 13) Hannah Arendt has pointed out that although the corporate idea of the body politic is present in pre-Christian Latin, in Paul, and in the fathers of the church, it assumed much greater importance in medieval political theory which took for granted that all men were members of one body.

But while the early writers stressed the equality of the members, which are all equally necessary for the well-being of the body as a whole, the emphasis later shifted to the difference between the head and the members, to the duty of the head to rule and of the members to obey. (Op. cit., p. 315, note 47).

- 14) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1226.
- 15) See Chapter 3, note 61 above.
- 16) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 1179.
- 17) See Chapter 6 above.
- 18) Nietzsche, Werke, II, p. 836.
- 19) H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
- 20) *Ibid.*, p. 221.