

Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* as History Serving Life

By

Aaron John O'Brien

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Doctoral Degree in Philosophy

Department of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts

University of Ottawa

© Aaron John O'Brien, Ottawa, Canada, 2017

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abbreviations	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Historiography Serving Genius in <i>On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life</i>	12
1.1 Historical Sense and Unhistorical Feeling	14
1.2 The Suprahistorical Perspective	19
1.3 Nietzsche's Disavowal of the Suprahistorical Perspective	23
1.4 Schopenhauer on Historical Knowledge and Aesthetic Contemplation	26
1.5 The Schopenhauerian Nature of the Suprahistorical Perspective	31
1.6 Other Interpretations of the Suprahistorical	37
1.7 Three Modes of Relating to the Past	47
1.8 Two Kinds of Life: Genius and the Masses	54
Chapter 2: Historical Epistemology in <i>On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life</i>	58
2.1 The Nature of Truth and Knowledge in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense"	59
2.2 Historical Epistemology in <i>On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life</i>	81
2.3 The Valuation of Creativity in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense"	89
Chapter 3: Perspectivist Epistemology in Nietzsche's Later Thought	95
3.1 The Falsity of Appearances in <i>The Gay Science</i>	97
3.2 Denial of the Thing-In-Itself	103
3.3 Immanentist Epistemology	112
3.4 Perspectivist Epistemology	117
3.5 Knowledge, Truth, and Philosophy	131
3.6 The Role of Non-Truth	138

Chapter 4 – Truth and Non-Truth in the Second Treatise of the <i>Genealogy</i>	152
4.1 Nietzsche as Naturalist	153
4.2 Morality of Custom and the Sovereign Individual	157
4.3 The Sovereign Individual as Creator of Values	172
4.4 The State-Form of Community	177
4.5 Bad Conscience	182
4.6 The Double Effect of Socialization and Punishment	186
4.7 The Nobles as Men of Conscience	193
4.8 The Conquered as Human Beings of Conscience	196
4.9 The Emergence of Bad Conscience Reconsidered	198
4.10 Pre-Social Man	202
4.11 Darwin on the Origin of Human Sociability	208
4.12 Nietzsche’s Concern with Truth in GM II	212
4.13 The Unhistorical in GM II	224
Chapter 5: Truth and Persuasion in the First Treatise of the <i>Genealogy</i>	231
5.1 The Natural Origins of Noble Morality and Slave Morality	233
5.2 The Role of Affects in Knowing a Morality	258
5.3 Conflicting Affects	259
5.4 A Critical Portrait of the Advocate of Slave Morality	263
5.5 A Monumental Portrait of the Noble	270
5.6 Janaway on the Lambs and the Birds of Prey	276
5.7 Arousing Disgust	279
5.8 The Noble Perspective of GM I	286
5.9 The Fiction of the Neutral Subject	289
Conclusion	301
Bibliography	321

Abstract

Friedrich Nietzsche's 1874 essay *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* (HL) presents ideas on how the past ought to be appropriated and how history ought to be written. His 1887 book *On the Genealogy of Morality* (GM) presents an account of the historical development of European morality. Given that Nietzsche appropriates the past through writing in GM, the question arises: does GM put into practice Nietzsche's earlier ideas from HL concerning how the past ought to be appropriated through the writing of history? I argue that GM does indeed apply some of Nietzsche's key ideas from HL. In particular, GM remains consistent with HL insofar as it appropriates the past unhistorically, makes use of the monumental and critical modes of history, and appropriates the past in a way that encourages the flourishing of an elite kind of human being. However, Nietzsche's manner of appropriating the past in GM also diverges from what he espouses in HL. Whereas in HL he emphasizes the usefulness and desirability of forgetting and distorting the past, in GM he exhibits a more notable concern with knowing the truth about the past. I show that this difference in approach is due to the significant change that Nietzsche's epistemology underwent between the writing of HL and the writing of GM. This difference in approach notwithstanding, the great virtue of illuminating GM through the lens of HL is that it allows us to see more clearly how a lack of concern with truth and knowledge plays a positive role in Nietzsche's writing of the past in GM. It also helps us to understand *why* he appropriates the past the way that he does in GM. Just as in HL Nietzsche thought that the past ought to be appropriated in a way that encourages the activity of genius, his writing of the history of European morality in GM is undertaken with the intent to encourage the occurrence and activity of a select kind of human being, a kind of human being that Nietzsche values above all else.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Anaïs, Andrew, Dave, Diana, Hector, Jillian, Lauren, Lydia, Lynn, Matt A., Matt M., Michelle, Neil, Pierre, Rob, Sean, Shawn, and Tim, and everyone at the Ottawa Outdoor Club and St. Joe's Supper Table for their friendship. Thanks to Dr. Sonia Sikka for patience and faith. Thanks to the Gatineau Hills for being there.

Abbreviations

AC	— <i>The Anti-Christ</i>
AO	— <i>Assorted Opinions and Maxims</i>
BG	— <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
DB	— <i>Daybreak</i>
DS	— <i>David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer</i>
EH	— <i>Ecce Homo</i>
GM	— <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i>
GS	— <i>The Gay Science</i>
HA	— <i>Human, All Too Human</i>
HL	— <i>On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life</i>
SE	— <i>Schopenhauer as Educator</i>
TI	— <i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
TL	— <i>On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense</i>
WP	— <i>The Will to Power</i>

Introduction

In 1874 Friedrich Nietzsche published an essay on historiography entitled *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* (HL). In it he presents some ideas on how the past ought to be appropriated and how history ought to be written. Almost fourteen years later in 1887 he published what would become one his best known books, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (GM), a work in which he presents over the course of three treatises an account of the historical development of various aspects of contemporary European morality. Since GM is an extended attempt by Nietzsche to appropriate the past through writing, one is naturally led to wonder if he there puts into practice what he had earlier advocated in HL. This is precisely the problem that I wish to address over the course of this dissertation. In other words, I will provide an answer to the question “Does Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morality* put into practice his earlier ideas from *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* concerning how the past ought to be appropriated through the writing of history?” I will argue that GM does indeed apply some of the key ideas that constitute Nietzsche’s view on historiography in HL. In particular, I will show that GM remains consistent with HL insofar as it appropriates the past unhistorically, makes use of the monumental and critical modes of history, and appropriates the past in a way that encourages the flourishing of an elite kind of human being, a kind of human being that is analogous to the figure of the genius in HL. Thus, in significant ways GM exhibits the historiographical approach that Nietzsche advocates in HL. However, Nietzsche’s appropriation of the past in GM also diverges from what he espouses in HL. Whereas in HL he is keen to emphasize the usefulness and desirability of forgetting and distorting the past, in GM he exhibits a more notable concern with

knowing the truth about the past. It will be shown that this difference in approach is due to the significant change that Nietzsche's epistemology underwent between the writing of HL and the writing of GM. This difference in approach notwithstanding, the great virtue of illuminating GM through the lens of HL is that it allows us to better understand how a lack of concern with truth and knowledge plays an important role in Nietzsche's writing of history in GM. That is, given HL's emphasis on the value of non-truth in the writing of history, interpreting GM in light of HL allows us to see more clearly the way in which non-truth plays a positive role in Nietzsche's writing of the past in GM. It also helps us to understand *why* he appropriates the past the way that he does in GM. Just as in HL Nietzsche thought that the past ought to be appropriated in a way that encourages the activity of genius, his writing of the history of European morality in GM is undertaken with the polemical intent to encourage, through artistic means, the occurrence and activity of a select kind of human being, a kind of human being that Nietzsche values above all else.

In Chapter 1 I offer my explication and interpretation of HL. I focus on what I take to be the essay's main ideas: the historical sense, unhistorical feeling, the suprahistorical perspective, the three modes of relating to the past (monumental, critical, and antiquarian), and the figure of the genius. I argue that the essay exhibits a tension between Nietzsche's tendency at this stage in his thinking to endorse and employ Schopenhauerian metaphysics on the one hand, a metaphysics that devalues the worldly assertion of will and desire, and his own inchoate and positive valuation of will and desire on the other, a valuation that will become more prominent as his thinking gains greater distance from the Schopenhauerian paradigm. This tension is particularly evident

in Nietzsche's ambivalent presentation of and attitude toward the concept of the suprahistorical. I will argue that even within the context of HL, Nietzsche's positive valuation of will and desire ultimately wins out over Schopenhauerian metaphysics. What the essay most forcefully asserts is the importance of harnessing the unhistorical attitude's power of forgetting and distorting the past so as to create images of the past that serve to encourage the assertion of will and desire on the part of individual geniuses. The life that Nietzsche thinks history ought to serve is the life of genius, not the life of the mass of humanity.

In Chapter 2 I explore the topic of Nietzsche's historical epistemology at the time that he wrote HL. Since Nietzsche is concerned in HL to emphasize the role and importance of non-truth in the writing of history, it is perhaps understandable that he does not offer there a clear and detailed account of what it means to know the past. Given this lack, I opt to bring what he does say about historical epistemology in HL into relation with the more systematically presented epistemology of his posthumously published essay "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" (TL), written just a year prior to HL. In this way I arrive at a plausible determination of what Nietzsche's historical epistemology might have been when he wrote HL.

According to the epistemology of TL, truth is a matter of knowing mind-independent things-in-themselves. Reality is what it is in absolute independence of human cognition, and truth is a matter of correspondence between our beliefs and the things-in-themselves that populate that independent reality.¹ However, Nietzsche claims that the way in which cognition mediates our relation to things-in-themselves causes

¹ Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 85.

them to be entirely hidden from us. Consequently, we cannot have accurate representations of them, neither in the empirical world of perception of which we are immediately aware nor through the concepts that categorize objects of perception through the anthropomorphic selection of characteristics. Thus, according to Nietzsche's position in TL truth and knowledge are strictly speaking impossible for human beings to attain.

However, based on what Nietzsche has to say about historical epistemology in HL, it would seem that knowing the past is not a matter of knowing a mind-independent world of things-in-themselves. Rather, it is a matter of knowing the empirical world of the past, i.e., the world as it was perceived by human beings in the past. According to the epistemology of TL, such knowledge is in principle possible to achieve insofar as concepts give us a limited sort of knowledge of objects in the empirical world. Because language is by its very nature conceptual, the various kinds of texts that historians work with as their basic material, as well as the texts they produce as products of their research, can provide conceptual linkages to the empirical world of the past and can in principle represent something of the truth of that world. It is therefore possible to know the past insofar as it is possible to have accurate conceptual representations of the empirical world of the past. Even though an historian cannot be immediately acquainted with the perceptual world of the past, he can know it in a mediated fashion by way of concepts.

Nonetheless, there can be no question of determining the true meaning of past events according to this historical epistemology. This is because every attempt by an historian to know the past through concepts involves the creation of meaning through an imaginative and partial selection and ordering of the available evidence. As a result, the meaning of the past can never be finally determined, but is perpetually open to

reinterpretation and revision by way of reconceptualization. Furthermore, while this epistemology allows that the empirical world of the past can be known at least to some extent, this knowledge can never be considered knowledge in the strict sense, i.e., knowledge of the world as thing-in-itself.

In Chapter 3 I show that by the time Nietzsche wrote GM he had dispensed with the thing-in-itself as a standard of truth and arrived at a more definite notion of what it means to know the empirical world of the past. At this later stage in his thinking Nietzsche holds the view that the idea of the thing-in-itself is inconceivable and therefore irrelevant to the problem of truth and knowledge. Truth is no longer a matter of knowing mind-independent things-in-themselves. Instead, attaining truth and knowledge is a matter of engaging perspectivally and affectively with the world of appearance, i.e., the empirical world, the world that either is or can in principle be available to human subjects of knowledge in sense experience. What is grasped by means of such engagement can be evaluated according to epistemic criteria of evaluation such as consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, explanatory power, empirical adequacy, plausibility, and simplicity.² By means of these criteria it is possible to adjudicate the epistemic merits of conflicting claims. Within the context of this epistemology, claims that make exclusive reference to the world as it appears in sense experience and refrain from invoking any kind of transcendent or supernatural world are accorded epistemic privilege. Such claims fall into two broad categories: empiricist and naturalistic. In Chapters 4 and 5 I will show that Nietzsche's concern to tell the truth about the past in GM is manifest primarily in his attempt to offer naturalistic accounts of the origins of various human capacities and moral

² Clark, 48 & 86; Brian Leiter, "Perspectivism in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*," in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, ed. Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 347.

phenomena. At this stage in his thinking, telling the truth about the past means offering naturalistic accounts of historical developments which meet the above mentioned epistemic criteria. At the same time, it will be evident that Nietzsche is concerned in GM not only with telling the truth about the past, but also with asserting values in the present. He achieves this latter aim by artistically selecting, distorting, emphasizing, and idealizing elements within the history of European morality so as to create images of the past that foster in the reader a particular affective and valuational attitude toward that history. Thus, through his appropriation of the past in GM Nietzsche employs both truth and non-truth to achieve his aims.

In Chapter 4 I demonstrate how Nietzsche both is and is not concerned with telling the truth about the past in the second treatise of GM, placing particular emphasis upon how his unhistorical appropriation of the past in that treatise contributes positively towards the value-asserting dimension of the book.³ Nietzsche is concerned with telling the truth about the past in GM II insofar as he offers naturalistic explanations for the emergence of the sovereign individual, the human being of bad conscience, and the unique capacities that characterize these types of human being. The naturalistic quality of his explanations is manifest insofar as he makes abundant use of psychological and physiological claims to account for how human beings developed new capacities over the

³ I begin my analysis of GM with a discussion of GM II because the historical periods that Nietzsche refers to in GM II are antecedent to the periods he refers to in GM I. Nietzsche's motivations for placing a treatise that deals with a later time period before a treatise that deals with an earlier time period are not entirely clear. It may be that the stark distinction he draws between noble morality and slave morality in the first treatise offers the most accessible way into the problematization of morality that all three treatises of the GM are concerned with. It may also be the case that Nietzsche addresses the slave revaluation of noble morality first because the issue is more immediately relevant to his concern with urging a revaluation of contemporary European morality than are the temporally prior matters concerning the development of sovereign individuality and bad conscience that are dealt with in GM II.

course of time and as a result of violent processes of socialization. The psychological principle of will to power plays a particularly important role in these explanations.

A lack of concern with telling the truth about the past is evident in GM II insofar as the narrative of that treatise fails to meet the epistemic criteria of consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, and explanatory power. These shortfalls significantly reduce the plausibility of the narrative. However, rather than construe these epistemic deficiencies in a purely negative fashion, I will argue that they are indicative of Nietzsche's tendency to appropriate the past in an artistic and unhistorical manner, one which serves the valuational aim of convincing readers to overcome their bad conscience concerning their will to power and instead affirm their will to power in good conscience.

One of the main unhistorical features of the narrative of GM II involves the contrast that Nietzsche draws between the noble conquerors and the human beings of bad conscience who come into existence as a result of the creation of states by the noble conquerors. Whereas the logic of the narrative dictates that both the noble conquerors and the human beings of bad conscience are sovereign individuals by virtue of the fact that both are products of societies governed by moralities of custom, the way in which Nietzsche depicts the noble conquerors makes it appear as if they lack the powers of soul that characterize such individuals, including memory, promise-making, responsibility, calculation, reason, reflection, self-surveillance, and freedom. By denying the noble conquerors the characteristic features of sovereign individuality Nietzsche creates an idealized and unhistorical image of the nobles as purely unconscious, unreflective, and involuntary agents who express their will to power outwardly, uninhibitedly, and in good conscience. This image is diametrically opposed to the image of the human beings of bad

conscience. They are depicted as burdened by consciousness and by a vicious power of self-reflection and self-critique. Socialization and the punishments used to enforce the rules of the state have turned their will to power inward. As a result, they are ashamed of their will to power and cannot express it in good conscience. Because the characteristics of sovereign individuality are rightly understood as being shared in common by the nobles and the human beings of bad conscience, the way in which Nietzsche depicts these two types makes them appear more distinct from each other than they really are. The exaggerated difference between the two figures intensifies both the devaluation of the man of bad conscience and the affirmation of the noble conqueror. By depicting the nobles as being utterly unlike the human beings of bad conscience Nietzsche makes it clear to his readers what they ought to overcome and what they ought to cultivate in themselves. The uninhibited expression of will to power that the idealized image of the noble conqueror exemplifies offers an unambiguous and compelling model to the reader. It is the ideal to which Nietzsche wants his readers to aspire. In this way, the distorted and untruthful image of the noble conqueror that Nietzsche creates in GM II serves his valuational goal of urging his readers to overcome bad conscience and affirm their will to power.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, will demonstrate how the first treatise of GM is, like the second treatise, both concerned to tell the truth about the past and concerned to artistically idealize aspects of the past so as to motivate readers to adopt a particular valuational perspective with respect to contemporary European morality. Nietzsche is concerned to tell the truth about the past in GM I insofar as he offers in that treatise a naturalistic account of the origins of noble morality and slave morality. The emergence of

both kinds of morality is explained in predominantly psychological terms. Each is a product of the affective dispositions that characterize individuals who occupy different stations within ancient political, social, and economic hierarchies. The nobles occupy positions of dominance within these hierarchies and create their values on the basis of the pathos of distance that they feel with respect to the commoners and slaves who rank beneath them. The commoners and slaves, who are collectively the advocates of slave morality, occupy subordinate positions within the hierarchies and create their values on the basis of the resentment they feel towards the ruling nobles. As in GM II, the psychological principle of will to power plays an explanatory role: noble morality and slave morality are expressions of will to power on the part of those who create these manners of valuation. Both moralities are human creations that emerge out of real material conditions and processes of historical development. Consequently, neither of these moralities has any claim to metaphysical sanction or objective validity. Contemporary European morality, as an expression of the slave manner of valuation, is therefore not an ahistorical given, but a thoroughly natural and historical phenomenon.

Nietzsche achieves his value-asserting aims in GM I by imbuing his naturalistic account of the origins of noble morality and slave morality with emotionally biased portrayals of the nobles and the advocates of slave morality. Here he puts into practice ideas from HL by offering his readers a critical depiction of the advocate of slave morality and a monumental depiction of the noble. The advocate of slave morality is portrayed as the true image of human vice and sickness. He is deficient, defective, self-loathing, timid, needy, dependent, insincere, dishonest, deluded, scheming, cowardly, and viciously prudent. The noble on the other hand is portrayed as the true image of human

health and virtue. He is fundamentally happy, confident, affirmative, passionate, exuberant, generous, cheerful, magnanimous, honest, courageous, assertive, untiring, virtuously forgetful, and virtuously intuitive. Whereas Nietzsche denigrates the slave moralist and depicts him as in almost every respect unworthy of emulation, he idealizes the noble as one who is pre-eminently deserving of praise and approbation.

Through his critical depiction of the advocates of slave morality Nietzsche seeks to create in his readers an aversion to the slave moralists and their manner of valuation. His monumental depiction of the nobles is, by contrast, designed to create an affective inclination toward the nobles and their manner of valuation. By juxtaposing the nobles and the advocates of slave morality in this way, Nietzsche recommends to the reader the noble manner of valuation and its salubrious affirmation of will to power.

To what extent the images that Nietzsche creates of the noble and the advocate of slave morality are true is uncertain. Nietzsche offers only a small and highly selective sampling of textual evidence to substantiate his characterizations of them. His examination and exploration of the textual evidence is nowhere near exhaustive. Hence, it is evident that in his manner of depicting these two types he is not so much concerned with getting at the truth of who they were as he is with creating highly affective images of them that will motivate readers to affirm the noble manner of valuation and devalue the slave manner of valuation. Nietzsche's use of the monumental and critical modes of history in GM I therefore contributes to the polemical objective of persuading readers to adopt a particular value-perspective vis-à-vis contemporary European morality. By putting into practice ideas from HL, Nietzsche advances the value-asserting aim of GM.

The first treatise of GM urges readers to affirm their will to power by repudiating the slave manner of valuation and adopting instead the noble manner of valuation. The second treatise urges them to affirm their will to power in good conscience rather than deny and devalue it through the psychological mechanism of bad conscience. Nietzsche wants his readers to live in accordance with the noble manner of valuation and affirm their will to power in good conscience because in doing so they will be in a better position to achieve what he calls the “*highest power and splendour of the human type*”.

(GM Pref: 6) Just as in HL only a minority of human beings are capable of becoming geniuses, Nietzsche’s view in GM is that only a minority of human beings are capable of achieving this highest power and splendour of the human type. Bad conscience and slave morality, while conducive to the flourishing of the majority of human beings, inhibit the elite minority from achieving their full potential. By employing techniques of writing that he had initially thought through in HL Nietzsche appropriates the past in GM in a way that allows him at the same time to recommend and assert particular attitudes and values. He thinks that these attitudes and values will be conducive to the flourishing of an elite and higher kind of human being, a kind of human being that in his writings Nietzsche values above all else.

Chapter 1 – Historiography Serving Genius in *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*

HL was Nietzsche's third book, published while he was still a professor of classical philology at the University of Basel. In terms of both content and style, the essay expresses a profound dissatisfaction with the scholarly approach to writing history. The truth-oriented procedures of scholar-historians are relentlessly critiqued; their cool and *wissenschaftlich* method of discourse is openly eschewed in favour of one imbued with affect and enthusiasm.⁴ Given the passion and conviction with which Nietzsche conveys his ideas in HL, it is easy to appreciate how the essay can energize and inspire the reader on an emotional level. However, it can do this while still remaining conceptually obscure. Its ideas sometimes lack clear definitions, and the ways in which these ideas relate to one another are not always articulated as explicitly as they might be.

In order to bring HL's conceptual content out of obscurity, I offer in this first chapter an explication of the essay's main ideas, which I take to be the historical sense, unhistorical feeling, the suprahistorical perspective, the three modes of relating to the past (monumental, antiquarian, and critical), and the figure of the genius. Through this explication I will show that Nietzsche advocates a manner of appropriating the past that promotes the maximum exertion of will and desire on the part of individual geniuses. This exertion of will and desire is achieved primarily through the mobilization of the unhistorical attitude's power to distort and forget the past. Appropriating the past unhistorically allows the creativity of geniuses to flourish, and such flourishing is for Nietzsche the source of what is most meaningful and valuable in history.

⁴ Nietzsche uses the terms "kühl" (cool) and "wissenschaftlich" (scientific) in *Ecce Homo* to describe one aspect of his manner of expression in GM. See EH Why I write such good books: The Genealogy of Morality.

It is important to note that at the time of writing HL Nietzsche was still very much under the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy. Some aspects of the essay, particularly the concept of the suprahistorical, show the mark of this influence and are therefore clarified by an understanding of that philosophy. However, it is also the case that Nietzsche is in other respects striking out on his own in HL. While still being influenced by his educator's paradigm, he was already at this point in his thinking moving beyond Schopenhauer's thought and developing it in his own way. He is in conversation with Schopenhauer, as he would be throughout much of his career, and through that conversation creating his own idiosyncratic perspective.

Nietzsche's divergence from Schopenhauer in HL is most evident in his positive valuation of will and desire. In advocating a manner of appropriating the past which promotes the exertion of will and desire on the part of geniuses, Nietzsche is distancing himself from Schopenhauer's philosophy. In contrast to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer advocates as his ideal the renunciation of will and desire, and characterizes the genius as possessing a particular talent for such renunciation. However, despite Nietzsche's positive valuation of will and desire, there remains evidence of a continued commitment to the framework of Schopenhauer's metaphysics. The tension between an adherence to and a divergence from Schopenhauer's philosophy creates some confusion within HL, particularly with regard to Nietzsche's formulation of the concept of the suprahistorical. Consequently, some effort will be required to separate that which is Schopenhauerian in HL from that which is indicative of Nietzsche's own developing, yet still nascent, perspective.

1.1 Historical Sense and Unhistorical Feeling

HL is the second of four *Untimely Meditations* that Nietzsche wrote between 1873 and 1876. These essays are untimely insofar as they attack and critique cultural tendencies within Nietzsche's own time. Nietzsche was particularly concerned with criticizing what he believed to be the inauthentic and philistine culture of the Germany of his day. In HL he critiques a specific aspect of this culture, namely, its "historical sense".

Nietzsche introduces the idea of the historical sense by means of a comparison between humans and animals.⁵ Animals, he claims, have no memory. They live purely in the present moment and are completely unaware of whatever might have preceded it. As such, animals lack the historical sense or the ability to "feel historically". (HL 62) Humans, on the other hand, do not live exclusively in the present. Unlike the animals that Nietzsche imagines, they have the ability to remember the past. They possess by nature an historical sense.

The culture that Nietzsche critiques is characterized by a highly developed historical sense. Those who inhabit this culture believe that a proper understanding of any phenomenon requires an understanding of its place within the process of historical development. The attempt is therefore made to establish what might be called a science of remembering. The scholar-historians who practice this science seek to know the past as thoroughly as possible by determining the causal relations among past events in as much detail as possible. They formulate laws of historical development as a way of explaining and describing these events at higher levels of generality. Such knowledge is for them an end in itself, something inherently worthy of pursuit.

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 60-1. Cited hereafter in parentheses as HL with page number.

Nietzsche does not think that the historical sense deserves to be held in such high esteem. In his view, German culture has carried the ability to remember to the point of excess and obsession. Such enthusiasm for knowing the past is harmful insofar as too much knowledge of the past can burden human beings and make them unfit for creative activity in the present. Nietzsche therefore wants to urge upon his readers the need for a tempering of the historical sense. He wants them to understand that there is also value in forgetting.

The capacity to forget is the capacity to “feel *unhistorically*”. (HL 62) Animals (at least as Nietzsche conceives them) are wholly absorbed in unhistorical feeling insofar as they completely lack the power of memory. Humans also have the capacity to feel unhistorically, but they are not, like other animals, totally bereft of memory. Rather, a human being who feels unhistorically has the capacity to forget insofar as he is able to have a *limited* awareness of the past.

Nietzsche illustrates the kind of forgetting that characterizes unhistorical feeling in humans by means of an image, that of the “bounded horizon”. (HL 63) One who feels unhistorically allows within the “bounded horizon” of his consciousness only that which contributes positively to his creative willing in the present. A great many things that he might otherwise be aware of, including a great many things about the past, are then excluded from consciousness. Thus, when Nietzsche defines the unhistorical as “the art and power of *forgetting* and of enclosing oneself within a bounded *horizon*” (HL 120) it should be understood that “forgetting” and “bounded horizon” are really two ways of referring to a single thing, viz., the idea that the unhistorical man’s awareness of the past is limited and thereby focussed on the object of his creative willing in the present.

A person may enter into an exceptionally intense unhistorical state of mind as a result of being overcome by a passion for an idea or project. Nietzsche associates unhistorical feeling with passionate inspiration when he offers an illustration of what it means to feel unhistorically. He asks his readers to “imagine a man seized by a vehement passion, for a woman or for a great idea”. (HL 64) Such a man is “narrow-minded” and “blind”: “there are so many things he is no longer capable of evaluating at all because he can hardly feel them anymore”. (HL 64) He “forgets most things so as to do one thing”. (HL 64) In this state of mind a man is “least capable of being just”; “he is unjust towards what lies behind him, and he recognizes the rights only of that which is now to come into being” through his creative activity. (HL 64) This exceptional kind of unhistorical feeling is a function of an individual’s passionate commitment to the satisfaction of his worldly desire.

Nietzsche values the unhistorical attitude as an effective antidote to the hypertrophy of memory that characterizes German culture. The overdevelopment of the historical sense causes people to become alienated from their instincts and passions. Rather than trust their own feelings, they look to the past for direction and purpose. They are then determined and governed by things foreign to themselves, by knowledge of distant times, places, and peoples. In losing touch with their instincts and passions they lose touch with their true and natural selves. In Nietzsche’s view, this makes them weak and inauthentic and hinders their ability to do great things.

Unhistorical feeling puts people in touch with their true and natural selves by connecting them with their instincts and passions. Instincts and passions express the “innermost roots of a man’s nature”. (HL 62) Hence, when a person heeds their passions

and allows them to guide their actions, they are then acting in accordance with who they really are. Acting in accordance with this inner source of direction is what makes a person's actions honest and authentic and gives them the power to do great things.

In Nietzsche's view, unhistorical feeling is fundamental to the strength and greatness of peoples and individuals alike. It is "the foundation upon which alone anything sound, healthy and great, anything truly human, can grow". (HL 63) It is the "atmosphere within which every great historical event has taken place". (HL 65) Unhistorical feeling activates the creative capacities that are the source of all great historical events. A preoccupation with knowing the past stifles that creativity.

It should not be thought however that Nietzsche advocates the complete suppression of the historical sense, for he acknowledges that there is value in knowing the past. His aim rather is to limit and temper historical feeling so that it does not undermine the creativity that is vital to human affairs. Nietzsche offers no formula or algorithm for determining the varying degrees to which the historical sense and unhistorical feeling ought to be deployed. Instinct determines this: one must possess "a powerful instinct for sensing when it is necessary to feel historically and when unhistorically". (HL 63) Ultimately, "the capacity to feel to a certain degree unhistorically [is] more vital and more fundamental" (HL 63) to the spirit of human creativity.

Some commentators suggest that the unhistorical attitude can be adopted intentionally. Michael Mahon characterizes unhistorical forgetting in this way. In this regard he distinguishes between active and passive forgetting. Animals passively forget due to their incapacity to remember. However, human beings who have strength of

character do not simply “fail to remember” in the way an animal does: “Unlike the animal’s forgetfulness, Mirabeau’s forgetfulness is an active, creative power ‘to form, to mold, to recuperate and to forget’ his experience for the sake of serving life”.⁶ For Mahon, active forgetting is “a rejection” of remembrance.⁷

However, there is no evidence in HL to support this characterization of unhistorical forgetting. The way in which Nietzsche describes the unhistorical attitude suggests that a person enters into it as the result of suffering an uncontrollable urge to pursue a goal or realize an idea. Nowhere is it said that unhistorical forgetting is consciously chosen. Rather, there is every indication that it results from living life in accord with the urgings of passion and instinct. One does not choose to feel unhistorically, but is overcome by that feeling.

Sarah Kofman offers a more correct understanding of Nietzschean forgetting. She says that forgetting, as Nietzsche presents it in GM, is “the product of a shifting of perspective which screens the evaluations of the former perspective in order to keep only that which is reconcilable with the new point of view”; “forgetting only *has* to take place because some new forces gained the upper hand which were able to bring victory to other evaluations”.⁸ I think what Kofman says here is true of forgetting as Nietzsche presents it in HL. That is, forgetting is there a product of the perspectival limitations that result from a passionate engagement with life.

Unhistorical feeling is one of the antidotes to the sickness that results from an excessive concern with knowing the truth about the past. By shifting focus away from

⁶ Michael Mahon, *Foucault’s Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power, and the Subject* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 96.

⁷ Ibid., 97.

⁸ Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche et la métaphore* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1983), 75. [All quotations from secondary sources written in French and German are my own translations.]

knowing the past it counteracts the degeneration and weakness of will that is caused by the vicious employment of the historical sense. In the unhistorical attitude, instead of being preoccupied with things that are beyond and foreign to oneself, one returns to oneself and grounds one's existence in the instinctual and passionate tendencies that express one's authentic self. One's concern with knowing the past is thereby diminished as one draws about oneself a limited horizon of concern within which one gives structure and value to that which one appropriates.

1.2 The Suprahistorical Perspective

The other antidote to the malady of will caused by the over-development of the historical sense is the suprahistorical (*das Ueberhistorische*). The concept of the suprahistorical is introduced in section one of HL right after Nietzsche's discussion of the importance of the unhistorical attitude.

Immediately we see that the suprahistorical perspective involves recognizing the fundamental role played by passion and the unhistorical attitude in the lives of great men and the great historical events that they initiate. Nietzsche describes the suprahistorical as a "vantage point" that could be attained if "one could scent out and retrospectively breathe this unhistorical atmosphere within which every great historical event has taken place". (HL 65) In other words, the suprahistorical perspective is attained when one realizes that all great historical events have their genesis in unhistorical feeling. The quote from Barthold Georg Niebuhr that immediately follows Nietzsche's first mention of the suprahistorical is intended to support this view:

History, grasped clearly and in detail [...] is useful in one way at least: it enables us to recognize how unaware even the greatest and highest spirits of our human

race have been of the chance nature of the form assumed by the eyes through which they see and through which they compel everyone to see – compel, that is, because the intensity of their consciousness is exceptionally great. He who has not grasped this quite definitely and in many instances will be subjugated by the appearance of a powerful spirit who brings to a given form the most impassioned commitment. (HL 65)

Nietzsche presents this quote from Niebuhr as a description of the suprahistorical perspective. In that quote, Niebuhr gives emphasis to the notion that passion is essential to the activities of “the greatest and highest spirits of our human race”. If, says Niebuhr, one grasps history “clearly and in detail”, one realizes that great spirits possess an “exceptionally great” “intensity of [...] consciousness”, and an “impassioned commitment” to the way in which they see the world. Through their passion and intensity they “compel” others to see the world in the way they themselves do. In emphasizing the passion that determines the way in which great spirits relate to the world, the quote from Niebuhr essentially reaffirms what Nietzsche had already said concerning the link between great historical events and the unhistorical attitude. Thus, the suprahistorical perspective, as expressed in the quote from Niebuhr, is a perspective from which the efficacy in history of the unhistorical attitude is realized, or at least asserted.⁹ In essence, the concept of the suprahistorical is a way of naming or labelling the views concerning the unhistorical attitude that Nietzsche had already expressed in section one of HL.

Another element of the suprahistorical perspective is the assertion that the way in which great spirits see the world is due to chance, and that they themselves are not aware of this. This aspect of the suprahistorical perspective is also expressed in the quote from

⁹ “Insofar as each historical phenomenon is based on an inspiration, it is as such fundamentally [and] deeply *unhistorical*.” [J. A. L. J. Geijssen, *Geschichte und Gerechtigkeit: Grundzüge einer Philosophie der Mitte im Frühwerk Nietzsches* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 32.]

Niebuhr: the “greatest and highest spirits” are unaware “of the chance nature of the form assumed by the eyes through which they see”.

A third important feature of the suprahistorical perspective is its rejection of what Nietzsche calls the process-theory of meaning in history and the assertion of an alternative view of meaning in history. The “historical men”, as Nietzsche calls them, believe in the process theory of history. That is, they believe that as time advances the “meaning of existence” (HL 65) is more fully revealed. Meaning is conceived as undergoing a cumulative process of development through time. Knowing the past makes historical men “desire the future more vehemently” (HL 65), presumably because they expect that the future will develop and complete what meaning can be gleaned from the past.

However, one who adopts the suprahistorical perspective does not, like the historical man, believe that the meaning of existence is more fully revealed with time. For the suprahistorical thinker, “the world is complete and reaches its finality at each and every moment”. (HL 65) Said otherwise, the meaning of existence is contained equally in all moments, expressed equally at all times. That is, it is not realized more fully as time advances. A finite span of past time teaches just as much about the meaning of existence as a finite span of future time.

Nietzsche expresses uncertainty about what exactly these finite portions of time teach us, what meaning they impart to the suprahistorical thinker. He tells us that such thinkers are in disagreement on this point. Nonetheless, they at least agree in asserting that all times are identical insofar as they are all characterized by “imperishable types”, the “motionless structure of a value”, and “a significance that is always the same”. (HL

66) In other words, they assert that not everything is in a state of flux. There is at least something that remains the same in the midst of all becoming, and this something-permanent is supposed to be recognized from the suprahistorical perspective.

It is strange that Nietzsche would here express such uncertainty about what fixed meaning is expressed in each finite span of time, for he had already suggested an answer to this question on the previous page. There he claimed that one who adopts the suprahistorical perspective learns “from all men and all experiences, whether among the Greeks or Turks, *from a single hour of the first or of the nineteenth century* [emphasis added], to answer his own question as to how or to what end life is lived”. (HL 65) Here we have an answer to the question: what is the eternal meaning that is expressed fully in each moment? The answer: that one must give direction to one’s own life, rather than receive that direction from beyond oneself. Admittedly, this answer is somewhat paradoxical, since it leaves it up to the individual to determine the meaning of his own life. Nonetheless, it coheres with what Nietzsche has already said concerning the link between the unhistorical attitude and the suprahistorical perspective. Nietzsche had stated that from the suprahistorical perspective, one realizes that all great historical events are fundamentally indebted to the unhistorical and passionate approach to living that the great spirits of mankind exemplify. And as we have seen, the unhistorical attitude involves allowing one’s inner nature to be the guiding light of one’s activity in the world. In essence, the eternal meaning taught by history according to the suprahistorical perspective is: allow one’s true nature to be the foundation and source of one’s active engagement with the world, for by living in this way one becomes capable of greatness, that is, capable of transforming humanity in some significant way. According to the

suprahistorical perspective, this is the practical lesson that even a limited exposure to history will teach and we need not attain complete knowledge of the past to know this. In recognizing this, we recognize the essential thesis of the suprahistorical theory of meaning in history: that every great historical event, and therefore all meaning in history that is worthy of recognition, all of which comes to be and passes away in time, finds its genesis in the unhistorical approach to life embodied by great spirits.

1.3 Nietzsche's Disavowal of the Suprahistorical Perspective

Nietzsche's aim in HL is to combat what he believes are the pernicious effects of an overemphasis on the acquisition of historical knowledge. In particular, he wants to counteract the deleterious effect that such an overemphasis has on the power of creative genius to transform humanity through its creative activity. In the last section of HL he claims that the suprahistorical perspective and the unhistorical attitude are the antidotes to this overemphasis on historical knowledge. (HL 120) However, Nietzsche's advocacy for the suprahistorical perspective in the last section of the essay is complicated by his initial discussion of the concept in section one of the essay. There he seems to reject the suprahistorical perspective on the basis that it promotes a withdrawal from life and action. Given that the suprahistorical perspective asserts the historical efficacy of passion and is in essence an affirmation of the power of the unhistorical attitude – a power that Nietzsche clearly values as the source of health, strength, and creativity – it is strange that in section one of HL Nietzsche would reject the suprahistorical perspective as something that is inimical to life. One would rather expect Nietzsche to embrace the suprahistorical,

as he does later in the essay, given that he conceives the unhistorical approach to living as fundamental to the lives of peoples and individuals alike.

Nietzsche's rejection of the suprahistorical perspective is based on the idea that this perspective fosters inaction and a withdrawal from life. He maintains that one who conceives history from the suprahistorical perspective would no longer want to "go on living or take part in history". (HL 65) It is suggested that one would feel this way because one would recognize that historical events require "blindness and injustice in the soul of him who acts". (HL 65) Nietzsche later asserts that in understanding that all times equally express an unchanging value and significance, the suprahistorical thinker will have no taste for the "endless stream of new signs" (HL 66), for, from the suprahistorical perspective, these new signs or new events are superfluous in that they are merely new signs for the same eternal meaning. Exposure to these new signs and new events would cause the suprahistorical thinker to become over-sated and nauseous. The "boldest" of the suprahistorical men, says Nietzsche, would perhaps withdraw from any concern with the world in an extreme manner. They would see the world as "pain", "boredom", and "dirt". (HL 66)

This negative characterization of the suprahistorical perspective is surprising, for the idea that recognizing the role of blindness and injustice in history would cause one to withdraw from life and action is contrary to the entire drift of what Nietzsche says in HL up to that point. Nietzsche had just spent the majority of section one of the essay expressing the view that the unhistorical attitude, to which blind passion and injustice are essential, is fundamental to a creative engagement with life. As we have seen, the suprahistorical perspective asserts the efficacy of the unhistorical attitude. The

suprahistorical perspective should therefore spur nascent great men to action since it claims to offer insight into what is essential to greatness, viz., a passionate engagement with life on the basis of one's firm inner nature.

The sense of contradiction is furthered when Nietzsche rejects the suprahistorical perspective in favour of the process view of history. Nietzsche separates himself from the "wisdom" of the suprahistorical perspective to indulge in "unwisdom", which involves believing in "deeds and progress and [being] honourers of the process". (HL 66) He claims to want to embrace the "occidental prejudice" of the "valuation of the historical" (HL 66) and make progress with this prejudice. In this way he thinks history might be made to serve life. The wisdom of the suprahistorical perspective is here presented as antithetical to life.

Again, why the suprahistorical perspective must be thought of as antithetical to life is not clear since the content of that perspective makes positive claims about what is most beneficial to life. Furthermore, Nietzsche's professed desire to believe in progress and honour the process of history is highly uncharacteristic of him and contradicts everything that follows in HL. Nietzsche explicitly rejects the process-theory of history in his discussion of Eduard von Hartmann's version of that theory.

In order to properly understand why Nietzsche distances himself from the suprahistorical perspective in section one of the essay we must first consider the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy on Nietzsche's concept of the suprahistorical. In particular, it is necessary to consider Schopenhauer's assessment of history as a region of knowledge and how this compares to his understanding of the sort of knowledge that the artistic genius is capable of attaining.

1.4 Schopenhauer on Historical Knowledge and Aesthetic Contemplation

Schopenhauer's philosophy owes a great deal to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Like Kant, Schopenhauer draws a distinction between things-in-themselves and things as they appear to human subjects of knowledge. For Kant, human beings can only experience and know objects as they appear. Objects appear to us as existing in time and space and as ordered by categories of the understanding such as causation, succession, and simultaneity. Things as they are in themselves, i.e., things as they are in isolation from our cognition of them, are utterly beyond our capacities of knowledge.¹⁰

Schopenhauer offers a similar conception of knowledge and experience. The individuated things that we know and experience, the phenomena or appearances, are given form by our mode of representation: we know them as existing in time and space and as causally related to one another.¹¹ To know something is to determine how it is causally related to other phenomena in time and space. However, all individual phenomena are really expressions or objectifications of a single thing, namely, Will. Will is the thing-in-itself for Schopenhauer, the reality that underlies all appearances, "the source of all [...] phenomena." (WWR 184) Individual phenomena come to be and pass away, but Will exists eternally, infinitely objectifying itself in the form of perishable individual phenomena. The individual phenomena are in a state of becoming. They endure in existence for a limited amount of time and are causally related to other phenomena in ever changing ways. Will is not in a state of becoming. It alone has being:

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965). See 257-75 for the distinction between noumena and phenomena. See the Transcendental Aesthetic for a discussion of the a priori nature of space and time. See the Transcendental Analytic, in particular 208-38, for a discussion of the categories of experience.

¹¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1969), 6-13. Cited hereafter in parentheses as WWR with page number. See WWR section 23 for a succinct summary of Schopenhauer's conception of what the world is and the nature of its appearing.

“The will alone is”. (WWR 184) Despite all the changes that its objectifications undergo, Will is eternally unchanging. Schopenhauer claims that we each have an immediate experience of Will in the experience or feeling of our own acts of willing. Such experience gives us insight into that which underlies all phenomenal appearances.

Within the context of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the proper concern of historians is to know the causal relations that have obtained among human phenomena. The historian seeks to know the world of becoming as it pertains to the human past. He determines the causal conditions, particularly the knowledge and human motives, which led to the occurrence of an event, and then how that event conditioned the occurrence of later events. Historians pursue knowledge of the becoming of phenomena so as to be able to give an accurate account of the human past. As Schopenhauer puts it, “[h]istory follows the thread of events; it is pragmatic in so far as it deduces them according to the law of motivation, a law that determines the appearing will where that will is illuminated by knowledge.” (WWR 184)

However, there is for Schopenhauer a kind of knowledge that is different from the knowledge of causal relations among phenomena. Schopenhauer calls this “knowledge of Ideas”. The Ideas are the “immediate and adequate” objectivity of the Will. (WWR 184) Logically (as opposed to temporally) speaking, the Ideas are the first expressions of the Will, intermediaries between its undifferentiated oneness and the many individual phenomena that manifest Will in time and space. For example, each individual human being is a manifestation of Will, and Will expresses itself in each individual by means of the Idea of “mankind”. The Idea is, in other words, the species. Each individual objectifies the Idea of man in a slightly different way, but the Idea, like the Will, is

eternally the same. It is not in a state of becoming, but has being. This is why Schopenhauer calls the Ideas “Platonic”. According to his system, the Ideas, understood as the immediate and adequate objectifications of the Will, are what Plato was referring to when he spoke of the eternal and unchanging archetypes of the changing temporal things that we perceive with our senses.¹²

The Ideas are not phenomena. We cannot know them in the way that we know phenomena. They do not exist in time and space and are not causally related to one another or to phenomena. They, like the one Will, have being and do not become. They are “the true content of [...] phenomena, that which is subject to no change, and is therefore known with equal truth for all time”. (WWR 184) They adequately and fully objectify the Will, whereas individual phenomena are imperfect and partial objectifications of Will.

Schopenhauer maintains that the Ideas can be known despite their non-phenomenal nature. However, the capacity to know the Ideas is a rare perfection. Relatively few people possess this ability to a high degree. Schopenhauer calls these rare individuals “artistic geniuses”. “[A] man of genius is a phenomenon rare beyond all ordinary estimation, and appearing in nature only as the greatest exception.” (WWR 191) Artistic geniuses communicate their knowledge of the Ideas through the various forms of art, whether it be architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, or music. Art, “the work of genius, [...] repeats the eternal Ideas, apprehended through pure contemplation, the essential and abiding element in all the phenomena of the world. [...] [Art's] only source is knowledge of the Ideas; its sole aim is communication of this knowledge.” (WWR 184-5)

¹² See WWR sections 35, 36, 38, and 49 for the Platonic nature of the Ideas.

What allows geniuses to know Ideas is their ability to disengage their will. According to Schopenhauer, all knowledge we have of phenomena involves our individual wills and desires. Through knowing we link phenomena to ourselves in a causal manner. That is, we come to know how various phenomena may hinder or facilitate the satisfaction of our desires. However, in order to know the Ideas, the will of the individual must be disengaged. Knowing is then in no way mixed with willing. One becomes what Schopenhauer calls a “*pure, will-less subject of knowledge*” (WWR 195), a “*pure knowing subject*”. (WWR 186) In this state of mind one’s subjectivity becomes unified with the Idea of an individual phenomenon such that one becomes “the clear mirror of the inner nature of the world”. (WWR 186) One then attains knowledge of the Will at its most immediate level of objectivity. The subject goes beyond the knowledge of becoming to the knowledge of being. This will-less state of knowing is attained in aesthetic contemplation and is the highest form of knowledge of which human beings are capable.

As mentioned already, historians are knowers of phenomena. They seek to know the causal relations that condition the events of history. Their subject matter is therefore inextricably linked with the wills of individuals and how these wills have played a role in the causal relations that form the nexus of history. The historian chooses an event in history and seeks to explain the causes that brought about that event and what role that event played in causing other subsequent events. What are significant to the historian are those phenomena that play an important role in causing an event to occur in time and space. He is concerned with the “outward significance [...] the importance of an action in relation to its consequences for and in the actual world”. (WWR 230)

However, Schopenhauer notes that history has significance that goes beyond the consideration of causal relations among phenomena. In contrast to the historian's way of knowing the past, the persons and events of history can also be taken as opportunities to know the Idea of mankind. This is to be concerned with the “inward significance” of historical events and persons. (WWR 230) All human beings are expressions of the Idea of man. Consequently, for those who have the ability to disengage the will and contemplate aesthetically, the persons and events of history offer opportunities for contemplating the Idea, the essence and innermost nature, of man. For such geniuses, history has a significance that is quite removed from the significance it has for the historian, for the historian *qua* historian does not attain knowledge of the Idea of man through history. “In art only the inward significance is of importance; in history the outward.” (WWR 230)

It is therefore possible that what is significant for the historian might be of little or no significance to the artistic genius, and vice versa. The historian is concerned generally with the great events and persons of history, with those events and persons that have causally determined a great deal of subsequent history. However, the artistic genius may depict events and persons from the past that are quite insignificant from the historian's point of view, but which nonetheless offer occasions for the contemplation of the Idea of man. Mundane persons and events that have played only a small role in the causal nexus of history, and which are therefore uninteresting to the historian, may be chosen by the artistic genius to express quite powerfully some aspect of the Idea of man. (WWR 230-1)

1.5 The Schopenhauerian Nature of the Suprahistorical Perspective

Nietzsche's formulation of the concept of the suprahistorical is very much indebted to Schopenhauer. For instance, and as noted above, the suprahistorical perspective involves the rejection of the process theory of meaning in history. As a consequence of adopting this perspective, the suprahistorical thinker does not believe that the meaning of existence is more fully developed and revealed as time goes on. Rather, he thinks that this meaning is at all times fully developed and available: "the world is complete and reaches its finality at each and every moment". (HL 65) This rejection of the process theory of meaning and consequent affirmation of a static theory of meaning is patently Schopenhauerian. For Schopenhauer, history and existence have no purpose, no direction, no aim, and no end. Will blindly and endlessly expresses itself through individual phenomena. The meaning of these phenomena is not more fully revealed as time goes on, but is at all times available to those who have the ability to disengage their wills and contemplate them aesthetically.

This leads us to the second and most significant respect in which the concept of the suprahistorical is indebted to the philosophy of Schopenhauer. Nietzsche conceives the suprahistorical perspective very much in terms of Schopenhauer's idea of the pure will-less knowing that characterizes aesthetic contemplation. It is easy to see that much of what Nietzsche says about the suprahistorical perspective echoes what Schopenhauer says about aesthetic contemplation. As with aesthetic contemplation, the suprahistorical perspective turns our attention away from becoming and toward being. One who attains the suprahistorical perspective attains knowledge of what is eternal and stable. This is stated explicitly in the definition of the suprahistorical that Nietzsche gives in the last

section of HL. There he defines the suprahistorical as “the powers which lead the eye away from becoming towards that which bestows upon existence the character of the eternal and stable, towards *art* and *religion*”. (HL 120)¹³ Nietzsche had already gestured toward this aspect of the suprahistorical perspective in his initial discussion of it in section one, where he says that all suprahistorical thinkers agree that “the past and the present are one, that is to say, with all their diversity identical in all that is typical and, as the omnipresence of imperishable types, a motionless structure of value that cannot alter and a significance that is always the same”. (HL 66) We can hear in words and phrases such as “identical”, “typical”, “motionless structure”, and “omnipresence of imperishable types” echoes of Schopenhauer’s notion that eternal unchanging Ideas lie behind the perishable individual phenomena that populate the world of becoming.¹⁴

Given that the suprahistorical perspective involves knowledge of things that have eternal being and are beyond all becoming, the perspective can be fairly characterized as a form of Schopenhauerian aesthetic contemplation in which the will becomes disengaged, in which one no longer desires anything and therefore no longer participates in the process of becoming that is history. In adopting this perspective, one devalues active engagement in the world because one knows that whatever might be created in the

¹³ That religion is here mentioned in conjunction with art can be explained if we keep in mind that for Schopenhauer religion, like art, is a matter of unselfing and renunciation of will. The religious ascetic or saint accomplishes his denial of will by denying himself any satisfaction of his worldly and bodily desires, such as his desires for food, sex, and physical comfort generally speaking. By these means he transcends the world of individuated phenomena and attains knowledge of and unification with the reality that is the ground of those phenomena. (WWR 378-98) Nietzsche does not offer an in-depth exploration of the religious dimension of the suprahistorical perspective in HL. However, we can surmise that saintly asceticism is, along with aesthetic contemplation, another path to the suprahistorical perspective.

¹⁴ Schopenhauer comes close to declaring the suprahistorical perspective in WWR when he says that for one who grasps the Ideas “the events of the world will have significance only in so far as they are the letters from which the Idea of man can be read, and not in and by themselves. He will not believe with the general public that time may produce something actually new and significant; that through it or in it something positively real may attain to existence, or indeed that time itself as a whole has beginning and end, plan and development, and in some way has for its final goal the highest perfection (according to their conceptions) of the latest generation that lives for thirty years”. (WWR 182-3)

world of becoming has no effect at all on what is eternal and stable beyond all becoming. Nothing really new is ever created or achieved in the world of becoming because the metaphysical significance of things, the significance that they have in virtue of the eternal Ideas, is always the same. Thus, to fully take on the suprahistorical perspective is to lose concern with the world of becoming.

That the suprahistorical perspective involves disengaging the will explains why Nietzsche is ambivalent about it and why he initially distances himself from it. Nietzsche does not want his readers to stop engaging creatively in the world of becoming. He believes great acts of creativity that bring the new into existence are possible and he wants his readers to engage their will and desire to perform such deeds. He is clearly against Schopenhauer on this point. For this reason, he cannot wholeheartedly adopt the suprahistorical perspective. Nietzsche does not want his readers to turn away from history and becoming entirely. Rather, he wants them to use history in ways that will allow their creative capacities to flourish so that great things can be accomplished. Nietzsche's ideal is not will-less knowing, but creative excellence, which is achieved by engaging will and desire.

We might surmise that Nietzsche embraces the suprahistorical perspective later in the essay because, despite its dangers, it can counteract the overdevelopment of the historical sense. Its value lies in its ability to dislodge those who are obsessed with knowing the past from their over-concern with history and becoming. However, the way in which it achieves this is really too radical because it removes one entirely from the world of becoming. For Nietzsche, there is serious danger in this. One should not be completely unconcerned with history and becoming because then one will no longer exert

one's will to create new and great things. From Nietzsche's perspective, it is really best to avoid the extreme of not having any concern at all for history and becoming.

At the same time, one must avoid the extreme of having too much concern for history and becoming, which extreme is exemplified by the historical attitude towards appropriating the past. While the suprahistorical perspective can counteract the over-development of the historical sense, it is not the ideal antidote to this sickness. Rather, it is the unhistorical attitude that can most effectively treat and prevent the excesses of the historical attitude. The historical and the unhistorical attitudes can be usefully pictured as the opposite extremes of a line. At one extreme lies the over-development of memory, of the capacity to remember and know the past. At the other extreme lies the over-development of forgetfulness, the purely momentary awareness found in the image of animality that Nietzsche offers at the beginning of HL. Each of these extremes is excessive and vicious. Virtue lies at the mean between these extremes, a mean which is closer to the side of the unhistorical than it is to the side of the historical. Forgetting is, after all, the more vital and fundamental power. A concern with remembering and knowing the past is important, but it should be limited and balanced by the unhistorical attitude, an attitude in which one is grounded by one's authentic and true nature, something which Nietzsche thinks is naturally fixed and stable.

The suprahistorical perspective cannot be placed on this line at all. It is beyond the line, incommensurable with it, more like a point that floats above the line. Life can exhibit to varying degrees the historical and unhistorical attitudes, but to adopt the suprahistorical perspective is to transcend life.¹⁵ Nietzsche does not desire a complete

¹⁵ The image of the suprahistorical as a point floating above the line of life resonates with Richard Roos' characterization of the suprahistorical perspective: "the suprahistorical [perspective] really no longer

transcendence of life. Rather, he wants history to serve life. The suprahistorical perspective does not so much serve life as it abnegates it in favour of the metaphysical world of Ideas. That Nietzsche both advocates and rejects the suprahistorical perspective is a sign that his thinking was already in a serious state of tension with Schopenhauer's philosophy. He was in the process of breaking away from it, but was still held captive enough by it to endorse, however confusedly, the renunciation of will and desire that the suprahistorical perspective involves. Nietzsche's ideal in HL is not the Schopenhauerian ideal of will-less knowing, but creation through the exercise of will and desire. Such creation requires not the adoption of the suprahistorical perspective, but finding the virtuous mean between the historical and unhistorical attitudes. In achieving such a mean concern with history is balanced by the fixed and stable nature of the authentic self.

As we have seen, Nietzsche's initial, and ultimately half-hearted, rejection of the suprahistorical perspective can be explained through a consideration of the Schopenhauerian nature of the concept of the suprahistorical. However, it is not only Nietzsche's attitude toward the suprahistorical perspective that is ambivalent.

Ambivalence dwells within the concept of the suprahistorical itself as well, for it both denies and affirms a will-full engagement with the world. Once we have understood the Schopenhauerian nature of the suprahistorical perspective, we understand that it involves attaining a detached and will-less attitude toward the world. It is a contemplation of that which is eternal and stable, of that which is beyond the world of becoming. However, the concept also involves the affirmation of the power of the unhistorical attitude, an attitude

belongs to common humanity, but is reserved for a select company of sages, *who are established upon an unearthly Mount Olympus* [emphasis added]". [Richard Roos, "Der Schopenhauerische Mensch und die Historie in Nietzsches „Unzeitgemäßen Betrachtungen“,“ *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 65 (1984): 32.] While the Nietzschean genius is indeed a rare type of human being, he is not "unearthly" in the way that the Schopenhauerian genius is. For this reason the suprahistorical perspective is inimical to the Nietzschean idea of genius in HL.

which is anything but detached and will-less. The unhistorical attitude is eminently will-full. It is grounded in passion and desire, in the drive to do something, to accomplish something in the world. This ambivalence within the concept of the suprahistorical is a further manifestation of Nietzsche's ambivalent attitude toward Schopenhauer during the time he wrote HL. Within this single concept, he both devalues a will-full engagement with the world and affirms that it is through such engagement that all greatness is achieved. In a strange conceptual paradox, the disengagement of will that characterizes the suprahistorical perspective eventuates in the realization that it is through the vigorous engagement of will that the most worthy deeds are accomplished.

The suprahistorical perspective can be understood, in a Schopenhauerian sense, as the perspective from which the eternal Idea of history is known. From this perspective one knows that history is driven and originality is achieved by individuals who live unhistorically, who heed their passions and instincts and ground their lives in their true natures. This is the innermost nature of history, its eternal essence, understood from the suprahistorical perspective. Thus, we see that even when Nietzsche is being Schopenhauerian through his assertion and elaboration of the suprahistorical perspective, he still manages to be un-Schopenhauerian by positively affirming the power of will and desire through his affirmation of the unhistorical attitude. This attitude is the real focal point of HL. Unhistorical feeling is the best antidote to the excesses of the historical sense.

1.6 Other Interpretations of the Suprahistorical

Michel Foucault is one commentator whose interpretation of the suprahistorical differs from my own. Foucault associates the suprahistorical perspective with a Platonic approach to history,¹⁶ one that interprets the past on the basis of a metaphysics of unity. Any history that adopts the suprahistorical perspective is “a history whose function would be to recollect, in a totality thoroughly closed again on itself, the finally reduced diversity of time; a history that would allow us to recognize ourselves everywhere and to give all the displacements of the past the form of reconciliation; a history that would cast over that which is behind it a look of the end of the world”.¹⁷

Foucault is correct to say that the suprahistorical perspective expresses a commitment to a metaphysics of unity. It does this insofar as it is a kind of Schopenhauerian contemplation of history which claims to transcend the flux of becoming and adopt the perspective of being. To the extent that Schopenhauer associates what is known through this kind of contemplation with the knowledge of Platonic Ideas, Foucault is correct to say that the suprahistorical perspective is a kind of Platonic approach to history.

However, insofar as the suprahistorical perspective is Schopenhauerian, it does not imply any notion of the end of time or a completed development of history, for the Schopenhauerian unity of Will excludes such notions: Will expresses itself in the form of individuated phenomena *endlessly* and *purposelessly*. Nietzsche is careful to distinguish the suprahistorical perspective from any theory of history that posits any kind of progressive and completed development of time. It is the process-theory of history, not

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire,” in *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

the suprahistorical perspective, which interprets the past on the basis of a developmental metaphysics of unity, positing that the events of history cohere systematically with one another and find their resolution and conclusion at the end of history. The suprahistorical theory of history does not conceive history in this way at all. It conceives meaning in history as generated by exceptional individuals whose passions and desires drive them to take hold of and transform themselves and humanity through their creative activities. The monumental events engendered by these monumental individuals do not cohere in any systematic way with one another. Nor are they ultimately reconciled with one another in any systematic order. These are chance occurrences, often disparate in time and place. The meaning of each event is in no way determined by how it contributes to any kind of unfolding story of man or the cosmos. These are unique and discontinuous events whose meanings cannot be reduced by means of a unifying narrative encompassing them all. Each is a testament to the perpetual possibility of the transformation and overcoming of man and nature *despite* the fact that they do not contribute in any way to the salvation or redemption of humanity. In associating the suprahistorical perspective with a developmental metaphysics of unity, Foucault misses the specifically Schopenhauerian nature of the suprahistorical perspective and the extent to which Nietzsche's formulation of that concept is indebted to Schopenhauer.

Foucault also misses the ambiguity within the concept that arises out of Nietzsche's quite un-Schopenhauerian assertion of the power of the unhistorical, which he includes as a major component of the suprahistorical perspective. Foucault's understanding of the suprahistorical thus remains incomplete. He fails to understand the implications of Schopenhauer's influence over Nietzsche with respect to this concept, as

well as the implications of Nietzsche's gathering resistance to Schopenhauer which introduces the un-Schopenhauerian element of unhistorical feeling into the concept.

Alexander Nehamas, in his essay "The Genealogy of Genealogy: Interpretation in Nietzsche's second *Untimely Meditation* and *On the Genealogy of Morals*", shows an overall better grasp than Foucault of the suprahistorical perspective. In that essay, Nehamas first makes reference to the suprahistorical by way of quoting the passage from HL where Nietzsche says that all suprahistorical thinkers agree that "the past and the present are one" insofar as they manifest the same "imperishable types", the same "significance", and the same "motionless structure of a value".¹⁸ This is the knowledge, says Nehamas, that must be forgotten by way of the unhistorical attitude so that action in the present can be possible.

Nehamas further elaborates his understanding of the suprahistorical perspective by associating it with a pessimistic perspective from which the utter meaninglessness of the world is grasped. "[A]t the time he wrote his *Untimely Meditations* Nietzsche thought that in reality history is simply the succession of chance events which essentially lack an order, a meaning, or a purpose; [...] In reality, history is a causal sequence of events [...] But these events occur for no reason, and this deprives [history] of meaning".¹⁹ For Nehamas, the perennial meaninglessness of reality is the sense in which the past and the present are one. As a consequence of this meaninglessness, no real change or novelty is possible in the world: "in their real nature, neither the world nor history can ever be

¹⁸ HL 66; Alexander Nehamas, "The Genealogy of Genealogy, Interpretation in Nietzsche's Second *Untimely Meditation* and in *On the Genealogy of Morals*," in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, ed. Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 270.

¹⁹ Nehamas, 272-3.

altered. What meaning they have, which is no meaning at all, is already there”.²⁰ From the suprahistorical perspective, creative activity does not bring anything new into existence.

Nehamas claims that from Nietzsche’s perspective in HL the knowledge of the meaninglessness of reality that is gained from the suprahistorical perspective must be forgotten if there is to be any productive and creative action in the present. This is because the one who creates, in order to create, must believe that what he creates is truly meaningful and potentially novel. To adopt the suprahistorical perspective is to think that any new creation is in reality meaningless and adds nothing truly different to the world. The suprahistorical perspective must therefore be forgotten because it destroys the illusion of meaningfulness that is necessary for creative activity to take place.²¹

Nehamas’ understanding of the suprahistorical perspective can be understood as a recognition of the Schopenhauerian nature of that perspective (even though Nehamas does not mention Schopenhauer by name) as long as we understand the meaninglessness that Nehamas speaks of to be a function of the purposelessness of the Will’s ongoing manifestation as “world”. Insofar as the suprahistorical perspective is Schopenhauerian and pessimistic, the will of the one who adopts that perspective will be disengaged and the phenomenal world will be understood as illusory. The suprahistorical thinker will believe that nothing truly meaningful or new can be created or accomplished in the world because what is truly meaningful for such a thinker are the eternal Ideas that inform all individuated phenomena. Nehamas’ understanding of the suprahistorical perspective is

²⁰ Nehamas, 273.

²¹ Ibid.

correct insofar as he has grasped something of the Schopenhauerian nature of that perspective.

Nehamas is mistaken, however, with regard to Nietzsche's understanding of the relationship between unhistorical forgetting and the suprahistorical perspective. As we have seen, Nehamas argues that unhistorical forgetting must be brought to bear on the knowledge gained from the suprahistorical perspective, that the ineluctable meaninglessness of the world must be forgotten so that the will to create can be mustered: "only by forgetting that [great creative] deeds are in reality impossible can the young engage in the effort to perform them".²² Nehamas here misses the mark. What Nietzsche urges by means of the idea of the unhistorical is not the forgetting of what is learned from the suprahistorical perspective. That is, he does not urge the forgetting of the impossibility of greatness. Nietzsche is nothing if not a firm believer in the possibility of creativity and greatness. Rather, through the idea of the unhistorical he urges *the forgetting of certain aspects of the past* so that the performance of great deeds *becomes* possible. For Nietzsche, unhistorical forgetting must be brought to bear upon the excesses of the historical sense, not upon the suprahistorical perspective. That Nietzsche offers both the unhistorical and the suprahistorical as antidotes to the excesses of the historical sense at the end of HL shows that he affirms and values both. Consequently, he does not employ the unhistorical so as to dispense with the suprahistorical.

Furthermore, Nehamas' pitting of the unhistorical against the suprahistorical overlooks the fact that Nietzsche actually affirms the unhistorical by means of the suprahistorical in his articulation of the latter concept. Nietzsche says that from the suprahistorical perspective one realizes that unhistorical feeling is at the basis of all great

²² Nehamas, 273.

historical events. (HL 65) This is for Nietzsche a positive realization of that which lies at the root of all creative activity. To gain this insight is to become empowered to engage creatively with the world. Thus, the suprahistorical perspective is not merely world-negating and Schopenhauerian. It is also, and ambivalently, world-affirming in its affirmation of the power of the unhistorical attitude.

Nietzsche's attitude toward the suprahistorical is indeed ambivalent. He at first distances himself from it, then later embraces it. Nehamas deals with this ambivalence by claiming that Nietzsche both accepts the truth of the view of reality offered by the suprahistorical perspective, and recognizes the need to forget this truth so that the will to create can remain active: "one can fool oneself into action by forgetting that change is really impossible: What is accomplished is insignificant, but the effort remains".²³ However, if Nietzsche's main objection to the hypertrophy of the historical sense is that it stifles creative activity, then he should flatly reject the suprahistorical perspective as an antidote to the historical sense since taking on that perspective would also, according to Nehamas, kill a person's will to create. But he does not flatly reject it. Rather, he affirms it as an antidote to the historical sense at the end of HL. Nehamas does not adequately explain why Nietzsche affirms the suprahistorical perspective as an antidote to the tendency of the historical sense to inhibit creative activity.

My interpretation has the virtue of explaining Nietzsche's affirmation of both the unhistorical attitude and the suprahistorical perspective at the end of HL by way of recognizing Nietzsche's evidently ambivalent relationship to Schopenhauer's philosophy at the time that he wrote HL. Nehamas does not take this ambivalence into account. Instead, he pits the unhistorical against the suprahistorical in an oversimplified and

²³ Nehamas, 273.

inaccurate manner. It makes more sense to argue that the tension between these two concepts is a symptom of the tension between Nietzsche's allegiance to Schopenhauer on the one hand and the gathering momentum of his own unique perspective on the other.

Unlike Nehamas, Walter Kaufmann understands Nietzsche to be fully embracing the suprahistorical perspective in HL, despite his initial disavowal of it. According to Kaufmann, it is conceived from the suprahistorical perspective that there are eternal values, values that persist throughout all time. This perspective is opposed to the historical perspective, according to which values are temporally relative, i.e., all values are changeable in time. For Kaufmann, the opposition between the historical and suprahistorical is the main opposition of HL:

Nietzsche's long polemic against the hypertrophy of the historical sense is not nearly as important as, and receives what significance it has from, this problem in which philosophy of history and theory of values meet: whether there are genuinely supra-historical values or whether all values are merely historical phenomena which are valid only in a certain place and time.²⁴

Kaufmann identifies the fields of endeavour in which eternal or suprahistorical values are attained and articulated as religion, art, and philosophy.²⁵ The values that are expressed through and animate these fields of endeavour are "above the flux of history".²⁶ Through the creation of things of eternal value, one attains the suprahistorical perspective. It is from this perspective that true greatness and culture are realized.

The meaning of the suprahistorical is for Kaufmann intimately tied to what it means to be a great man or genius, one of the "highest specimens" of the human

²⁴ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 147-8. See 141-56 for Kaufmann's discussion of HL and the suprahistorical perspective.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

species.²⁷ Kaufmann understands these highest specimens to be qualitatively different from the mass of humanity. The mass of humanity has no intrinsic worth or dignity. They are no more than animals in a Godless universe.²⁸ Great men, on the other hand, have infinite worth and dignity because they have heroically raised themselves above the naturalness and animality of the masses.²⁹ As a consequence of this transcendence of nature, great men become suprahistorical symbols of “the meaning of life and history”.³⁰ Kaufmann does not explicitly venture an opinion concerning what this meaning might be. However, he emphasizes that both the accomplishments of Goethe and the culture of ancient Greece teach us that greatness is achieved by giving a beautiful and original form to what one is or what one has inherited. In other words, greatness requires the organization of chaos into unity.³¹ Such unity is achieved, he claims, through the suprahistorical transcendence of nature: “culture originates only when nature is subdued”.³² Thus, it is from the suprahistorical perspective that chaos is organized and nature reformed. And it is great men such as Goethe who sustain culture by means of their transcendence of nature. For Kaufmann, the suprahistorical perspective is the perspective of genius. The source of greatness is the suprahistorical realm of eternal values.

Although Kaufmann does not mention Schopenhauer during his discussion of the suprahistorical perspective, his understanding of that concept does recall Schopenhauer’s philosophy. For example, the eternal values that are above the flux of history are reminiscent of Schopenhauer’s notion of the eternal Ideas that mediate between the Will

²⁷ Kaufmann, 149; HL 111.

²⁸ Kaufmann, 150.

²⁹ Ibid., 150-1.

³⁰ Ibid., 149.

³¹ Ibid., 152-6.

³² Ibid., 156.

and the multitude of individuated phenomena that populate the world of becoming. In addition, Kaufmann understands the “highest specimens” of the human species to be individuals who make the leap from nature into the realm of eternal values. This recalls Schopenhauer’s concept of genius, according to which a genius is someone gifted with a talent for contemplating the eternal Ideas. Thus, Kaufmann has struck upon something important about the suprahistorical perspective, viz., its lineage with Schopenhauer’s philosophy.

Kaufmann is mistaken, however, to emphasize the suprahistorical perspective at the expense of unhistorical feeling. The main opposition in HL is not the opposition between the historical sense and the suprahistorical perspective, but the opposition between the historical sense and unhistorical feeling. The latter is the most powerful and appropriate antidote to the hypertrophy of the historical sense. In adopting the suprahistorical perspective, one’s will becomes disengaged and one loses interest in creative action. In other words, one defeats the unhealthy obsession with knowing the past that characterizes the historical attitude at the cost of losing all interest in participating in history. Because the suprahistorical perspective is essentially world- and will-negating, one cannot accomplish great things by adopting that perspective. Through the unhistorical attitude, on the other hand, one’s creative will not only remains engaged in the world, but becomes intensified. One limits one’s interest in knowing the past while fostering a healthy drive to do something of worldly significance. The unhistorical attitude, not the suprahistorical perspective, is therefore the primary source of greatness. One who does great things is one who can fruitfully employ the unhistorical attitude.

Kaufmann also overlooks the important link between the suprahistorical perspective and the unhistorical attitude. The suprahistorical perspective posits the effectiveness, indeed the necessity, of the unhistorical powers of passion, imagination, and instinct in mankind's attempts to attain its highest spiritual achievements. This is what any finite span of time teaches one who interprets it from the suprahistorical perspective. Furthermore, the elevation to these heights is, for Nietzsche, essentially a matter of will-full creativity, a point that Kaufmann does not sufficiently articulate. Ultimately, Kaufmann misses what HL posits about the nature of creativity. This is a significant omission since the nature of creative activity is nothing less than the central idea of HL. In the context of that essay, the life of creative action rooted in the unhistorical powers of man is the life that history ought to serve. This is the kind of life that is of superlative value to Nietzsche. A human being must live unhistorically in order to intensify his creative engagement with himself and with the world. In this way he can elevate himself to the highest level of spirituality attainable to man.³³ For Nietzsche, chaos is organized and greatness achieved, not on the basis of the suprahistorical perspective, but on the basis of unhistorical forgetting and the authentic self.

³³ Some commentators come close to recognizing the cultivation and elevation of the creative powers of man through the figure of the genius as Nietzsche's ultimate criterion of value. Alan D. Schrift identifies Nietzsche's ultimate criterion of value as "life-enhancement". [Alan D. Schrift, "Genealogy and the Transvaluation of Philology," *International Studies in Philosophy* 20, no. 2 (1988)]. Frithjof Bergmann claims that Nietzsche's basic distinction is "between what debilitates and maims *life*, versus everything that strengthens and invigorates it". [Frithjof Bergmann, "Nietzsche's Critique of Morality," in *Reading Nietzsche*, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen Marie Higgins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 44.] These two commentators have each identified a value that is very near to being Nietzsche's ultimate value, a form of life that I would call "ascending life". It is evident that for Nietzsche all great creative individuals exhibit ascending life. However, it does not follow that all instances of ascending life are necessarily instances of genius. It seems to me that the secondary literature does not often enough or clearly enough distinguish between creative genius and ascending life as related but distinct values expressed by Nietzsche.

1.7 Three Modes of Relating to the Past

In addition to the historical sense, unhistorical feeling, and the suprahistorical perspective Nietzsche discusses three modes of relating to the past in HL: the critical, the monumental, and the antiquarian. The three modes of relating to the past can be understood as ways of writing about the past or as ways of relating to the past whether one writes about it or not. Nietzsche's treatment of the three modes exhibits scant trace of Schopenhauer's influence. We find instead a prevailing emphasis upon the importance of exerting will and desire so as to bring the new into existence. Through his treatment of the three modes it becomes clear that it is the life of creative excellence, as exemplified by the genius, that Nietzsche wants history to serve.

Let us begin with critical history. Critical history is history that appropriates the past with the aim of breaking away from or destroying some aspect of it. It is the kind of history that "employ[s] the strength to break up and dissolve a part of the past". (HL 75) Critical history brings about the destruction of traditional habits of thought and practice by creating images of the past that emphasize the "human violence and weakness" (HL 76) at the origins of old ways. In this way it seeks to open up a space within which something new can be created. What is sought is "a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature, so that our first nature withers away". (HL 76)

Monumental history is history that recounts the lives and achievements of the great men of the past. Nietzsche sees value in this kind of history because he thinks that stories of great deeds can inspire the nascent great men of the present to take the risks that they need to take in order to realize their own creative potential. It teaches that "the greatness that once existed was in any event once *possible* and may thus be possible

again”. (HL 69) Monumental history complements critical history insofar as it provides impetus for the affirmative act of creation that must follow the critical act of destruction if the complete overcoming of a pernicious past or tradition is to be realized.

Contrary to critical history, antiquarian history appropriates the past in a spirit of reverence. Its aim is to preserve the things that have been constituted and accomplished in the past. (HL 72) Monumental history is also concerned with preserving and revering the past, but it does this in a way that makes it distinct from antiquarian history. Whereas monumental history remembers the great men of the past and reveres them for their achievements, antiquarian history preserves and reveres the more mundane aspects of the past, such as the customs, beliefs, and rituals of a people, or even the physical structure of a town or city. It preserves these things in order to keep a community rooted in its past.

Each of the three modes of relating to the past involves unhistorical feeling insofar as each involves forgetting the past to some extent. For example, in order for monumental history to have the inspirational effect that Nietzsche wants it to have, the lives of the great figures of the past must be presented, not in full factual correctness, but in embellished form. Nietzsche goes so far as to say that monumental history should approximate “free poetic invention”. (HL 70) This is because the exact conditions which allowed those great figures to achieve great things do not obtain in the present. Nietzsche worries that the realization of this incongruence could be enough to discourage people in the present from pursuing greatness. However, if the lives of the great figures of the past are presented in such a way that the real differences between past and present are diminished or elided, then these histories can have a greater inspirational effect. As Nietzsche declares, “[h]ow much of the past would have to be overlooked if it was to

produce that mighty effect, how violently what is individual in it would have to be forced into a universal mold and all its sharp corners and hard outlines broken up in the interest of conformity!” (HL 69) In monumental history the past and the present should be made to seem relevantly similar so that greatness will appear more attainable to those who exist in the present. By thus distorting and forgetting the past, monumental history can more effectively promote the activity of genius.

Critical history also thrives on not seeing the past for what it was. It is unjust towards the past insofar as it disregards reasons in favour of revering and preserving what is old. The creation of the new requires the displacement of the old. Critical history accomplishes this by creating images of the past that make the past appear worthy of destruction. Nietzsche emphasizes that the critical historian’s creation of these images “has never proceeded out of a pure well of knowledge”. (HL 76)

The same is true of antiquarian history. The antiquarian mode of relating to the past

is certainly not one in which a man would be most capable of resolving the past into pure knowledge; so that here too, as in the case of monumental history, we perceive that, as long as the study of history serves life and is directed by the vital drives, the past itself suffers. [...] The antiquarian sense of a man, a community, a whole people, always possesses an extremely restricted field of vision [It excludes the perception of] most of what exists. (HL 74)

Antiquarian history distorts and forgets the past insofar as it tends to value too much the things that it preserves and reveres. It does not see these things for what they really are. If it did perceive the past truthfully it would see that there is much in it that is deserving of contempt and destruction.

Nietzsche’s discussion of the three modes of relating to the past makes it clear that when the three modes are used properly they fuel creative activity, whereas when

they are abused they invariably stifle the creation of the new. For example, Nietzsche maintains that when monumental history is employed by “inartistic natures” (HL 71) its use amounts to abuse because such people use the remembrance of greatness to discourage the activity of great men in their own time. Through monumental history they convince those who are capable of greatness that greatness is a thing of the past, that the present is and can only be an age of epigoni. To submit to the judgement of the inartistic in these matters is to let the “mob”, the “numerical majority”, and the “aesthetically inactive” be the arbiters of what counts as great in the present. (HL 71) In Nietzsche’s view, only the “strong artistic spirits [...] are capable of learning from [monumental] history in a true, that is to say life-enhancing sense, and of transforming what they have learned into a more elevated practice.” (HL 71)

Antiquarian history can also be a threat to creative willing in the present. Sometimes it preserves and reveres the past to such an extent that “everything new and evolving is rejected and persecuted”. (HL 74) In this way, antiquarian history, if not employed in conjunction with the proper use of critical and monumental history, “undermines continuing and especially higher life”. (HL 75) The antiquarian mode must not be cut off from “the fresh life of the present” (HL 75) if it is to serve life as Nietzsche thinks it should. Once again we see that the past properly appropriated serves a specific kind of life, namely, the “higher life” of creative genius.

Foucault’s discussion of the three modes of relating to the past is remarkable for its failure to recognize the positive contribution that the proper employment of these modes of history makes to creative activity. Foucault characterizes monumental history as “history that gave itself the task of rendering the great summits of becoming [*devenir*]”

and claims that “Nietzsche criticized this history, one entirely devoted to veneration, of barring the way to the actual intensities of life, and to its creations”.³⁴ However, it should be pointed out that the proper use of monumental history, far from inhibiting the creations of life, promotes creative activity by encouraging those who are capable of greatness to actualize their potential. Foucault completely misses this point and emphasizes only the manner in which the abuse of monumental history can discourage creative willing in the present.

Foucault also presents critical history in a one-sided manner. He claims that critical history involves “dragging the past before the courts [*en justice*, i.e., to justice]” and that “Nietzsche accused it of detaching us from all our real sources and of sacrificing the very movement of life to the sole concern for the truth”.³⁵ My analysis makes clear however that critical history is not exclusively concerned with truth. It is true that critical history can sometimes achieve its aim of breaking with the past by bringing into stark recognition those inherited forms that are truly hateful and worthy of destruction. It is then accurate to say that it employs a just treatment of the past in order to achieve its goals. However, critical history need not adopt this approach. It may also create a distorted or false image of the past so as to more effectively motivate the desired break with tradition. In such cases “[i]t is not justice which [...] sits in judgement”. (HL 76) Nor does it then draw its water from a “pure well of knowledge”. (HL 76) Rather, in these instances critical history creatively appropriates the past so as to more effectively instigate a rupture with it. Far from “detaching us from all our real sources”, critical

³⁴ Foucault, 168.

³⁵ Ibid., 172.

history is for Nietzsche an expression of life's most vital and fundamental drive: the drive to bring new life into being.

With respect to antiquarian history, Foucault is admittedly correct in saying that Nietzsche "objected that it could prevent all creation in the name of the law of fidelity [to tradition]".³⁶ However, it is not the case that Nietzsche categorically condemns antiquarian history. Rather, he warns of the danger that this type of history can pose insofar as creative activity might be stifled as a consequence of the antiquarian tendency to revere tradition too much. This is clearly not tantamount to a complete devaluation and rejection of antiquarian history. Furthermore, there is good reason to think that the antiquarian will to revere and preserve the past plays a positive role with respect to the performance of monumental acts of creation. For it can be argued that the life of a people must to some extent be preserved in order for it to be created anew and that a certain degree of reverence for the past and maintenance of tradition is therefore conducive to creating the proper conditions for great acts of creativity. This is not a point that Nietzsche explicitly makes in his discussion of antiquarian history. However, it is reasonable to think that antiquarian history, like critical and monumental history, is an enabling condition for the flourishing of creative genius. Antiquarian history can be said to complement critical and monumental history insofar as the most fruitful instances of creation are likely to be ones that do not completely destroy and supplant the traditions and identity of a people, but do so in a tempered way that leaves aspects of tradition intact and thereby transforms rather than annihilates a people's identity and traditions.

³⁶ Foucault, 169.

Creative genius does not operate *ex nihilo*. Its acts of creation are to a great extent re-creations or reinterpretations of already existing traditions.³⁷

Foucault's presentation of the three modes of relating to the past emphasizes only how they inhibit life's "power to affirm and to create".³⁸ This is an unfortunate oversimplification of Nietzsche's position, an oversimplification that really amounts to a misrepresentation. Nietzsche is clearly of the opinion that if the monumental, antiquarian, and critical modes of history are used as he recommends, then they will encourage the flourishing of creative activity.

Despite the importance of all three modes of relating to the past, it is clear that monumental history occupies a privileged position. By recounting the lives of the great figures of the past and preserving in memory the moments of monumental transformation they brought about, monumental history provides the most direct inspiration for creative willing in the present. The other two modes of relating to the past set the stage for that willing. Critical history destroys the old so as to make way for the new. Antiquarian history preserves the past enough so that monumental acts of transformation do not break too radically with vital traditions. The upshot is that when the past is properly employed it serves to augment the annals of monumental history. History conceived in this way promises each individual who accomplishes something great "a place of honour in the temple of history" (HL 68) and membership in that illustrious "republic of genius". (HL 111)

³⁷ Mahon agrees that antiquarian history is as essential to the flourishing of life as are critical and monumental history. Antiquarian history "serves life as a check on the flighty preoccupation with the ever new and allegedly improved". (Mahon, 99) An excessive fascination with the new is detrimental to life and creativity. Antiquarian history moderates this fascination.

³⁸ Foucault, 172.

Only those who possess the most intense and powerful sort of creative abilities can appropriate the past such that it serves the goal of monumental transformation: “He who has not experienced greater and more exalted things than others will not know how to interpret the great and exalted things of the past. When the past speaks it always speaks as an oracle: only if you are an architect of the future and know the present will you understand it. [...] only he who constructs the future has a right to judge the past”. (HL 94) In Nietzsche’s view, only geniuses are fit to appropriate and judge the past. They instinctively know how to make the past serve their creative willing in the present. They instinctively know what to preserve and what to destroy so that they can bring into effect a moment of monumental transformation.

1.8 Two Kinds of Life: Genius and the Masses

Nietzsche’s discussion of the three modes of relating to the past brings the figure of the genius into focus as that which history ought to serve. There we see that the proper use of history fuels the creativity of the genius while its misuse stifles, inhibits, and quells the fullest flowering of the genius’ potential. There we see that history in the service of life is really history in the service of genius. Geniuses are therefore of absolute importance to Nietzsche’s conception of history and how it ought to be appropriated. The past is best appropriated in such a way that it promotes the flourishing of genius.

To bring home the point that history should serve to invigorate the creative activity of genius, and that this is key to understanding the kind of appropriation of the past that Nietzsche advocates in HL, it is helpful to consider what Nietzsche has to say about the mass of humanity. In other words, we must take account of Nietzsche’s elitism.

For Nietzsche, not all life is of equal value. Evidence for a ranking of different kinds of human life in particular can be found in his express views concerning the worth of the masses. Nietzsche clearly expresses a disdain for the mass of humanity in HL. There he assigns the masses no intrinsic worth. Rather, “they deserve notice in three respects only: first as faded copies of great men produced on poor paper with worn-out plates, then as a force of resistance to great men, finally as instruments in the hands of great men”. (HL 113) In every instance their value is determined only with respect to and as a function of the activity of great men.

Nietzsche also emphasizes what he takes to be the worthlessness of the kind of history that concerns itself with the masses. Such historiography “seek[s] to derive the laws which govern [history] from the needs of these masses, that is to say from the laws which move the lowest mud- and clay-strata of society.” (HL 113) From Nietzsche’s perspective, any laws that such historiography arrives at or formulates will be expressions of nothing more than “the effects of inertia, stupidity, mimicry, love and hunger”. (HL 113) If this is what counts as laws of history, then laws of history and the historiography that determines them are “worthless”. (HL 113) On this basis Nietzsche condemns the most popular historiographies of his day, for they treat “the great mass-drives [as] the chief and weightiest facts of history”. (HL 113)

The life of the masses does not figure prominently or positively in Nietzsche’s conception of how the past ought to be appropriated in HL. The mass of humanity is indeed an expression or form of life, but it is a form of life that Nietzsche holds in contempt. It is not intrinsically, but only instrumentally, valuable, and the kind of history that captures and expresses the life of the masses is absolutely not the most worthy kind

of history. Such history is indeed symptomatic of the philistine culture that Nietzsche is combating.

Nietzsche's denigration of the life of the masses and of the kind of historiography that concerns itself with the masses is strong evidence in favour of the view that it is not life per se that Nietzsche endorses in HL. Clearly, it is not the life of the masses that he thinks history ought to serve. Rather, the life of highest value and the life that history ought to serve is the life of creative excellence as exemplified by the genius.

Nietzsche asserts the superlative value of genius on several occasions in the *Untimely Meditations*. In *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer* he defines *das Genie* as “the ideal expression of the species man”.³⁹ This definition is obliquely echoed in HL where it is claimed that “the goal of humanity cannot lie in its end but only in its highest exemplars”. (HL 111) Nietzsche arrives at his most explicit endorsement of genius in *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Genius is there Nietzsche's highest value insofar as the production of genius is the goal of any genuine culture: “the root of all true culture” is “a profound desire for the genius” and “the goal of all culture” is “the procreation of genius”.⁴⁰ Culture is the perfection of nature and humanity, and such perfection necessarily involves the production of genius. For this reason “[m]ankind must work continually at the production of individual great men – that and nothing else is its task”; our “only concern” should be “the individual higher exemplar” of the species. (SE 161-

³⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer*, in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 30. Cited hereafter in parentheses as DS with page number.

⁴⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 142. See also 163 and 169. Cited hereafter in parentheses as SE with page number.

2)⁴¹ In Nietzsche's view there is no true culture without genius. The masses embody degenerate culture, while geniuses make authentic culture.

Thus, what Nietzsche means by "life" in the slogan "history in the service of life" can only be the life of transformative creative excellence that is genius. This is the kind of life that Nietzsche values above all else and the kind of life that history ought to serve. In later chapters we will see that Nietzsche's appropriation of the history of European morality in GM is intended to encourage the flourishing of an elite form of life that is analogous to the form of life embodied by the genius. We will also see that Nietzsche accomplishes this goal by appropriating the past unhistorically and by making use of both the critical and the monumental modes of history. However, before addressing these issues I will first examine the way in which Nietzsche's epistemology developed between the writing of HL and the writing of GM. Through this examination I will demonstrate the extent to which these two works are informed by distinct conceptions of what it means to know the past.

⁴¹ Nietzsche then makes the goal more specific: "The supreme objective [is] the production of the *philosophical* genius [emphasis added]". (SE 187)

Chapter 2 – Historical Epistemology in *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*

While Nietzsche does not develop in HL anything approaching a detailed and rigorous historical epistemology, his comments pertaining to historical objectivity in HL are to a great extent consistent with, and can be fruitfully interpreted in light of, the epistemological theory that he develops in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense”,⁴² a posthumously published essay written just a year prior to HL. In this chapter I will explicate the epistemological theory of TL and show that historical knowledge as conceived in HL can be fairly characterized as a species of “conceptual” knowledge.

According to the epistemology of TL, truth is a matter of knowing mind-independent things-in-themselves. However, Nietzsche claims that the manner in which cognition mediates our relation to things-in-themselves causes them to be entirely hidden from us. Consequently, we cannot have accurate representations of them, neither in the empirical world of perception nor through the concepts that categorize objects of perception. It is therefore Nietzsche’s position in TL that truth and knowledge are strictly speaking impossible for human beings to attain.

However, Nietzsche’s statements regarding historical objectivity in HL suggest that knowing the past is not a matter of knowing a mind-independent world of things-in-themselves. Rather, they suggest that knowing the past is a matter of knowing the empirical world of the past, i.e., the world as it was perceived by human beings in the past. The epistemological theory of TL allows that such knowledge is possible to achieve insofar as it allows that concepts can give us a limited sort of knowledge of objects in the

⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,” in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Cited hereafter in parentheses as TL with page number.

empirical world. Because language is by its very nature conceptual, the various kinds of texts that historians work with as their basic material, as well as the texts they produce as products of their research, can provide conceptual linkages to the empirical world of the past and can in principle represent something of the truth of that world.

That being said, the epistemology of TL precludes the possibility that the true meaning of past events can be determined once and for all. This is because every attempt by an historian to know the past through concepts involves the creation of meaning through an imaginative and partial selection and ordering of the available evidence. Consequently, the meaning of the past can never be finally determined, but is endlessly open to reinterpretation by way of reconceptualization. In both TL and HL Nietzsche valorizes the artistic activity of creating concepts that go against the grain of conventionally accepted 'truth'. In this way, TL exhibits much the same spirit as HL and gives a theoretical underpinning to the artistic manner of appropriating the past that Nietzsche advocates in HL.

2.1 The Nature of Truth and Knowledge in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense"

In TL Nietzsche offers an account of human cognition which allows the subject of cognition only a highly mediated relation to the world of things-in-themselves. According to Nietzsche, the process of cognition begins with the effect that a thing in the world has on the body of an individual subject of cognition. The thing impinges upon its sense organs, causing nerve stimuli to be produced. These nerve stimuli then cause perceptions or images to be produced within the subject. Next, objects of perception (i.e., percepts) are designated by means of articulated sounds or words. Linguistic designation is a

rudimentary form of conceptualization.⁴³ Concepts simplify and categorize individual percepts and are commonly supposed to capture and express knowledge of the essential natures of the things in the world that originally impinged upon the body of the subject of cognition.

Nietzsche here understands truth to be a matter of knowing the things-in-themselves that lie at the beginning of the process of cognition. However, he thinks that the mediations that intervene between things-in-themselves and the end products of cognition prevent us from having truth. In other words, he does not think that the chain of causes and effects that constitutes cognition can allow us to have what we think we have, viz., knowledge of things-in-themselves through concepts. Rather, the nature of the mediation that occurs between thing-in-itself and concept is such that the form and nature of the thing are not retained at the level of the concept. Through the process of cognition the thing-in-itself is lost and obscured. At each moment of transition – from thing to nerve stimulus, from nerve stimulus to perception, and from perception to word and concept – there occurs a leap from one medium of information into another, incommensurable medium. Thus: the form of the nerve stimulus that is caused by the thing does not accurately represent or resemble the thing; the form of the percept that is caused by the nerve stimulus does not accurately represent or resemble the nerve stimulus; and the form of the articulated sound that designates the percept by way of a concept does not accurately represent or resemble the percept. At each moment of transition a transformation occurs such that the information transmitted becomes something quite different, even entirely different, from what it had been at the previous stage. “[E]ach time there is a complete leap from one sphere into the heart of another,

⁴³ “[E]ach word immediately becomes a concept”. (TL 145)

new sphere”. (TL 144) Consequently, “[t]he ‘thing-in-itself’ [*das „Ding an sich”*]” which stands at the beginning of this chain of causation must remain an “inaccessible”, “indefinable”, and unknown X. (TL 144-5)

In order to better understand this theory of cognition, it will be helpful to first address in greater detail the process of cognition up as far as the stage at which perception occurs. This is because there is a significant difference – which is not clearly enough articulated by Nietzsche – between what occurs up to and including the production of perception, and what occurs thereafter. The difference is that the process that produces perception is unconscious, while the process that produces words and concepts is at least in principle open to conscious scrutiny. This difference will prove to be important for how we understand the nature of the transitions from one stage in the process of cognition to the next.

Perception

Nietzsche’s position in TL is that the world as it appears to us in perception, i.e., the empirical world, does not give us any information about the world as it is in itself. This is because the world that we are immediately aware of – the world of sensations, images, and percepts of all sorts – is the product of a process of mediation and transformation of information. More specifically, the empirical world does not resemble the world as it is in itself because the mediations that occur in the process of cognition involve transferences to and from qualitatively distinct media of information.

Nietzsche uses an analogy to depict the nature of the moments of transference and transformation that are involved in constituting the world of perception. (TL 144-5) He

claims that the relationship between each successive stage in the process of cognition is similar to the relationship between a sound-tone and the visible figure or pattern of vibration that the tone produces in a plate or membrane, which pattern can be made visible by scattering sand or powder on the vibrating plate. These patterns are known as Chladni figures, after Ernst Florens Friedrich Chladni, the German physicist and musician who invented a technique for showing these patterns of vibration. Nietzsche points out that a sound-tone, as perceived by way of our sense of hearing, bears absolutely no resemblance to the visible figure produced by the tone on a plate or membrane. Consequently, for one who cannot or does not hear the sound, seeing the figure produced by the sound can in no way allow him to experience or know the sound. This is because the sound is something entirely different from the figure. The form of the sound, as it is heard by the subject, bears absolutely no resemblance to the form of the visible figure. The sound has become entirely transformed in the movement from audible sound to visible figure of vibration. The movement from the audible to the visible is a movement between two incommensurable and qualitatively distinct media of information, such that exposure to only the audible or the visible, that is, to just one side of the cause-effect relation, cannot lead one to know anything about the essential nature of the other side of that relation.

The relationship of a Chladni figure to the sound-tone that produces it is a metaphor for the relationship between the different stages that lead from thing-in-itself to perception. "Just as the musical sound appears as a figure in the sand, so the mysterious 'X' of the thing-in-itself appears first as a nerve stimulus, then as an image, and finally as an articulated sound". (TL 144-5) A Chladni figure bears no resemblance to the sound-

tone that produced it. Likewise, a nerve stimulus bears no resemblance to the thing in the world that caused it, and a percept bears no resemblance to its associated nerve stimulus. Thus, with respect to things-in-themselves and nerve stimuli, we are like deaf people who have no experience of sound except through the medium of Chladni figures. A deaf person does not know sounds. He knows only the figurative effects of sounds. Similarly, we do not perceive things in the world through cognition. Rather, we know the figurative effects of these things in the form of percepts. The world as it appears to us is thus composed of figurative effects and this is all we are capable of having. We are deaf, blind, and numb to things-in-themselves. For us, there is only a perceived world of appearance and what we make out of those appearances with our words and concepts.

Nietzsche's use of the relationship between sound-tones and Chladni figures as a metaphor for the moments of transition in the process that leads from things-in-themselves to perception is helpful, but not entirely apt. One reason why it isn't apt is that there is a relationship of necessity between the Chladni figures and the sound-tones that produce them: the same tone will always produce the same figure on a plate or membrane. Nietzsche claims that no such necessity holds between a thing and the percept that it produces in the subject. This lack of necessity is due to the role that the imagination plays in the production of perceptions. The nervous stimulus that is caused by the thing in the world and that eventuates in the occurrence of a percept is processed through the imagination in such a way that it does not necessarily produce any particular kind of perception or image: "the relation of a nerve stimulus to the image produced thereby is inherently not a necessary relationship". (TL 149) Notwithstanding this lack of

necessity, certain percepts come to be habitually and rigidly associated with certain nervous stimuli:

[W]hen that same image has been produced millions of times and has been passed down through many generations of humanity, indeed eventually appears in the whole of humanity as a consequence of the same occasion, it finally acquires the same significance for all human beings, as if it were the only necessary image and as if that relation of the original nerve stimulus to the image produced were a relation of strict causality – in exactly the same way as a dream, if repeated eternally, would be felt and judged entirely as reality. (TL 149)

Particular kinds of percepts come to be accepted as faithfully representing reality when they are in fact quite arbitrarily related to that aspect of the real that gave rise to them. Other kinds of percepts could just as well serve to represent the real, and the empirical world would alter accordingly. The world would then appear differently to us.

In addition to depicting the moments of transition in the process of cognition by means of the metaphor of the Chladni figure, nerve stimuli and percepts are also said to be metaphorical in nature. (TL 144)⁴⁴ Each is a metaphor for that which precedes it in the process of cognition: nerve stimuli are metaphors for things-in-themselves; percepts are metaphors for nerve stimuli. Nietzsche characterizes the metaphorical nature of these relations as follows:

[B]etween two absolutely different spheres, such as subject and object [or, more specifically, between thing-in-itself and nerve stimulus, and between nerve stimulus and percept] there is [...] at most an *aesthetic* way of relating, by which I mean an allusive transference, a stammering translation into a quite different language. For which purpose a middle sphere and mediating force is certainly required which can freely invent and freely create poetry. (TL 148)

⁴⁴ Although Nietzsche only explicitly calls percepts/images and words/concepts metaphors, we can extrapolate to say that nerve stimuli are also metaphorical according to his view. Like the relationship between percepts and nerve stimuli, the relationship between nerve stimuli and things-in-themselves is one of non-correspondence. Nerve stimuli are figurative effects of things-in-themselves, but do not resemble things-in-themselves. The relationship between percepts and nerve stimuli can be characterized in precisely the same way. Thus, if percepts are metaphorical, so are nerve stimuli.

A criticism might be advanced here against Nietzsche's use of the term "metaphor". Metaphor involves the identification of things which are not in fact identical, but merely similar. Thus, calling nerve stimuli and percepts metaphors might suggest that there is a relationship of similarity or resemblance between the nerve stimulus and the thing that caused it, as well as between the percept and the nerve stimulus. If, for instance, we assert metaphorically that "Nietzsche is a mountain goat", we of course do not mean that he is identical to a mountain goat. But we do mean that he is similar to a mountain goat in some respect. The metaphorical utterance attempts to communicate some real correspondence between Nietzsche and a mountain goat, for example, that they both enjoy walking in mountainous terrain. If the metaphor is apt, then there is between them at least one shared attribute or characteristic. Some literal truth is implied as underlying the metaphor. However, Nietzsche's overall point in TL is that we do not have access to the real *at all* by way of cognition, that our percepts do not at all resemble things in the world, that they are not like things in the world and therefore do not allow us to know the world. But if our percepts are metaphors for nerve stimuli, and if nerve stimuli are metaphors for things in the world, this could be taken to suggest that there are similarities between these things, similarities that could provide some basis for saying that we can know something of things-in-themselves through perception.

However, given that Nietzsche depicts the transferences that occur in the process of cognition through the metaphor of the Chladni figure, it is difficult to understand how a nerve stimulus can in any way resemble a thing in the world, or how a percept can in any way resemble a nerve stimulus. According to the metaphor, the nervous system and the faculty of perception are supposed to be entirely incommensurable media of

information. If the metaphor of the Chladni figure is apt and is to be taken seriously, then phenomena that coalesce in these different media cannot be in any way similar to one another, just as the visible figure of vibration is not similar to the sound-tone that produced it. Thus, calling nerve stimuli and percepts metaphors, if taken literally, contradicts the claim that Nietzsche makes about cognition by way of the metaphor of the Chladni figure, viz., that perception is not able to give us any knowledge of things-in-themselves.

Alan D. Schrift's observations concerning how Nietzsche uses the term "metaphor" in his writings of the early 1870s help to explain why Nietzsche characterizes the transitions that occur in the process of cognition as metaphorical.⁴⁵ Schrift notes that in addition to using the term "metaphor" to refer to utterances in which an identity is asserted between two things which are merely similar, Nietzsche also uses the term in a way that is analogous to how Aristotle defines the term. In *De Poetica* Aristotle says that "[m]etaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy".⁴⁶ Aristotle's idea that metaphor involves "transference" is similar, though not identical, to Nietzsche's idea that the transitions from one stage in the process of cognition to the next are metaphorical. Schrift claims that Nietzsche "generalizes from Aristotle's restriction of metaphor to a *linguistic* "carrying over," and comes to regard any transference from one sphere to another (e.g., physical to spiritual, literal to figurative, audible to visual, subject to object, etc.) as an

⁴⁵ Alan D. Schrift, "Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric: Nietzsche's Deconstruction of Epistemology," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (1985).

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *De Poetica*, in *The Works of Aristotle, Volume XI*, ed. W. D. Ross, trans. Ingram Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924): Ch. 21, 1457b, lines 5-10. The transferences of which Aristotle speaks are different ways in which a similarity between two things comes to serve as the basis for a figurative assertion of identity between them.

instance of metaphor”.⁴⁷ So we see that the transferences of information that occur during the transitions from one stage of cognition to the next are not literally metaphorical in the sense that these transferences involve linguistically asserted identifications of things that are merely similar. Rather, the transitions are metaphorically metaphorical: they are analogous to the transferences that Aristotle claimed are involved in linguistic instances of metaphor. They are analogous because in both cases there is a transference or carrying over of something from one “sphere” to another. Percepts and nerve stimuli are therefore not metaphors in a literal sense. This means that neither percepts nor nerve stimuli are similar to that which precedes them in the process of cognition. Consequently, we cannot have a true “picture” of the world by means of perception.⁴⁸

Maudemarie Clark also thinks that Nietzsche uses the term “metaphor” metaphorically when he characterizes percepts as metaphors. By definition a metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon, “a particular use of language”,⁴⁹ whereas perception is non-linguistic. A metaphor is an utterance that asserts “an identity where there is only similarity”,⁵⁰ but percepts are not utterances of any kind, and so cannot state or assert anything. However, despite this incongruity, characterizing percepts as metaphors “call[s] to our attention certain similarities between perception and the metaphorical use of language”.⁵¹ Clark thinks that for Nietzsche perception and metaphorical language are similar in that they each fail to correspond to things-in-themselves. Nietzsche assumes that

⁴⁷ Schrift, “Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric,” 374-5.

⁴⁸ Percepts and nerve stimuli manifest within incommensurable media of information. Strictly speaking, the concept of metaphor does not allow for this requisite incommensurability.

⁴⁹ Clark, 78.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

[t]o use language metaphorically [...] is to say something that fails to correspond to the actual nature of an object, but communicates nevertheless how that object appears given certain workings of the human imagination. Nietzsche apparently views percepts as similar to metaphorical discourse in this regard. Perception gives us only appearance, not things-in-themselves.⁵²

Clark draws the right conclusion when she goes on to claim that the reason why language, including metaphorical language, fails to correspond to things-in-themselves is because the percepts to which language refers and out of which it develops do not properly correspond to the world of things-in-themselves.⁵³ As I have demonstrated, the idea that they do not correspond to things-in-themselves is a consequence of Nietzsche's theory of how cognition constitutes a world of perception. As Clark says, Nietzsche advocates a representational theory of perception according to which "we do not perceive extramental things, but only representations constructed by the human imagination from nerve stimuli".⁵⁴ Through our representations we have no "perceptual access" to the objects that exist independently of us.⁵⁵ What we perceive are appearances, not the things-in-themselves.

There is one other difficulty associated with the view that nervous stimuli and percepts are metaphors for that which precedes them in the process of cognition. This difficulty concerns the obscurity of the movement from thing-in-itself to perception. According to TL's theory of cognition, we have no conscious awareness of the manner in which perception is produced because we have no direct awareness of the nerve stimuli that give rise to it. Like so many of our bodily functions, nerve stimuli lie beyond the

⁵² Clark, 78-9. As Nietzsche tells us, "when we speak of trees, colours, snow, and flowers [we believe] we have knowledge of the things themselves, and yet we possess only metaphors of things which in no way correspond with the original entities" (TL 144); "forgetting that the original metaphors of perception were indeed metaphors, [man] takes them for the things themselves." (TL 148)

⁵³ As Arthur Danto says, "Language [...] describes [...] the illusions we take for reality." [Arthur Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 38.]

⁵⁴ Clark, 83.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

boundaries of consciousness: “the twists and turns of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream and the complicated tremblings of the nerve fibres” are all beyond conscious awareness. (TL 142) Lacking direct awareness of our nerve stimuli, we cannot properly depict the nature of their transformation into percepts. Consequently, whether percepts are in some sense similar to nerve stimuli, and therefore metaphorical in a sense that is stronger than being mere instances of “transference”, is not possible to determine on the basis of introspection alone. As I have argued, Nietzsche’s argument requires that percepts be entirely dissimilar to the nerve stimuli that give rise to them.

Conception

Unlike the movement from things-in-themselves to percepts, the movement from percepts to concepts is relatively open and apparent according to Nietzsche’s way of conceiving it in TL. This is because we are conscious of both our percepts and our concepts. Consequently, the way in which the former become transformed into the latter can be more clearly ascertained. According to Nietzsche, objects of perception are utterly unique and individual. Concepts are formed through a process of simplification of these similar yet non-equivalent individuals. Certain of their qualities are selected and deemed essential to their natures so that non-equivalent individuals come to be conceived as equivalent to one another. The concept is the universal which is supposed to capture the essence that the particular individuals share in common.

Nietzsche offers the concept “leaf” as an example of how we move from percept to concept. Any particular empirical leaf is utterly unique and strictly unlike all other

leaves. The concept “leaf” is formed by eliding the individual differences that characterize each leaf,

by forgetting those features which differentiate one thing from another, so that the concept then gives rise to the notion that something other than leaves exists in nature, something which would be ‘leaf’, a primal form, say, from which all leaves are woven, drawn, delineated, dyed, curled, painted – but by a clumsy pair of hands, so that no single example turned out to be a faithful, correct, and reliable copy of the primal form. (TL 145)

According to this nominalist theory of universals, concepts do not exist in perception, let alone in the world of things-in-themselves. Rather, they are creations of the human intellect and not true in the strict sense. That is, they are not true in the sense that they correspond to the world of things-in-themselves.

The selection of characteristics that gives rise to concepts is sometimes driven by considerations of utility, sometimes by aesthetic considerations, and always by considerations that are anthropomorphic in nature. For example, we might select from objects of perception those qualities that are most useful to us, those features the retention of which is most conducive to human survival. Concepts that are in some way harmful are rejected, while those that are salutary enjoy common currency. All concepts are deceptive in that they represent only some of the features of empirical objects and fail to capture the essences of things-in-themselves. However, “[h]uman beings do not so much flee from being tricked as from being harmed by being tricked. Even on this level they do not hate deception but rather the damaging, inimical consequences of certain species of deception”. (TL 143) Alternatively, we might select qualities that are particularly striking to us in an aesthetic sense. For example, Nietzsche claims that in the German language snakes are named, and therefore conceived, in terms of their peculiar manner of movement. The German word for snake (*die Schlange*) “captures only its twisting

movements and thus could equally well apply to a worm”. (TL 144) Conceptualization can also involve a subjective projection of human qualities, such as when some object or class of objects is designated as masculine or feminine. (TL 144) The French and German languages do this, as does English, albeit less consistently and systematically: for example, a sailing vessel might be referred to as “she”. In all cases conceptualization is anthropomorphic in that it is “assimilation”, “the metamorphosis of the world in human beings”, “the infinitely refracted echo of an original sound, that of humanity”. (TL 148)

Nietzsche says repeatedly throughout TL that conceptualization involves metaphorization, that concepts are metaphors. For example, he calls conceptual truths “metaphors which have become worn by frequent use and have lost all sensuous vigour”. (TL 146) “The obligation to be truthful” is “the obligation to use the customary metaphors”. (TL 146) And the artistic drive that gives rise to percepts and concepts is called “the drive to form metaphors”. (TL 150) Initially, this might seem to be a rather limited way of understanding conceptualization. Might it not be more appropriate to say that conceptualization involves various forms of non-literal speech, including metaphor? Indeed, Nietzsche seems aware that other figures of speech can play a role, mentioning the figure of metonymy a couple of times in relation to the matter of concept-creation. (TL 146 & 151) *Die Schlange* is in fact an example of concept formation by way of metonymy: a species (viz., the snake) is named or conceived in terms of one of its attributes or characteristic qualities (i.e., its manner of movement). Gendered words are examples of ways in which the figure of personification can play a role in concept formation: a human characteristic (gender) is attributed to nonhuman and non-gendered things. Synecdoche, “a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or

vice versa”,⁵⁶ can also serve as a means of concept formation, as when the human species is named and conceived as “Man”. All of these figures of speech are means by which we conceptualize and anthropomorphize the world of perception.

However, we can also say that these instances of concept-formation by way of figurative speech are metaphorical in that they each involve transferences from one “sphere” to another.⁵⁷ In the case of metonymy, an attribute is carried over to stand for the thing of which it is an attribute. In the case of synecdoche, a part is carried over and made to represent the thing of which it is a part. In the case of personification, a human quality is projected into a non-human thing. Nietzsche actually makes use of the term “metaphor” in the sense of transference or carrying over in his discussion of the etymology of the concept “Being” (*esse*) in *Philosophy During the Tragic Age of the Greeks*.

The idea of “Being”! As though that idea did not indicate the most miserable empiric origin already in the etymology of the word. For *esse* means at the bottom: “to breathe,” if man uses it of all other things, then he transmits the conviction that he himself breathes and lives by means of a metaphor, *i.e.*, by means of something illogical to the other things and conceives of their Existence as a Breathing according to human analogy. Now the original meaning of the word soon becomes effaced; so much however still remains that man conceives of the existence of other things according to the analogy of his own existence, therefore anthropomorphically, and at any rate by means of an illogical transmission.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, ed. Katherine Barber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), s.v. “synecdoche”.

⁵⁷ Indeed, metonymy, synecdoche, and personification are all species of metaphor. Hayden White affirms this in the case of metonymy and synecdoche, and includes irony as a species of metaphor as well: “Irony, Metonymy, and Synecdoche are kinds of Metaphor, but they differ from one another in the kinds of *reductions* or *integrations* they effect on the literal level of their meanings and by the kinds of illuminations they aim at on the figurative level.” [Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 34.]

⁵⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy During the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Volume 2: Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. Maximilian A. Mügge (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), 128-9.

Esse, according to Nietzsche, is an example of concept-formation by way of metaphor. If he is correct about the etymology of *esse*, then the concept involves a “transmission” from one sphere to another, a transference from the human sphere to the sphere of existence in general. *Esse* is a metaphor by virtue of this transference. We can further specify the nature of this transference by recognizing that this is also an example of concept-formation by way of personification, since through *esse* Being is conceived in terms of human breath and life. Alternatively, we can call it an instance of concept-formation by way of synecdoche, since through *esse* Being is conceived in terms of just a part of Being, viz., human being. Personification and synecdoche characterize the particular nature of the transference involved in the formation of the concept.⁵⁹

As shown above, nerve stimuli and percepts are metaphorically metaphorical in that they arise out of transferences of information that are analogous to the transferences that Aristotle found to be involved in properly linguistic instances of metaphor. Now whereas the notion that nerve stimuli and percepts have a properly metaphorical relation, or relationship of similarity, to that which precedes them in the process of cognition is difficult to square with Nietzsche’s claim that we have absolutely no knowledge of things-in-themselves, the notion that words and concepts have this kind of relation to percepts makes more sense. Since concepts are formed through a selection of characteristics from individual percepts, it is understandable that they should to some degree capture or resemble the percepts from which they are abstracted. This resemblance or similarity permits us to say that concepts can be metaphorical in a way that nerve stimuli and percepts cannot. Thus, the transition from perception to words and

⁵⁹ It can also be said that the concept *esse* implies that Being is “like” human being, and that this is what makes the concept a metaphor. However, the concept does not state this explicitly, since a concept is not any kind of statement.

concepts is of a different nature than the transition from either thing-in-itself to nerve stimulus or nerve stimulus to perception. The resemblance that holds between objects of perception and the concepts that simplify them makes it fair to say that concepts do give us some knowledge of percepts, even if that knowledge is limited and anthropomorphic.⁶⁰

However, in TL Nietzsche understands “pure truth” to be knowledge of things-in-themselves. (TL 144) What is “true in itself” is true “regardless of mankind”. (TL 147) Thus, despite the similarities between percepts and the concepts that are abstracted from them, Nietzsche’s theory of cognition undermines the notion that truth is articulated through concepts. Concepts are anthropomorphic constructions thrice removed from the world of things-in-themselves. They are simplifications of the objects of perception, and the latter do not resemble things-in-themselves. What we have through concepts is not truth but something that generally passes for truth, viz., a set of customs or conventions concerning how the world is to be spoken about and conceived. Through our mediated interaction with the world, certain words which emphasize one quality or another in a thing, or express some highly subjective and human-centred way of designating an object, come to be conventionally used to refer to objects of perception. Certain conventions arise as to what features and qualities of perceived objects are to be emphasized and locked into concepts. As these habitual and conventional ways of designating and conceiving become solidified over time, they come to pass for truth.

“[H]uman beings forget that this is how things are; thus they lie unconsciously in the

⁶⁰ Consequently, in order for Nietzsche to maintain that concepts do not give us knowledge of things-in-themselves, it must be the case that the movement from thing-in-itself to perception involves transferences of information among incommensurable media of information. The resemblance that holds between objects of perception and the concepts that simplify them marks another point at which the relationship between sound-tone and Chladni figure breaks down as a metaphor for what happens during the process of cognition. In this instance, the metaphor is not apt because there does seem to be a relationship of resemblance between percepts and the concepts that are formed on their basis. By contrast, there is no such resemblance between a sound-tone and the Chladni figure produced by it.

way we have described, and in accordance with centuries-old habits – and precisely *because of this unconsciousness*, precisely because of this forgetting, they arrive at the feeling of truth”. (TL 146) The ‘truths’ that are had through concepts are not really truths at all. Using words and concepts in the usual, socially acceptable ways merely gives us the “feeling of truth”, a sentiment of security arising out of the conformity of our linguistic and conceptualizing behaviour with what habit and custom demand.

The truths arrived at by way of scientific research are truths that have their basis in this kind of conventional usage of words and concepts. Through the ordinary use of language an “edifice of concepts” is constructed. (TL 150) Science takes up and intensifies this architectural project. It creates and orders concepts in a rigorous fashion, attempting to distill “the whole empirical world” into concepts, or “dead perceptions”, and to order them within a “great *columbarium* of concepts, [a] burial site of perceptions” (TL 150) with “a pyramidal order based on castes and degrees”. (TL 146) Science is “the creation of a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, definitions of borders, which now confronts the other, sensuously perceived world as something firmer, more general, more human, and hence as something regulatory and imperative”. (TL 146) The expansive breadth of application of the scientific edifice of concepts, as well as the rigorous order among its component concepts, makes it seem as if this edifice captures the truth of the world. However, “the entire material in and with which the man of truth, the researcher, the philosopher, works and builds, stems, if not from cloud-cuckoo land, then certainly not from the essence of things”. (TL 145) Scientific truth is not a matter of articulating the essences of things-in-themselves. Rather, it is a matter of “using each die [i.e., concept] in accordance with its designation, counting its spots precisely, forming

correct classifications, and never offending against the order of castes nor against the sequence of classes of rank”. (TL 147)

The ‘truths’ that we have by way of concepts, even when reinforced by scientific rigour, are by no means unassailable. However, they are not assailable on the basis of knowledge of things-in-themselves, for it is Nietzsche’s view in TL that such knowledge cannot be had. Rather, the habits and conventions that typically govern how we perceive and conceive are vulnerable to being disrupted by “the primal power of the human imagination” that gave rise to these habits and conventions in the first place. (TL 148)

The percepts that comprise the empirical world exist by virtue of the power of imagination: it creates ways of perceiving objects out of information given through the nervous system. Of its own accord imagination can introduce new ways of perceiving things. It can create new figurative expressions of nervous stimuli within the medium of perception, expressions which diverge from the manners of perceiving that are habitually associated with those nervous stimuli. Each person, says Nietzsche, is inherently “*an artistically creative subject*” whose power of imagination persists no matter how “hard and rigid” their manner of perceiving has become. (TL 148) As Arthur Danto says with regard to Nietzsche’s epistemological theory in TL, “our original and most fundamental involvement with experience is artistic and transforming”.⁶¹ Consequently, imagination can always create new ways of perceiving, with the limitation that all perceptions must be organized in accordance with the subjective forms of time and space. (TL 149-50)⁶²

With respect to words and concepts, imagination can likewise give rise to new manners of designation and conception. As an inborn artistic power, imagination makes it

⁶¹ Danto, 45.

⁶² “[T]he artistic production of metaphor, with which every sensation begins within us, already presupposes those forms [i.e., the forms of time and space], and is thus executed in them”. (TL 150)

possible to designate something by way of a metonymy, metaphor, or some other figure of speech that was not previously employed or thought of. It allows us to reconceptualize the empirical world by way of a different manner of selecting characteristics and features. It makes possible the regrouping of individuals according to novel ways of making them appear equivalent. In this way, conventional truths are disrupted. New ways of understanding and ordering the world, new habits and conventions of conception, come into being. These new conceptions are no more true and no more false than the ways of conceiving the world that they replaced. However, from the perspective of the ‘truth’ comprised of conventional manners of naming and conceiving things, these new conceptions are false. They are artistic distortions which disrupt the established order of concepts.

Metaphysical Realism in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense”

That Nietzsche holds the ultimate standard of truth to be knowledge of things-in-themselves makes him an advocate of what Clark calls the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth. According to this theory, reality is what it is in absolute independence of human cognition, and truth is a matter of correspondence between our beliefs and the things-in-themselves that populate that independent reality.⁶³ However, according to the epistemology of TL things-in-themselves are obscured by the process of cognition. We do not perceive things-in-themselves, but only their figurative effects, and our concepts are created on the basis of these figurative effects. Consequently, neither our percepts nor

⁶³ Clark, 85.

our concepts correspond with reality. Neither of them allows us to know the “real natures” of things-in-themselves.⁶⁴

This makes Nietzsche not only an advocate of the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth, but also an advocate of a kind of metaphysical realism. The doctrine of metaphysical realism shares in common with the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth the idea that “the world is determinately constituted in complete independence of human beings”.⁶⁵ In addition, and as a consequence of this, the doctrine holds that “truth is independent not only of our [cognitive] capacities, but also of our cognitive interests”.⁶⁶ In other words, as a metaphysical realist, Nietzsche holds that we cannot have truth as it is conceived according to the metaphysical correspondence theory, for we cannot conceive anything beyond what our cognitive capacities and cognitive interests allow us to conceive.

Nietzsche’s belief that truth is independent of our cognitive capacities should be evident on the basis of the explication I’ve given of Nietzsche’s theory of human cognition. According to that theory, the mediations involved in the process of cognition prevent us from grasping the real natures of things. That truth must also be independent of our cognitive interests requires a little more explanation.

Clark defines our cognitive interests as our “best standards of rational acceptability or theory selection”.⁶⁷ These are the “cognitively relevant properties we want from a theory or set of beliefs *other than truth*”.⁶⁸ Examples of such properties are simplicity, coherence, explanatory power, predictive success, comprehensiveness,

⁶⁴ Clark, 56.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 48.

completeness, consistency, and plausibility.⁶⁹ Metaphysical realism holds that truth is independent of these interests and standards. The idea is that even if some theory were to fully satisfy our cognitive interests and standards of theory selection, the theory might still be false because reality is constituted independently of these interests and standards. Ideal cognition would produce a theory that gratified all of our cognitive interests. However, it might do this and still fail to grasp the natures of things-in-themselves.

This is how it stands with respect to cognition and truth in TL. Our cognitive abilities are such that they do not allow us to grasp the natures of things-in-themselves. Nonetheless, cognition does allow us to create concepts, and with these concepts we construct theories. Theory construction proceeds according to certain cognitive interests and standards of rational acceptability which lead us to determine that some theories are better than others. These interests and standards have been constituted over time on the basis of our species' practical interests. As Clark tells us in her analysis of TL, our species' practical interest in survival "explain[s] our possession of the framework within which we ask and answer questions".⁷⁰ What counts as a good theory, a theory worthy of being accepted as true, is determined on the basis of an "*a priori* framework of categories and principles that we inherit (either biologically or culturally) because of its survival value".⁷¹ The best theory, the one that satisfies our standards of rational acceptability most fully, is (or should be) the theory that holds sway. However, it is clear that for Nietzsche the mediations and distortions involved in the process of cognition would prevent such a theory from being true in the strict sense.

⁶⁹ Clark, 48 & 86.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 87.

⁷¹ Ibid.

This then is Nietzsche's position in TL: he is a metaphysical realist who holds that reality is what it is independently of how human beings perceive and conceive, and that truth is independent of our cognitive capacities and interests. To have truth is to know reality, but according to Nietzsche even an ideal theory would fail to grasp that reality.

Although Nietzsche holds quite firmly in TL to the idea that the mediations involved in the process of cognition make it impossible for us to have real knowledge of the world, on a couple of occasions he does diverge from this conviction. For example, on his way to telling us that the distinction between individual and species is anthropomorphic and thus not compatible with the "essence of things", he warns us not to make the "dogmatic assertion" that such a distinction "does *not* correspond to the essence of things", for that would be "just as incapable of being proved as its opposite". (TL 145) Here Nietzsche momentarily concedes, contrary to his main line of argument, that what we have by means of the process of cognition might reveal the natures of things-in-themselves (although we would have no way of knowing whether they do), and that both the assertion that those natures are revealed through cognition and the assertion that they are not are equally dogmatic and unfounded. Following Clark, we can say that this is Nietzsche's "agnostic" moment in TL, a moment of moderation in which he briefly diverges from his conviction that what we perceive and conceive does not and cannot give us knowledge of things-in-themselves.⁷²

Clark points out that Nietzsche veers from his main position on one other occasion as well.⁷³ This time he calls into question the very conceivability of the thing-in-itself. First he denies that there can be any such thing as "correct perception", which is

⁷² Clark, 91.

⁷³ Ibid., 91-2.

defined as “the full and adequate expression of an object in the subject”. (TL 148) That this amounts to a denial of the possibility of perceiving things-in-themselves is suggested by an earlier passage in TL, where Nietzsche equates “full and adequate expression” with truth as knowledge of the thing-in-itself. (TL 144) However, Nietzsche adds that correct perception is not only impossible, but also “contradictory”. (TL 148) As Clark points out, this marks a divergence from Nietzsche’s main thesis. For if knowledge of things-in-themselves is contradictory, then it is also inconceivable and therefore hardly a coherent standard of truth. By implying that the idea of the thing-in-itself is inconceivable, Nietzsche effectively forsakes any ground for maintaining the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth and the metaphysical realist position. Like the above-mentioned agnostic moment, this is another divergence from the dominant position that otherwise pervades TL. We might take these divergences as indications that Nietzsche’s position on truth was not yet fully worked out and might become modified as he moved forward with his thinking.

2.2 Historical Epistemology in On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life

Although Nietzsche does not offer a thorough discussion of historical epistemology in HL, there are hints that he there adhered to an epistemology very much akin to the epistemology of TL. Significant parallels are evident between some of the things he has to say in HL about knowing the past and his more general epistemological reflections in TL. For instance, he claims that what passes for historical objectivity – i.e., what counts as a perspective on the past which gives access to the truth about the past – is really a

matter of interpreting the past in accordance with the prejudices and conventions of one's own time:

These naïve historians call the assessment of the deeds and opinions of the past according to the everyday standards of the present moment 'objectivity': it is here they discover the canon of all truth; their task is to adapt the past to contemporary triviality. On the other hand, they call all historiography 'subjective' that does not accept these popular standards as canonical. (HL 90-1)

Here we find an analogue of one of Nietzsche's central claims in TL, namely, that mere convention passes for truth.

Nietzsche then elaborates his denial of the historian's ability to have objective knowledge of the past. The historian believes himself to be a "purely passive medium" who can "observe an event in all its motivations and consequences so purely that it has no effect at all on his own subjectivity". (HL 91) This notion of a purely disinterested historian, like the notion of a purely disinterested artist who attains the state of aesthetic "detachment" and "complete absorption in the things themselves [*die Dinge*]", is "superstition" and "bad mythology". (HL 91) The artist cannot attain "a true reproduction of the empirical nature of the things themselves [*das empirische Wesen der Dinge*]", neither within himself at the moment when he beholds an object, nor in the painting that he will produce as a consequence of that moment of inspiration. (HL 91) This is because the moment of aesthetic contemplation is for the artist "the strongest and most spontaneous moment of creation in the depths of the artist, a moment of composition of the highest sort, the outcome of which may be an artistically true painting but cannot be an historically true one". (HL 91) Such claims are reminiscent of Nietzsche's assertion in TL that all we take as true is really a subjective and imaginative construction, an anthropomorphic appropriation and selection performed on the basis of our bodily

interaction with obscure things-in-themselves. As he says in TL, man as knower is “*an artistically creative subject*”, not a mirror of thing-in-themselves. (148)

The artistic and imaginative nature of the historian’s appropriation of the past is more explicitly asserted and elaborated in the next paragraph. Nietzsche claims that it is man’s “artistic drive [...] not [...] his drive towards truth or justice” that is at work when he appropriates the past. (HL 91) The work of the historian is analogous to that of the dramatist: he “think[s] of all things in relation to all others and [...] weave[s] the isolated event into the whole: always with the presupposition that if a unity of plan does not already reside in things it must be implanted into them. Thus man spins his web over the past and subdues it”. (HL 91) In addition to conceiving the historian as an artist, this passage also conceives him metaphorically as a spider that captures elements of the past in its web and incorporates them into a determined structure. The metaphor brings to mind TL’s notion of concepts as dead perceptions: just as a spider captures prey in its web and immobilizes them in web-casing so that they can later be killed and eaten, we are invited to imagine the spider-historian capturing elements of the past and ‘killing’ them as he conceptualizes them and places them into the structure of his theory or narrative.⁷⁴

Nietzsche goes on to quote Franz Grillparzer in support of his view that historiography is a matter of creation: “What is history but the way in which the spirit of man apprehends *events impenetrable to him*; unites things when God alone knows whether they belong together; substitutes something comprehensible for what is

⁷⁴ The metaphor of the spider was also used explicitly in TL: once where Nietzsche says that the “cathedral of concepts” must be “like a thing constructed from cobwebs” in order for it to remain intact on “moving foundations” (147); and again where he says that the “representations of time and space” are “produce[d] within ourselves and from ourselves with the same necessity as a spider spins”. (150)

incomprehensible”. (HL 91) In the same spirit, he quotes Friedrich Schiller to bolster his view that the necessity that some historians ‘discover’ in the course of history is actually a subjective projection: “one phenomenon after another begins to forsake the realm of blind chance and limitless freedom and to take its place as a fitting member of a harmonious whole – *which whole is, of course, present only in his* [the historian’s] *imagination*”. (HL 92)

What can be gathered from these comments on historical objectivity and epistemology is that, for Nietzsche, knowing the past as an historian is at worst a matter of interpreting it according to the standards and prejudices of one’s own time, and always a matter of projecting a form and meaning into it that does not reside in the events themselves, a form and meaning that has its origin in the historian’s own subjectivity and imagination. These claims are clearly consistent with Nietzsche’s assertions regarding the nature of conceptual ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ in TL.

An important difference between TL and HL is that the latter makes no mention whatsoever of things-in-themselves. It might *seem* that Nietzsche comes close to invoking the thing-in-itself in HL when he makes reference to the artist’s, and by implication the historian’s, inability to attain either “complete absorption in the things themselves [*die Dinge*]” or “a true reproduction of the empirical nature of things themselves [*das empirische Wesen der Dinge*]”. (HL 91) However, R. J. Hollingdale’s inclusion of the word “themselves” in his translation of these phrases is misleading. Nietzsche’s text in no way calls for its inclusion. A more faithful rendering of the phrases would translate *die Dinge* simply as “the things” and *das empirische Wesen der Dinge* as “the empirical nature of things”. Hollingdale’s use of the phrase “things themselves”

makes it sound as if Nietzsche is discussing the thing-in-itself (*das Ding an sich*), but there is no reason to think that the thing-in-itself is in any way implicated in or relevant to the discussion.

In TL the empirical world of perception is a mediated and figurative expression of the world of things-in-themselves. The most basic data we have in consciousness is perceptual data and it gives us no knowledge whatsoever of things-in-themselves. The qualification “empirical” in the phrase “empirical nature of things” (HL 91) indicates that what is at issue in HL is the ability of artists and historians to know and represent the empirical world of perception, not their ability to know and represent the metaphysical entities that lie beyond that world. So when Nietzsche denies the artist and the historian the ability to faithfully reproduce “the empirical nature of things” he is denying them the ability to effectively capture an undistorted image of empirical reality in their works. Each takes up that reality in such a way that it is transformed in the process. Each appropriates his object in a manner that is artistic and imaginative. What each produces is a creative interpretation of the empirical.

Of course, the work of the historian and the work of the artist are not the same in every respect. One is merely analogous to the other. In the passage under consideration, Nietzsche imagines the situation of an artist who is immediately confronted by some present scene, “a stormy landscape with thunder and lightning, or a rolling sea” (HL 91), and who then enters into an aesthetic-contemplative state of mind. In that moment when the artist is affected by the scene, the “picture which these things evoke” in the artist will not be “a true reproduction of the empirical nature of the things”. (HL 91)

Unlike the artist of whom Nietzsche speaks, the historian does not have an immediate perceptual relation to that which he interprets. His relationship to the empirical world of the past cannot be a matter of direct perception since that world can no longer be perceived from the vantage point of the present in which every historian's work is carried out. Rather, the historian as Nietzsche conceives him has access to the empirical world of the past primarily by way of language and particularly in the form of texts such as letters, diaries, eye-witness accounts, official documents, and journalistic reports. As such, his relationship to the past is mediated by concepts, and these concepts are, according to the epistemology of TL, products of an anthropomorphic interpretation and simplification of the world as it was perceived by human beings in the past. The basic stuff of the historian's work is therefore conceptual. He both works with concepts as basic material and produces a product that is inherently conceptual. That is, he produces another text, another arrangement of abstractions.

Given that the idea of the thing-in-itself plays no obvious role in the historical epistemology of HL, it should not be said that the products of historical research lack objectivity due to their failure to correspond with things-in-themselves. Rather, we should say that these products lack objectivity insofar as they do not exhaustively mirror the empirical world of the past. This is the case even with respect to accounts of past events that were written by people who witnessed those events first hand. The mere act of translating what was perceived into a linguistic form means that a certain selection and simplification of the empirical world had to take place. In Nietzsche's view, this process of conceptualization must of necessity fall short of capturing the full richness and complexity of the empirical world. Since the historian's only acquaintance with the past

is by way of such conceptualizations, the conceptualizations that the historian himself creates on the basis of these prior conceptualizations must also fall short of apprehending the totality of the empirical world of the past. As Anthony K. Jensen puts it, “historiography will always abbreviate and summarize rather than re-present the events of the past”;⁷⁵ “any historian’s cache of technical terms – ‘revolution’, ‘migration’, ‘working-class’, ‘emperor’ – are cases wherein a single word is to stand as an ideographic designation for a complex, diverse, and non-identical set of features. [...] The designations provided by the historian are therefore symbols rather than correspondential references”.⁷⁶ In creating these “symbols” or concepts the historian gives the empirical world of the past a form that it does not inherently have. His work is therefore a matter of *giving* unity and order to the conceptual traces of past events that are preserved in primary historical texts. It is not a matter of *discovering* unity and order in the events themselves.

Through his repeated emphasis in HL on the value of creating images of the past that can fuel creative activity in the present, Nietzsche can be understood as recommending the practice of conceiving the past in ways that depart from the conventional ways of understanding and imagining it. Unhistorical feeling should be understood as a state of mind in which this power to re-conceptualize the past comes to the fore. For one overcome by this feeling, the usual habits and conventions of conception are forgotten. New manners and rules of selection are put into force. The past is thereby understood differently, atypically. For example, in the unhistorical state of mind, contexts in which great individuals lived might be conceived as in important ways

⁷⁵ Anthony K. Jensen, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 129.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

equivalent to the present-day context so that monumental deeds seem more possible in the present. Where significant non-equivalences between two eras might have been asserted, more productive equivalences can be unhistorically constructed. By another application of the unhistorical attitude, habits, traditions, and forms of life that had been conceived as good and worthy of maintenance might be reconceived in a critical fashion. The value conventionally assigned to them can be forgotten and obliterated from the point of view of a will to make way for new habits and new forms of life. Alternatively, traditions that might be conceived from a critical perspective as worthy of destruction can be unhistorically reconceived from an antiquarian perspective as worthy of maintenance so as to promote stability at a time and place where stability is needed.

Each of these unhistorical approaches to appropriating the past, when understood through the lens of Nietzsche's epistemological reflections in TL, is an activation of that artistic drive that brings concepts into being and disrupts conventional ways of conceiving the past. Unhistorical feeling upsets the order of historical 'truth' by creating a rupture or crack in the historical wing of the scientific edifice of concepts. It is a manifestation of that inherent drive to create new concepts and percepts, which drive is a necessary condition for both what we call truth and what we call error and illusion.

As noted in my discussion of TL in the first section of this chapter, there is ground to claim that concepts, as entities of thought constructed by way of a simplification of objects of perception, can communicate some real knowledge of the empirical world. Thus, because historians base their research on conceptualizations of the empirical world of the past that are contained in primary historical texts, it is in theory possible for them to grasp something of the truth of that world in their own writings.

However, given that concepts can only selectively capture aspects of the empirical world, any truths about the empirical world of the past that historians might apprehend through their works are at best partial. Furthermore, while factual questions concerning whether or not some event took place might be relatively easy to settle, the historian's work is complicated by the fact that concepts do not designate objects or events in a purely indexical fashion. Rather, the creation of concepts is essentially a matter of ascribing meaning to objects and events. On the basis of Nietzsche's epistemological reflections in TL, the ways in which empirical objects or events might be given meaning through conceptualization would seem to be almost inexhaustible, limited only by the matter at hand and the flexibility of the human imagination. Thus, insofar as the historian's work essentially involves giving meaning to the events of the past, the products of their research can never be considered objective in the sense of having once and for all determined the true meaning of these events. Their attempts to know the past will always be a matter of creating meaning by way of an imaginative and partial selection and ordering of the available evidence.

2.3 The Valuation of Creativity in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense"

Just as Nietzsche positively values the creation of new ways of conceiving the past in HL, he also elevates the ability to create unorthodox conceptions in TL. In HL Nietzsche was of the view that the past ought to be reconceived, even misunderstood, if such reconception or misunderstanding might prove to be conducive to creating the conditions for great acts of creativity. In TL he similarly valorizes the ability to perceive and conceive differently. He calls one who is capable of such innovation and deviance the

“man of intuition” and opposes him to the “man of reason”. (TL 152) Most of section 2 of TL is taken up with contrasting these two types of men. Almost invariably, the contrast favours the man of intuition.

The man of reason is paradigmatically the scientist or researcher who dedicates his life to tending to and enlarging the scientific edifice of concepts. The weakness of this kind of man is intimated when Nietzsche describes him as in “need of protection”, which protection he finds through his close association with the scientific structure of concepts: “the researcher builds his hut close by the tower of science so that he can lend a hand with the building and find protection for himself beneath its already existing bulwarks”. (TL 150) The image is of a man who is small, diminutive, feeble, and barely able to maintain his existence without the backing and security provided by the normal conceptions that have been generated and ordered by science.

In addition to being weak, the man of reason is also supremely unfree. This is suggested when Nietzsche describes the scientific project as “the process whereby a regular and rigid new world is built from its own sublimated products – concepts – in order to imprison it in a fortress.” (TL 151) The world is shackled, trapped, and stiffened by scientific understanding. We can imagine that the scientist is likewise imprisoned by the nature of his work. He is unable to realize the full potential of his in-born creativity. His employment of intellect exemplifies the “usual slavery” of thought. (TL 151) “[A]rtistic (or intuitive) activity is conceived [in TL] as the basic explanatory activity of man”,⁷⁷ but in the man of reason this basic activity is inhibited in its operation. The scientist is one who lives a life of servitude and bondage to the reigning conceptual conventions.

⁷⁷ Danto, 42.

In this state of “servitude”, the intellect lacks vigour: it “labours, with dull-spirited industry, to show some poor individual who lusts after life the road and the tools he needs”. (TL 152) The man of reason is content to merely “cope with the chief calamities of life by providing for the future, by prudence and regularity”. (TL 152) His expectations are low, his existence poor in vitality and intensity. Through his preoccupation with conventional abstractions he “only succeeds [...] in warding off misfortune, is unable to compel the abstractions themselves to yield him happiness, and strives merely to be as free as possible of pain”. (TL 153) A desperate and servile neediness dominates the scientist: the “needy man clings” to the scientific structure of concepts, “thereby saving himself on his journey through life”. (TL 152) He lacks the confidence and strength to strike out on his own, to take the risk of creating his own conception of the world. He chooses the safer route, that of being governed by concepts that have been created by others. On the basis of this characterization, Nietzsche would have us believe that the man of reason lives a slavish and wretched existence.⁷⁸

Nietzsche portrays the man of intuition in a far more positive light. Although TL does not explicitly define what intuitions are, on the basis of what is there said about them, it would seem that they are basically pre-conceptual and pre-linguistic and can either remain so or be expressed in terms of novel conceptual constructs:

No regular way leads from these intuitions into the land of the ghostly schemata and abstractions; words are not made for them; man is struck dumb when he sees them, or he will speak only in forbidden metaphors and unheard-of combinations of concepts so that, by at least demolishing and deriding the old conceptual barriers, he may do creative justice to the impression made on him by the mighty, present intuition. (TL 152)

⁷⁸ Likewise, in HL Nietzsche criticizes those who are constantly looking beyond themselves for meaning and purpose, who do not pay heed to their passions and instincts and therefore do not allow themselves to be guided by what they truly are.

The pre-conceptual aspect of intuition can be characterized as something like pure perception: it is an instance of perception (a percept, or figure of perception) that is as yet singular, unconceptualized, in some cases even deviant insofar as it departs from the normal forms of perception to which the individual or the species is habituated. To be a man of intuition is to be capable of perceiving differently than others, and also capable of perceiving without at the same time conceptualizing what is perceived, without bringing to bear upon the immediate perception the old conceptual schemata. It is to be capable of “being swept away by sudden impressions and sensuous perceptions”, something that “creatures of *reason*” can “no longer tolerate”. (TL 146) The man of intuition is more animalistic insofar as “[e]verything which distinguishes human beings from animals depends on [the] ability to sublimate sensuous metaphors into schema, in other words, to dissolve an image into a concept”. (TL 146) The world of unschematized perception is richer than the world of concepts. In this richness there is greater freedom from determination and limitation: “every metaphor standing for a sensuous perception is individual and unique and is therefore always able to escape classification”. (TL 146)

Along with the ability to refrain from conceptualizing one’s percepts, the man of intuition is also adept at conceptualizing percepts in novel ways. He can conceive differently. He creates new ways of selecting attributes from percepts and new figures of speech with which to designate them. In this way he gives new meaning to the empirical world. These are the marks of the man of intuition: he can suspend reason so as to access the more vivid life of pure perception, and give new meaning to the world by means of novel and deviant conceptualizations.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Whether Danto is right to say that intuitions are “deviant experiences” (40) depends on what he means by “experiences”. Experience seems most akin to perception, but intuition can also involve novel

Nietzsche is full of praise for the talents of the man of intuition. His creativity is “unconquerable”. (TL 151) He is “not defeated, indeed hardly even tamed” by the conventions of conceptualization. (TL 151) His intellect is “liberated”, “free and absolved of the usual slavery”. (TL 151) Its activity is “richer, more luxuriant, more proud, skilful, and bold. Full of creative contentment”. (TL 151) Intuitive intellect does not serve a pre-existing structure of concepts, but creates its own conceptual order. Thus, it “has become the master itself”. (TL 152) It does not need the scientific structure of concepts as does the servile intellect. That structure is “a mere climbing frame and plaything on which to perform its most reckless tricks”. (TL 152) The exuberance of its life exceeds the enslaving power of the structure. By virtue of his capacities, the man of intuition has a talent for art and myth-making, and Nietzsche is in awe of the seemingly boundless potential inherent in these activities. For one endowed with an active mythological imagination “anything is possible at any time”. (TL 151) There is joy in such “miracles”: “the whole of nature cavorts” and one is “enchanted with happiness”. (TL 151)⁸⁰

Where intuition dominates, as Nietzsche believes it did in ancient Greece, art takes precedence over knowledge and “a culture can take shape”. (TL 152) All the creations of such a people then “express sublime happiness and Olympian cloudlessness”. (TL 153) Intuition offers “a constant stream of brightness, a lightening of the spirit,

conceptualization. It would seem more appropriate to say that intuition involves both deviant perception and deviant conception.

⁸⁰ According to Georg Picht, “This is [...] no regression into archaic states of consciousness, but is for Nietzsche the highest degree of enlightenment to which the free and totally emancipated spirit, who has also freed himself from the illusions of reason, can attain. He finds himself with respect to the play of the transcendental imagination in a state of sovereign freedom. The images have no power over him, but they bow obediently to his will.” [Georg Picht, “Nietzsche – das Denken und die Wahrheit der Geschichte,” *Merkur* 42, no.1 (January 1988): 24.] I would agree with Picht, except that the man of intuition has a more passive relationship to his imagination and the images it creates than Picht’s wording suggests.

redemption, and release” for those given over to it. (TL 153) The only advantage that Nietzsche is willing to allow the man of reason is a more dignified manner of dealing with suffering. He can endure suffering calmly and stoically, whereas the man of intuition, who suffers more acutely and more often, complains and makes a great show of his suffering. (TL 153)

Eugen Fink interprets TL correctly when he says that “[f]or Nietzsche [in TL] the intuitive person, the artist is the higher type in comparison with the logician and scientist.”⁸¹ The high value that Nietzsche assigns the man of intuition and his creative abilities is another respect in which TL is consistent with HL. In HL Nietzsche’s highest value is the creative genius, one who can transform mankind and the world through his form-generating activity. He there conceives culture as the goal of mankind, and genius as the goal of culture. In TL we find Nietzsche characterizing creativity in terms of intuition, as an ability to perceive and conceive differently. In addition, we find him associating this intuitive ability with culture: culture develops where the man of intuition is dominant. We might therefore take TL to offer some insight into the mentality of genius, something that was not much addressed in HL. The genius is one who can perceive and conceive differently, who has a talent for giving new meaning to things because he can perceive without conceiving, and because he can conceptualize what he perceives in novel ways. TL therefore offers insight not only into the historical epistemology that informs HL, but also into the nature of that which Nietzsche believes history ought to serve, namely, the life of creative excellence.

⁸¹ Eugen Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1968), 34.

Chapter 3 – Perspectivist Epistemology in Nietzsche's Later Thought

Having determined in Chapter 2 the nature of Nietzsche's epistemological theory in TL, as well as the nature of the historical epistemology that informs his ideas on how the past ought to be appropriated in HL, I will now move on to a consideration of Nietzsche's later views on truth and knowledge. Gaining a clear understanding of how Nietzsche's thoughts on truth and knowledge develop after TL will be instrumental for achieving an understanding of how he goes about appropriating the history of morality in GM. It will be seen that in some instances Nietzsche upholds the main features of the epistemological theory of TL, albeit without invoking the relatively systematic and technical theory of cognition that was elaborated in TL. Especially in the 1882 edition of *The Gay Science*,⁸² we find Nietzsche at times upholding the view that human perception and cognition do not allow us to know the true nature of the world, that through perception and cognition we have only a false world of appearance. On this view, the illusoriness of the world of appearance is due to the fact that the preservation of the human species is so well advanced by means of various errors that have become fundamental to how we experience and know the world. Furthermore, Nietzsche upholds the view that the real nature of the world is fundamentally and in principle inaccessible to human beings. As in TL, we can realize the deceptive nature of our experience and knowledge, but we cannot thereby overcome the essential ignorance that characterizes this experience and knowledge. At most we can disrupt the ways in which we do in fact experience and know the world by coming up with new ways of ordering the world as it appears to us in our

⁸² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974). Cited hereafter as GS with section number.

experience and knowledge. However, these new ways will remain just as erroneous as the old ways.

All this is very much in line with what Nietzsche had claimed with respect to human perception and cognition in TL. However, both the epistemological theory of TL and the view on truth and knowledge from the 1882 edition of GS that I just outlined are problematic because in each case Nietzsche denies human beings access to the world as it is in itself. Consequently, whether human experience and knowledge actually falsifies the world is impossible to determine, since the world as it appears to us cannot in principle be compared to 'how the world really is'. Nietzsche had briefly raised this problem in TL, but did not elaborate its consequences for his position. To do so would have been to render hyperbolic and indefensible his view that the world of appearance is radically false.

However, both within the 1882 edition of GS and following it (for example in *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and Book V of GS) we find an alternative, and more viable, conception of truth and knowledge. Through this alternative conception Nietzsche moves away from the idea that the world as it appears is radically and irredeemably false, and towards an epistemology that makes truth attainable for human beings. This shift is made possible first by a rejection of the thing-in-itself as a conceivable notion and coherent standard of truth, and second by an understanding of truth as something which is entirely immanent to the world of appearance. That is, Nietzsche comes to conceive truth as something which is attained through a certain kind of engagement with and labour upon appearances, an engagement and labour that moves one along a continuum from relative ignorance to more substantial

knowledge. It is this notion of truth as a natural and immanent feature of the world of appearance that characterizes Nietzsche's later theory of epistemological perspectivism. This notion of truth also informs Nietzsche's appropriation of the history of European morality in GM.

At the same time, it will be evident that Nietzsche's appropriation of the past in GM does not proceed merely as an accumulation of knowledge about the past. The unhistorical feeling that had been such an important part of how the past ought to be appropriated in HL remains prominent in GM insofar as Nietzsche's appropriation of the history of European morality proceeds from a passionate and perspectival desire to assert values. Nietzsche wants his appropriation of that history to serve his aim of overcoming slave morality and instituting new manners of valuation that will be more conducive to the flourishing of an elite and higher kind of human being. I will argue that Nietzsche's appropriation of the past in GM puts into practice the idea, expressed in HL, that historiography should not be truth-obsessed – that the past ought to be appropriated imaginatively and untruthfully so as to promote the flourishing of a select kind of human being.

3.1 The Falsity of Appearances in The Gay Science

In the 1882 edition of GS Nietzsche discusses various ways in which human perception and cognition impede the attainment of a true understanding of the world. One of his main theses is that the world as it appears through perception and cognition is false as a consequence of the human intellect's propensity for producing errors, combined with the

fact that these errors are useful for the preservation of the species.⁸³ According to Nietzsche, the human intellect is and has been throughout history a crude instrument which more often than not produces errors of judgement and false conclusions. However, these errors have been and continue to be conducive to the preservation of the species. For this reason, they remain with us and are treated not as errors, but as correct appraisals of reality. The errors that are useful for survival have been incorporated into how we think, how we perceive, and how we feel the world. They have become “almost part of the basic endowment of the species”. (GS 110) Human existence is adapted to these errors, adept at functioning under the assumption that these errors are true. They constitute what we call knowledge, and this knowledge is effective despite its falsity.

The human endowment of species-preserving errors is presumably extensive. A short list of such errors is offered in GS 112: “lines, planes, bodies, atoms, divisible time spans, divisible spaces” have no objective reality. These are forms or images projected onto reality by human beings as a way of giving it order and making it amenable to human purposes. Another list of errors is given in GS 110. According to Nietzsche, it is false “that there are enduring things; that there are equal things; that there are things, substances, bodies; that a thing is what it appears to be; that our will is free; that what is good for me is also good in itself”. (GS 110)

In GS 111 Nietzsche elaborates on the nature of two of the errors listed in GS 110, namely, that there are equal things and that there are substances. He claims that our thinking is based on these species-preserving errors to such an extent that logic itself requires belief in them. For example, logic requires the belief that there are equal things.

⁸³ At this stage in his thinking, Nietzsche is of the view that the instinct for species-preservation is the essence of the human species. (GS 1) Only later would he deny this claim in favour of the view that will to power is the fundamental human instinct.

According to Nietzsche, we have no acquaintance with equal things, only similar things. Logic would therefore not be possible without the error of mistaking what is similar for what is equal. Mistaking similar things for equal things was useful to our ancestors with regard to identifying “nourishment and hostile animals”. (GS 111) Those who were too cautious and too slow to falsely infer equality from similarity did not so easily survive to transmit their habits of thought to the next generation.

As with the concept of equality, Nietzsche claims that the concept of immutable substance is both essential to logic and entirely fictitious. Among early forms of life, a great aptitude for perceiving the changes that things undergo, for seeing “everything in “flux”” (GS 111), was not conducive to survival. Those creatures whose power of perception was not so exacting, and who therefore did not so readily perceive everything as being in flux, survived with greater success and transmitted the erroneous idea of immutable substance to later generations. Ultimately, Nietzsche thinks it is the skeptical tendency in human beings that impedes inferences from similarity to equality and from flux to substance. The skeptical tendency to employ caution, suspend judgement, and hold fast to what is actually perceived imperils life. Hence a great faith in errors has been bred into the human species. (GS 111)

In GS 57 Nietzsche addresses the falsifying effect that emotions have on perception. He claims that even the most sober “realists”, who believe that “the world really is the way it appears” to them, exist in a state of impassioned “intoxication” that prevents them from grasping reality as it truly is. (GS 57) They interpret the world in a skewed and prejudiced fashion, partly because of what they have inherited from their ancestors, partly because of what they themselves have learned over the course of their

lives. “Every feeling and sensation” is influenced by “some fantasy, some prejudice, some unreason, some ignorance, some fear” that has been bred into the individual or otherwise inculcated over the course of his experience and “training”. (GS 57) For human beings there is no reality that is free of these subjective factors. We are acquainted only with a world conditioned by human modes of thought and feeling.

The supposed falsity of human experience and knowledge is summed up pithily in Nietzsche’s aphorism “*Ultimate skepsis*”: “What are man’s truths ultimately? Merely his *irrefutable* errors.” (GS 265) The errors that constitute our knowledge are irrefutable because they have for so long been useful for the purpose of preserving the species: “the *strength* of knowledge does not depend on its degree of truth but on its age, on the degree to which it has been incorporated, on its character as a condition of life”. (GS 110)

So we see that Nietzsche makes considerable use of the claim that human experience and knowledge involve deep-seated errors which have the effect of falsifying the real nature of the world. A number of passages in GS suggest that this falsification should be understood in terms of the epistemological position Nietzsche had advocated in TL, viz., that the world of appearance, the world as we experience and know it through perception and cognition, is false due to its failure to correspond with a metaphysical reality that in principle lies beyond the reach of human experience and knowledge. For example, in GS 54 Nietzsche dramatizes the notion that there is a metaphysical reality underlying the world of appearance by comparing the world of appearance to a dream. As in GS 57 and elsewhere, he invokes the idea that the world appears as it does as a consequence of our “human and animal past, indeed the whole primal age and past of all sentient being”, because of how the past invents, loves, hates, and infers through us. (GS

54) The narrative voice in section 54 expresses this realization and yet cannot on the basis of this realization dispense with all that his inheritance contributes to the appearance of the world. It is as if, in the midst of a dream, he realizes that he is dreaming, and yet cannot rouse himself from the dream. Through his use of the metaphor of dreaming, the voice in GS 54 implies that there is a world beyond the world of appearance; and by claiming that he is unable to wake up from the dream, he implies that this other world is inaccessible. His cognitive inheritance prevents and impedes him from knowing this other world. The idea of appearance as an unending and unbreakable dream illustrates and reinforces the idea that the world of appearance is false insofar as it does not correspond to the metaphysical reality that underlies it.

Nietzsche again juxtaposes the world of appearance to an underlying and inaccessible reality in GS 58. There he says that “what things *are called* is incomparably more important than what they are”. And not only what they are called, but “the reputation, [...] appearance, the usual measure and weight of a thing, what it counts for” are “foreign to [the thing’s] nature”. (GS 58) As in GS 54 Nietzsche claims that realizing the disparity between a thing’s appearance and what it actually is does not suffice to “*destroy* the world that counts for real, so-called “*reality*””. (GS 58) Rather, appearances as they stand can only be destroyed through a new creation of appearances, through the creation of “new names and estimations and probabilities”. (GS 58) The world as we experience and know it is a falsification of the world as it really is and we can upend existing falsifications only by creating new falsifications. Since what appears is generally believed to be the essence of the thing, these acts of creation are for us equivalent to the creation of new “things”. As in TL, new ways of perceiving and conceiving do not allow

us any better access to things-in-themselves because by their very nature perception and conception must fail to correspond with reality-in-itself.

In these and other passages in the 1882 edition of GS it is suggested that human experience and knowledge involve a total and complete falsification of a fundamentally inaccessible metaphysical reality, that is, a reality whose nature is entirely independent of our cognitive capacities and interests. This radical view of human knowledge raises a problem that Nietzsche had already raised briefly in TL, viz., the problem of how one can know that the world of appearance is false if one cannot access the reality that it supposedly falsifies. As Nietzsche says in TL, “the criterion of *correct perception*”, i.e., the criterion that would allow us to judge the extent to which our perceptions correspond or fail to correspond to things-in-themselves, is a “*non-existent*”, “contradictory”, and “impossible” criterion. (148) In a related passage from the same essay, he claims that “the opposition we make between individual and species is anthropomorphic and does not stem from the essence of things, although we equally do not dare to say that it does *not* correspond to the essence of things, since that would be a dogmatic assertion and, as such, just as incapable of being proved as its opposite.” (TL 145) Presumably, if this opposition were to correspond to the essence of things, the correspondence would be fortuitous and “stem from” (i.e., be due to) the nature of human cognition, rather than from the nature of things-in-themselves. Whether the opposition between individual and species does or does not correspond to the essence of things is indemonstrable, and the same must be said of all that we perceive and conceive.

Nietzsche’s radical claims about the false nature of human perception and cognition in GS raise the same question: how can we know that the world of appearance

is false if we cannot compare it to the inaccessible reality that supposedly underlies it and which is supposedly falsified by it? Unfortunately, the answer to this question must prove fatal to this way of conceiving the world of appearance. Since, according to Nietzsche's account, we have no access to the reality that underlies the world of appearance – that is, since we have no access to whatever might be beyond possible experience and knowledge – we cannot be justified in asserting that the world as it appears is a falsification of reality. All that we experience and know is the world as it is arranged according to the habits of perception and norms of conception that we use. As Nietzsche tells us, to dispense with these habits and norms would be to adopt other habits and norms which also falsify the world. Consequently, we cannot rank conflicting claims by comparing them to any thing-in-itself. Given that we have no access to reality-in-itself, there is no way to verify the claim that cognition perpetrates a global falsification of the world. Nietzsche's claim that the world as it appears is false is therefore a hyperbolic and unjustified claim. He would require privileged access to the in-itself in order to back up this claim, but by his own account he does not and cannot have such privileged access.

3.2 Denial of the Thing-In-Itself

However, there is another strain in Nietzsche's thinking that does not lead us to this epistemological dead end. This line of thought involves denying the relevance, and eventually even the conceivability, of the idea of any metaphysical reality or thing-in-itself. We find an early expression of this approach to the problem of the thing-in-itself in section 9 of *Human, All Too Human*,⁸⁴ a book published four years prior to the first

⁸⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Cited hereafter as HA with section number.

edition of GS. Nietzsche there considers the existence of things-in-themselves or the “metaphysical world” to be a possibility, but not something that has any cognitive or practical significance.⁸⁵ “It is true,” says Nietzsche, “there could be a metaphysical world; the absolute possibility of it is hardly to be disputed”. (HA 9) However, the possibility of its existence should have very little consequence for us because “all that has hitherto made metaphysical assumptions *valuable, terrible, delightful* to [people], all that has begotten these assumptions, is passion, error and self-deception; the worst of all methods of acquiring knowledge, not the best of all, have taught belief in them”. (HA 9) For the Nietzsche of HA, our best methods of acquiring knowledge are our scientific-empirical methods. But these teach us nothing of any metaphysical world or thing-in-itself. Consequently, “one could assert nothing at all of the metaphysical world except that it was a being-other, an inaccessible, incomprehensible being-other; it would be a thing with negative qualities”. (HA 9)⁸⁶ The possibility that the metaphysical world exists should therefore be of no relevance to us since “one can do absolutely nothing with it”. (HA 9) Even if its existence were demonstrated, “knowledge of it would be the most useless of all knowledge”. (HA 9)

This passage from HA expresses a position on the thing-in-itself which is distinct from the position Nietzsche adopts in TL and GS 54 and 58. In the latter texts, Nietzsche mocks our pretensions to truth and calls our knowledge “false” because of its failure to correspond to an unknowable metaphysical world of things-in-themselves. In HA 9 the possible failure of such correspondence is not a mark against our knowledge. Rather,

⁸⁵ Clark, 112.

⁸⁶ In other words, the metaphysical world is on this view no more than an empty “conceptual posit” [Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche On Morality*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 16.], something conceived, but not in a “contentful manner” [Peter Poellner, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 84.]

Nietzsche affirms the epistemic value of scientific-empirical knowledge despite the unknowability of a (possible) metaphysical world to which our knowledge may or may not correspond.⁸⁷

Nietzsche eventually intensifies this devaluation of the idea of a metaphysical world. Beginning with *Beyond Good and Evil*,⁸⁸ the idea of the thing-in-itself is rejected not only because of its irrelevance, but also on account of its supposed incoherence and inconceivability. As noted in the previous chapter, Nietzsche briefly suggested the inconceivability of the thing-in-itself in TL when he called it a “contradictory” and “impossible” criterion. (148) However, the implications of this inconceivability were not worked out in that essay. It is not until BG that Nietzsche brings this into prominence and dispenses altogether with the idea of the metaphysical thing-in-itself.

Before moving on to address this aspect of Nietzsche’s later thought, I will first address Maudemarie Clark’s claim that Nietzsche had already fully rejected the idea of the thing-in-itself in the 1882 edition of GS. Clark finds evidence of Nietzsche’s outright rejection of the thing-in-itself in GS 54. She claims that his rejection of the opposition between appearance and essence in that section amounts to an assertion of the inconceivability of the thing-in-itself. Nietzsche there defines essence as a function of appearance, rather than in terms of a metaphysical thing-in-itself: “What is “appearance” for me now? Certainly not the opposite of some essence: what could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance! Certainly not a dead mask that one could place on an unknown *x* or remove from it”. (GS 54) According to Clark, these

⁸⁷ The position Nietzsche adopts in HA 9 is nearly equivalent to the agnostic position that he briefly asserts in TL, viz., that there is a metaphysical world, but we cannot know whether or not our knowledge corresponds with that world. The difference is that in HA 9 the existence of the metaphysical world is only considered a *possibility*.

⁸⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. & trans. Marion Faber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Cited hereafter cited as BG with section number.

statements indicate that Nietzsche did not at this point in his thinking understand the essence of a thing in metaphysical terms, as he had in TL. In TL, a thing's essence was understood to be inaccessible to human cognition. The unknowable X of the thing-in-itself was the essence that neither perception nor conception could grasp or represent. In GS 54, however, Clark supposes that essence is brought out of metaphysical obscurity. Essence is revealed in appearance: it is the empirical nature of a thing as it appears or can appear. By making essence apparent, Nietzsche in effect denies the conceivability of a metaphysical realm of things-in-themselves. As Clark says, "we have no way of conceiving of a thing's essence except in terms of its appearance. If we can conceive of [or "think of"] what something is only in terms of its possible appearances, we have no way of conceiving it as it is in itself [, i.e.,] as independent of these appearances".⁸⁹

I would argue that Clark's interpretation of this passage misses the mark. As I explained above, GS 54 actually reinforces the idea of a metaphysical world by claiming that the world of appearance is like a dream world that cannot be broken out of. Through the metaphor of the dream, Nietzsche implies that the metaphysical or non-apparent world, while inaccessible to us, nonetheless exists. In this way, the idea of metaphysical essence beyond the world of appearance is kept in play. Furthermore, I would argue that it is the inaccessibility of the metaphysical world that leads Nietzsche to stipulate an additional meaning for the word "essence" in GS 54: for human beings, who are only acquainted with a world of appearance, a thing's essence is only determinable through the manner of its appearance. This is essence in the specific sense of "that which lives and is effective". (GS 54) This kind of essence, the kind that is available through appearance, need not and does not in GS 54 cancel the possibility of metaphysical essence.

⁸⁹ Clark, 100.

Nietzsche reiterates the idea of essence as “that which lives and is effective” only a few sections later in GS 58. He there asserts that what we take to be the essences of things are really appearances, and that these appearances are false because they are constructed on the basis of habits and norms of perception and conception that we have inherited from our ancestors, which habits and norms falsify reality. Due to the influence of these habits and norms, a thing’s appearance is “foreign to [its] nature”. (GS 58) We cannot break through appearance and achieve unadulterated access to the real. All we can do is create new ways of falsifying the world. Thus, from the human perspective a thing’s essence can only be the manner of its appearance. Appearance is taken as essence and “is effective as such”. (GS 58) As in GS 54, Nietzsche is once again clearly of the opinion that there is a reality beyond appearance, even if that reality must remain inaccessible to us. This means that the metaphysical sense of essence remains in play despite the fact that human beings are incapable of grasping anything other than the kind of essence that is available through appearance.

Another way of putting my objection to Clark’s reading of GS 54 is this: I agree with Clark that GS 54 denies the possibility of conceiving the thing-in-itself insofar as it denies that we can have access to things aside from how they appear to us in experience. For this reason, we can have no “contentful conception”⁹⁰ of what a thing is in isolation from how it appears or can appear to us. However, despite the fact that we can have no contentful conception of the thing-in-itself, there is still a sense in which Nietzsche continues to conceive of the thing-in-itself in GS 54. Both there and elsewhere in the 1882 edition of GS the thing-in-itself remains what it was in TL, viz., a “conceptual

⁹⁰ Poellner, 84.

posit”.⁹¹ As a conceptual posit the thing-in-itself plays the same role in this iteration of Nietzsche’s epistemology that the noumenal world played in Kant’s philosophy: it is “a necessary logical link”.⁹² Thus, although the world as it appears to us empirically does not allow us any definite or contentful conception of the thing-in-itself, it can still be conceived as that which underlies the world as it appears empirically, which world is the basis for all our definite or contentful conceptions. Contrary to Clark, in GS 54 Nietzsche continues to conceive the thing-in-itself as that which underlies the world of appearance, and despite our incapacity to have a contentful conception of it, he maintains that the world of appearance falsifies the thing-in-itself. As I explained in the previous section, such an epistemological position is incoherent.

When we take into account the context of Nietzsche’s rejection of the opposition between appearance and essence in GS 54, we see that he does not fully reject the conceivability of the thing-in-itself. Rather, his point is that our inability to know reality-in-itself means that what we understand a thing’s essence to be must be a matter of how it appears to us. Clark misses the essential context in which Nietzsche rejects the opposition between appearance and essence and thereby misunderstands the meaning of that rejection.

It is not until BG that we find Nietzsche attempting to clearly and decisively put the idea of the thing-in-itself to rest. He does this by arguing for a non-metaphysical conception of truth, one that makes the attainment of truth entirely a matter of engaging with the immanent world of appearance. The idea that truth can be attained in this way, that it is not a matter of correspondence with a metaphysical world of things-in-

⁹¹ Leiter, *Nietzsche On Morality*, 16.

⁹² Ibid.

themselves that transcends the world of appearance, is suggested in BG 2. There Nietzsche claims that metaphysicians operate under the assumption that all that they value most – for example truth, goodness, and beauty – must have its origin and basis in a world other than the world of appearance. For instance, one metaphysical understanding of truth makes the thing-in-itself the standard of truth: to know a thing is to know it as something uncontaminated and unmediated by human modes of perception and conception. By affirming and valuing a metaphysical world of things-in-themselves above all else, these metaphysicians negate and devalue the world of appearance. The latter is for them an inferior world, a “perishable, seductive, deceptive, lowly world, [a] confusion of desire and delusion”. (BG 2) They find it unthinkable that the things they consider to be of highest value could have their origin in the world of appearance. This would be tantamount to degrading all that they supremely value.

For Nietzsche, the metaphysician’s assumption that these things of highest value must have their basis in another world is an unjustified prejudice. Intellectual conscience demands that doubt be brought to bear precisely on this most fundamental assumption. The metaphysicians may be in error. It may be that the things they consider to be of highest value are not so fundamentally opposed to the things they consider to be of lowest value, such as error, deception, egoism, ugliness, and evil. “It could even be possible that the value of those good and honoured things consists precisely in the fact that in an insidious way *they are related* to those bad, seemingly opposite things, linked, knit together, even identical perhaps”. (BG 2) Nietzsche’s doubt ultimately leads him to the conclusion that all things, including the things that the metaphysicians consider to be of highest value, originate and reside purely within the world of appearance.

Nietzsche advocates for this reduction of all things to the world of appearance in part by asserting the inconceivability of the thing-in-itself and thereby denying its existence. In BG 16 he explicitly refers to the thing-in-itself as a “*contradictio in adjecto*”, i.e., a contradiction in terms, “a logical inconsistency between a noun and its modifier”.⁹³ As a contradiction in terms, the idea of the thing-in-itself would be by definition inconceivable, its existence impossible. Further iterations of this denial of the thing-in-itself can be found in Nietzsche’s writings after BG. A somewhat ambiguous denial occurs in Book V of GS where Nietzsche asserts that “we do not “know” nearly enough to be entitled to [the] distinction” between appearance and thing-in-itself (GS 354), the implication being that we know only appearances and have no contact or acquaintance at all with things-in-themselves. Consequently, the existence of things-in-themselves is at best highly doubtful. A more straightforward denial is made in *Twilight of the Idols*⁹⁴ where Nietzsche claims that “The ‘apparent’ world is the only world; the ‘true world’ [i.e., the metaphysical world of things-in-themselves] is just a *lie added on to it*”. (TI ‘Reason’ in Philosophy: 2) He reaffirms this thought several sections later: “people have based the ‘true world’ on an opposition to the actual world: in fact it is an illusory world to the extent that it is just a *moral-optical* illusion”. (TI ‘Reason’ in Philosophy: 6) Here Nietzsche isolates the motivation for the positing of such a world “in the need for revenge against life”.⁹⁵ “It would not make any sense to fabricate a world ‘other’ than this one unless we had a powerful instinct for libelling, belittling, and casting suspicion on life: in that case, we would be using the phantasmagoria of an ‘other’, a

⁹³ BG, p. 183n.

⁹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols And Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Cited hereafter as TI with chapter title and section number.

⁹⁵ Clark, 113.

‘better’ life to *avenge* ourselves on life”. (TI ‘Reason’ in Philosophy: 6) The psychology of resentment begets the idea of a metaphysical world, not clear thinking and knowledge.

Nietzsche gives more extended expression to his rejection of the metaphysical thing-in-itself in the chapter of TI entitled “How The ‘True World’ Finally Became A Fable”. There he outlines various manifestations of the idea of the ‘true’ or metaphysical world in the history of western thought. Having first traced its Platonic, Christian, and Kantian manifestations, he then charts the waning of the idea of the ‘true world’ in the post-Kantian context. First, there is what Nietzsche designates as the positivist position, namely, that the metaphysical world is “*unknown*” and “*unattained*”, and hence “not consoling, redeeming, [or] obligating either”. Next, he condemns the ‘true world’ as useless, “obsolete”, “superfluous”, and “refuted”. Finally, he claims that once the ‘true world’ has been dispensed with and “refuted”, the notion of an “*illusory world*”, a world of ‘mere appearance’, is also dispensed with. In other words, in the absence of the idea of the ‘true world’, in the post-metaphysical mentality, the world of appearance need no longer be conceived and condemned as inherently illusory as the metaphysicians and advocates of the ‘true world’ had done.

In all fairness, it cannot be said that in these passages Nietzsche decisively “refutes” the existence of a metaphysical world of things-in-themselves. Strictly speaking, the incoherence and inconceivability of the thing-in-itself has not been demonstrated, but merely asserted (and vigorously so). Furthermore, it would seem that the only thing that is really ruled out is the possibility of attaining a *contentful* conception of the thing-in-itself. Just as in GS 54, it remains possible to conceive the thing-in-itself

as an indefinite conceptual posit. Nonetheless, Nietzsche's treatment of the idea of the metaphysical world is significant. In effect he has denied the thing-in-itself any important role in thinking. The concept has been dismissed, put aside: all things, including truth, can be understood without reference to a metaphysical world. This is the abductive hypothesis that he will again and again test as he proceeds to offer explanations of phenomena that make reference only to the world as it appears or can appear to us as human subjects of knowledge.

3.3 Immanentist Epistemology

One of the consequences of dispensing with the metaphysical world is that truth can no longer be understood as a matter of correspondence with the thing-in-itself. The inaccessibility – or, as Nietzsche would have it, the inconceivability and non-existence – of the thing-in-itself renders it an incoherent standard of truth. But this does not entail that the idea of truth must also be dispensed with. On the contrary, it suggests the possibility that truth is something that can be determined through non-metaphysical means, something that can be arrived at purely through an engagement with the immanent world of appearance. Nietzsche takes this possibility seriously. Having dismissed the metaphysical world, he thinks that the distinction between truth and falsity can be maintained under the assumption that there is only one world, the world of appearance.

The idea that truth and falsity are both purely matters of appearance is to some extent elaborated in BG 34. Having already renounced the thing-in-itself in BG 16, Nietzsche sets up truth and falsity as entirely natural and immanent features of the world

as it appears. Here he follows through on his suggestion in BG 2 that there is no metaphysical opposition between truth and falsity. They are both of the same kind. Both are matters of appearance. What separates them is not any essential difference, but a difference of degree: “why should we be forced to assume that there is any essential difference between ‘true’ and ‘false’ in the first place? Isn’t it enough to assume that there are degrees of apparency so to speak, lighter and darker shadows and hues of appearance – different *valeurs*, to use the language of painters?” (BG 34) From the vantage point of Nietzsche’s immanentist view of truth, the idea that there is an essential or metaphysical opposition between truth and falsity is due to the metaphysicians’ devaluation of the world of appearance (or ‘world of falsity’) at the expense of the valuation of an imagined metaphysical world (or ‘world of truth’). Those who advocate for this opposition do so out of a nihilistic desire to “do away with the ‘apparent world’ entirely”. (BG 34) However, according to Nietzsche’s immanentist epistemology, if the apparent world were to be done away with, truth would be done away with as well. Truth is of *this* world. We need not posit a metaphysical world in order to understand or assure the possibility of truth.

In addition to positing that truth and falsity are not essentially opposed, Nietzsche also posits that truth has its origin and basis in falsity and error, as if truth is accomplished by ascending through degrees of apparency from the “false” end of the spectrum towards the “true” end. For instance he claims in BG 24 that “only upon this foundation of ignorance, now as firm as granite, could our science be established, and our will to knowledge only upon the foundation of a much more powerful will, the will to no

knowledge, to uncertainty, to untruth – not as the opposite of the former will, but rather – as its refinement!”

How might this movement from falsity and error to truth and knowledge work? As noted earlier, Nietzsche thinks that errors and falsehoods were and still are highly advantageous for the survival and flourishing of the human species. Often he speaks of belief in these fundamental errors as a matter of faith and conviction. The preservation of the species requires that most individuals in the species share a common faith in the same basic set of beliefs. It is not so important whether these beliefs are true or false. Rather, the more or less universal agreement that certain things are true is in itself conducive to the survival of the species. As Nietzsche says in GS, “man’s greatest labour so far has been to reach agreement about very many things and to submit to a *law of agreement* – regardless of whether these things are true or false”. (76) To think in agreement with the majority – to share in their faith – is to think in a manner that is considered disciplined, rational, and non-arbitrary. Without the successful establishment and dominance of a ‘normal’ set of beliefs, “humanity would have perished long ago”. (GS 76)

However conducive to survival such shared faith and conviction might be, it is not conducive to the attainment of truth. The errors upon which our perception and cognition are based make life possible for the species, but as long as we remain within the thrall of these errors we live a life of ignorance. The state of mind of one who lives in accordance with faith and conviction is not amenable to an honest acknowledgment of what is true and what is false. Such a person feels compelled to believe what his faith demands:

Not to see many things, *not* to be free on a single point, to be partisan through and through, to have a strict and necessary optic in all values – these are the only conditions under which this type of person [i.e., the faithful person] can even arise. But this makes him the opposite, the *antagonist* of the truthful person, – of

truth ... A faithful person is not free to have any sort of conscience for the question 'true' and 'untrue': honesty on *this* point would be his immediate downfall. (AC 54)⁹⁶

The faithful person is constrained by his faith. His horizons are limited and static, his perspective confined and fixed. There is in his case an "excessive nourishment (hypertrophy) of a single point of view and feeling that henceforth becomes dominant". (GS 347)

Such adherence to and over-development of a single perspective is the contrary of what Nietzsche thinks is required for the attainment of truth. Truth is gained precisely by adopting new perspectives, by calling one's beliefs into question, by escaping the constraints of faith and conviction. It is accomplished through "the good will of those who seek after knowledge to declare themselves at any time dauntlessly *against* their previous opinions, and to mistrust everything that wishes to become *firm*". (GS 296) For Nietzsche there is joy in this freedom from unconditional faith and conviction. The man who pursues knowledge feels "the jubilant curiosity of one who formerly stood in his corner and was driven to despair by his corner, and now delights and luxuriates in the opposite of a corner, in the boundless, in what is "free as such"". (GS 375) One who seeks knowledge cannot rest. The "penchant and passion for what is true, real, non-apparent, certain" makes him a wanderer. (GS 309) He might very much enjoy the security of a fixed view and settled opinions, but he is compelled nonetheless to move on from every firm belief, to distance himself from every 'unquestionable' standpoint. For Nietzsche it is a "ridiculous immodesty" to think that one's present perspective is the

⁹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols And Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Cited hereafter cited as AC with section number.

only one possible or permitted. (GS 374) For the philosopher, such dogmatic and absolute faith in a perspective has little to recommend it.

It is only the exceptional few who exhibit the passion for truth and knowledge, the searching attitude that drives them away from all absolute faith and conviction: “the most select spirits bristle at this universal binding force [of faith and conviction] – the explorers of *truth* above all. Continually this faith, as *everybody's* faith, arouses nausea and a new lust in subtler minds”. (GS 76) Those who exemplify the passion for truth are stigmatized. Their deviation from the shared faith, from what is considered ‘rational’, leads others to believe that they are afflicted with madness, “which means the eruption of arbitrariness in feeling, seeing, hearing, the enjoyment of the mind’s lack of discipline, the joy in human unreason”. (GS 76) In fact it is only because they are not held captive by the norms of common opinion that their thinking seems arbitrary, undisciplined, and irrational.

The emergence and attainment of truth in the world of appearance is made possible by this exceptional aversion to faith and conviction. In a word, it is skepticism that generates the movement from falsity to truth in the world of appearance. Skepticism creates the distance between the individual and his beliefs that is necessary for the calling into question and eventual overcoming of those beliefs. It dislodges the individual from his perspective and moves him in the direction of new perspectives and new beliefs. The seeker after knowledge treats none of these perspectives as ends in themselves. They are for him only momentary resting places. The more perspectives he adopts, the more he knows of the world of appearance. Openness to and incorporation of many perspectives is the mark of the man of knowledge.

3.4 Perspectivist Epistemology

The immanentist view of truth and knowledge is given significant elaboration in the oft-cited passage on perspectivism in GM III. In that section of text (GM III: 12) Nietzsche uses the metaphor of seeing to help explain what he takes to be the nature of knowing:

Finally let us, particularly as knowers, not be ungrateful toward such resolute reversals of the familiar perspectives and valuations with which the spirit has raged against itself all too long now, apparently wantonly and futilely: to see differently in this way for once, *to want* to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future “objectivity” – the latter understood not as “disinterested contemplation” (which is a non-concept and absurdity), but rather as the capacity to have one’s pro and contra *in one’s power*, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the *difference* in perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge. For let us guard ourselves better from now on, gentlemen philosophers, against the dangerous old conceptual fabrication that posited a “pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge”; let us guard ourselves against the tentacles of such contradictory concepts as “pure reason,” “absolute spirituality,” “knowledge in itself”: here it is always demanded that we think an eye that cannot possibly be thought, an eye that must not have any direction, in which the active and interpretive forces through which seeing first becomes seeing-something are to be shut off, are to be absent; thus, what is demanded here is always an absurdity and non-concept of an eye. There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival “knowing”; and *the more* affects we allow to speak about a matter, *the more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our “concept” of this matter, our “objectivity” be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to disconnect the affects one and all, supposing that we were capable of this: what? would that not be to *castrate* the intellect?... (GM III: 12)⁹⁷

Nietzsche thinks that knowing is like seeing in that both are fundamentally dependent upon perspectives. Seeing is literally perspectival in that it presupposes a certain distance and angle between the seer and the object of sight, as well as certain other “background conditions” that affect how the object presents itself visually to the seer.⁹⁸ Knowing is

⁹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Allan J. Swenson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1998). Cited hereafter cited as GM with treatise and section number.

⁹⁸ Leiter, “Perspectivism,” 344.

figuratively (metaphorically) perspectival in that it presupposes the existence of affects, interests, and needs on the side of the knower by means of which he grasps something about the object of knowledge. In his incisive explication and analysis of GM III: 12 Brian Leiter calls this Nietzsche's "*Doctrine of Perspectives*".⁹⁹

According to Leiter, the Doctrine of Perspectives implies four claims about how we see objects that he thinks are "uncontroversially" true: the perspectivism claim, the plurality claim, the infinity claim, and the purity claim. He states these claims as follows:

Necessarily, we see an object from a particular perspective: for example, from a certain angle, from a certain distance, under certain conditions (perspectivism claim). The more perspectives we enjoy – for example the more angles we see the object from – the better our conception of what the object is actually like will be (plurality claim). We will never exhaust all possible perspectives on the object of vision (infinity claim). There exists a catalogue of identifiable factors that would distort our perspective on the object: for instance, we are too far away or the background conditions are poor (purity claim).¹⁰⁰

Leiter thinks these claims accord with our "intuitive understanding" of what it means to see objects.¹⁰¹ If these assertions pertaining to the nature of seeing are true, then sight involves seeing an object that has some determinate nature that is independent of how it is seen. The more visual perspectives we have on an object, the better acquainted we are with its visible nature. Our optical grasp of an object can be impeded from certain perspectives due to distorting factors that attend those perspectives. Thus, not all perspectives allow for equally accurate sightings of the object in question. There is a hierarchy of visual perspectives. Some are more adequate to the "real visible nature of the object" than others.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Leiter, "Perspectivism," 343-4.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 344.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 345.

Since, for Nietzsche, knowing is analogous to seeing, Leiter proceeds to specify the epistemic assertions that are the analogues of the four assertions that characterize the nature of seeing:

Necessarily, we know an object from a particular perspective: that is, from the standpoint of particular interests and needs (perspectivism claim). The more perspectives we enjoy – for example, the more interests we employ in knowing the object – the better our conception of what the object is like will be (plurality claim). We will never exhaust all possible perspectives on the object of knowledge (there are an infinity of interpretive interests that could be brought to bear) (infinity claim). There exists a catalogue of identifiable factors that would distort our knowledge of the object: that is, certain interpretive interests and needs will distort the nature of objects (purity claim).¹⁰³

In specifying the epistemic analogues of the assertions which characterize what it means to see objects, Leiter thinks he has shown that Nietzsche's epistemic perspectivism involves the idea that we can know truths about the world and that some perspectives are epistemically better than others: "we do indeed have knowledge of the world, though it is never disinterested, never complete, and can always benefit from additional nondistorting perspectives"; "this epistemology is not egalitarian, though it is certainly pluralistic".¹⁰⁴

Leiter offers a useful analogy (suggested by Frithjof Bergmann) to help illustrate Nietzsche's perspectivist theory of knowing. Perspectival knowing, he says, is analogous to how maps represent the world. A map is constructed on the basis of some interest, e.g., roadways, waterways, or topography. If we multiply the maps we have of an area, then we also multiply our knowledge of the area, and there is no obvious limit to the number of maps we might make of an area. Nonetheless, some maps give false information about an area and so offer no knowledge of it. "Nietzsche, in a sense, is saying that while there

¹⁰³ Leiter, "Perspectivism," 345-6.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 346.

is no doubt an infinity of good maps of the world, some maps – like the “Christian map” – just aren’t about the world at all”.¹⁰⁵

As helpful as Leiter’s explication is to our understanding of Nietzsche’s perspectivist epistemology, it is noteworthy that when Leiter states the epistemic versions of the perspectivism, plurality, infinity, and purity claims, he does not explicitly mention affects and the central role they play in Nietzsche’s perspectivism as it is stated in GM III: 12. Leiter speaks of interests and needs, but not of the affects that on Nietzsche’s account ground our interests and needs. In GM III: 12 it is above all the affects that are invoked as being essential to knowledge:

There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival “knowing”; *the more* affects we allow to speak about a matter, *the more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our “concept” of this matter, our “objectivity” be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to disconnect the affects one and all, supposing that we are capable of this: what? would that not be to *castrate* the intellect? (GM III: 12)

As we have already seen, knowing is supposed to be like seeing. Seeing is a metaphor by means of which we can better understand the nature of knowing. Since the eye is the organ of sight, it is certainly significant that in GM III: 12 Nietzsche explicitly uses eyes as a metaphor for affects. It is implied that just as an object is seen by means of the eyes, a “matter” is known by means of the affects. In essence, Nietzsche makes affects the ‘organs’ of knowledge. Affects determine how we understand and interpret things just as the distance and angle from which an eye sees an object determines how the object looks. Knowing is perspectival insofar as we know by way of affects. What then does it mean to know by way of affects, and how do affects determine our knowledge of the world?

¹⁰⁵ Leiter, “Perspectivism,” 356n26.

In order to answer these questions we must first understand more precisely what affects are. To begin, it is helpful to recognize that there is an important link in Nietzsche's thought between affects and the body. Affects are a kind of mental state. They are as Christopher Janaway says "feelings of one sort or another" or "ways in which we *feel*".¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche's rejection of mind-body dualism entails that all mental states are fundamentally explicable in terms of physiological processes and conditions. In physiological terms then, affects are ways in which we feel the forces that constitute our bodies. They are states of the body as these become manifested and felt in conscious experience. Thus, the claim that affects are the organs of knowledge in no way disagrees with Jutta Georg's claim that "the body is for [Nietzsche] [...] the authentic organ of knowledge"¹⁰⁷ because affects are in Nietzsche's view a kind of conscious manifestation of the activity of the forces that constitute the body. To know by means of affects is to know by means of the body.

Further insight into the nature of affects can be gained by recognizing that, along with terms such as "passions" (*Leidenschaften*), "desires" (*Begierden*), "instincts" (*Instinkte*), "powers" (*Mächte*), "forces" (*Kräfte*), "impulses" (*Reize, Impulse*), "feelings" (*Gefühlen*), "drives" (*Triebe*), and "pathos" (*Pathos*),¹⁰⁸ Nietzsche uses the term "affects" (*Affekte*) to refer to the "sub-personal elements" that compose the self.¹⁰⁹ All of these terms are ways of referring to the states and processes that constitute the self at a basic

¹⁰⁶ Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 206.

¹⁰⁷ Jutta Georg, "Zum Verhältnis von Bewusstsein, Leib, und Wahrheit bei Nietzsche," *Nietzscheforschung* 18 (2011): 215.

¹⁰⁸ Christoph Cox, *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 126-7.

¹⁰⁹ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 213.

physiological level.¹¹⁰ Nietzsche conceives the self is an assemblage of affects, drives, instincts, passions, etc. and, in accordance with the theory of will to power, each sub-personal element has a will to dominate, a will to assert and expand its power by attaining a position of command over the other sub-personal elements. Each wants the others to act in conformity to its will so that its ends can be achieved and its power asserted. The sub-personal elements struggle and compete amongst themselves for domination and control of the individual. Ideally, an internal structure of command and obedience, a hierarchically ordered “social structure of many souls” (BG 19), coalesces by means of this struggle.

In Nietzsche’s view, knowing involves an engagement of the affects that constitute the self. In order to begin to know a thing it is necessary to approach it through a particular affect. Each affect is essentially a will that grasps the object in question with a particular aim or interest in view.¹¹¹ This aim or interest makes one’s view of the object partial. An affect is concerned with or values the object only insofar as the object can either serve or hinder its interest. It grasps only those aspects of the object that are within the purview of its concern. In this way the affect constitutes a perspective on the object. Its partial grasp of the object is determined by the interests, aims, or values through which it achieves or actualizes that grasp.

To grasp an object in this partial manner is only to begin to know it. To know the thing further one must adopt new perspectives on it by engaging new affects so that additional aspects of the thing ‘come into view’. As new value-perspectives come to bear

¹¹⁰ See section 255 of *The Will to Power* where Nietzsche characterizes all virtues as refined or developed passions and drives, which passions and drives are reducible to conditions of the body. [Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. W. Kaufmann, trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). Cited hereafter as WP with section number.] See also WP 458 where he characterizes philosophical concepts as expressions of instincts and physiological processes.

¹¹¹ Thus, “to eliminate the will altogether” would be “to disconnect the affects one and all”. (GM III: 12)

on the thing, one's concept of it is enlarged. Nietzsche imposes no limit on the extent to which one can enlarge one's concept of a thing in this manner. Objectivity, or knowledge of a thing, would seem to be something approximated by degrees. It can be more or less substantial, but it is not something that can be attained completely. The completeness of one's knowledge of a thing would seem to be limited only by the variety of affect-perspectives that one is capable of bringing to bear upon it.

Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology fits well with how he goes about philosophizing in his mature work. Of particular significance is the conformity of his later thought with the idea that not all perspectives have equal epistemic merit. As Leiter puts it, Nietzsche's "philosophical corpus contains numerous themes that presuppose the possibility of privileged modes of epistemic access to a world with determinate contents".¹¹² Nietzsche's criticisms of the claims and theories of others are frequently grounded in the idea of epistemic merit. He thinks there are many views that lack such merit and that his own claims are epistemically superior.

In his later works Nietzsche accords epistemic privilege to two classes of claims: the empiricist and the naturalistic. Nietzsche's empiricism is evident in many instances. In TI he praises the senses for being such "excellent tools for observation". (TI 'Reason' in Philosophy: 3) The sense of smell is singled out as "the most delicate instrument we have at our disposal". (TI 'Reason' in Philosophy: 3) In Nietzsche's view "[w]e have science these days precisely to the extent that we have decided to *accept* the testimony of the senses, – to the extent that we have learned to sharpen them, arm them, and think them through to the end. Everything else is deformity and pre-science". (TI 'Reason' in Philosophy: 3) Failure to take the evidence of the senses into account causes one to lose

¹¹² Leiter, "Perspectivism," 336.

grip on reality. For this reason logic is once again singled out as a false way of thinking: it “do[es] not have anything to do with reality”. (TI ‘Reason’ in Philosophy: 3) Any region of learning or inquiry that ignores or consistently misappropriates sense experience is not dealing with reality, “not even as a problem”. (TI ‘Reason’ in Philosophy: 3)

Evidence provided through sense experience grounds Nietzsche’s assertion in TI that the apparent world is the only real world. (TI ‘Reason’ in Philosophy: 6) Nietzsche asserts this view on “verificationist grounds”.¹¹³ The evidence of the senses demonstrates the existence of the world of appearance. The existence of another world is ruled out because it cannot be demonstrated empirically. Similarly, in “How The ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable” positivism, which advocates an empiricist standard of truth, is the first step towards dispensing with the “verification-transcendent” world.¹¹⁴ Many of Nietzsche’s attacks on Christianity in AC are also rooted in empiricism: its claims lack epistemic merit because they are contrary to what we know through the senses.¹¹⁵

Such empiricist critiques are typical of Nietzsche’s later work and show that for the mature Nietzsche “all genuine knowledge” is gained through sense experience.¹¹⁶ He is clearly committed to the view expressed in BG that “[o]ur senses are the first origin of all credibility, all good conscience, all apparent truth”. (134)

Nietzsche accords epistemic privilege not only to claims that are rooted in direct sense experience but to naturalistic claims more broadly conceived. As a naturalist, he criticizes moral and religious interpretations of phenomena that invoke what he considers

¹¹³ Leiter, “Perspectivism,” 337.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

to be imaginary supernatural causes.¹¹⁷ Proper explanations of observable phenomena should invoke only the causal power of natural things: “The primary causal/explanatory facts are natural facts” and this “holds across all domains of explananda (physical, moral, social, and so on)”.¹¹⁸ In accordance with this view Nietzsche offers naturalistic explanations for human phenomena, which explanations appeal to “certain natural facts and dispositions about human beings”.¹¹⁹ The causal determinants that Nietzsche invokes to explain such phenomena are for the most part psychological and physiological in nature.

For Nietzsche then, empiricist and naturalistic claims are epistemically privileged. In principle, if such claims are appropriately determined they provide accurate representations of the world. That Nietzsche accords epistemic privilege to empiricist and naturalistic claims makes sense within the context of his immanentist epistemology. Both kinds of claim can be called “immanentist” insofar as they are anchored in the world of appearances: they are about the immanent or apparent world that either is or can in principle become available to us in sense experience. Such claims do not point beyond nature to a transcendent world of things-in-themselves.

Although Nietzsche’s accordance of epistemic privilege to empiricist and naturalistic claims fits well with his perspectivist epistemology insofar as that epistemology wants to allow for an epistemic hierarchy of claims, there is the worry that perspectivist epistemology in fact undermines the notion of epistemic privilege. According to Nietzsche’s perspectivism, all knowledge necessarily presupposes some affect, and therefore some interest, on the part of the knower. The affective and interested

¹¹⁷ Leiter, “Perspectivism,” 338.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 337-8.

¹¹⁹ Leiter, *Nietzsche On Morality*, 8.

nature of knowledge makes it essentially perspectival and precludes it from ever being disinterested. The idea that all knowledge is generated on the basis of affect-perspectives threatens to undermine the possibility of epistemic privilege and hierarchy because it makes mediation and interpretation essential to knowledge. For Nietzsche, affects mediate how we relate to objects in the world, and affective mediation yields interpretations, not bare facts. The worry is that the interpretations generated through mediation may be mere “affective projections” which are not in any way constrained by reality.¹²⁰ This would preclude the possibility of ranking different interpretations in terms of their epistemic merit, i.e., in terms of how accurately they represent the world as it really is.

Leiter reconciles Nietzsche’s affirmation of epistemic hierarchy and merit, and thus his acknowledgement that there are true and false claims, with his claim that knowledge presupposes affect-perspectives by suggesting that we think of affects as a “necessary *condition* of our knowledge claims”.¹²¹ Conceiving affects as conditions of knowledge rules out the metaphysical realist idea that truth is “available from no perspective at all (i.e., independent of *all* human interests)”.¹²² Whereas the metaphysical realist would say that “truth transcends *all* human interests”, the perspectivist would say that “human interests are *conditions* of anything being true or knowable”.¹²³ Conceiving affects as conditions of knowledge also rules out the idealist notion that objects of knowledge and truth are entirely constituted by human interests.¹²⁴ For the perspectivist, objects are what they are independent of human interests. It is just that in order to know

¹²⁰ Leiter, “Perspectivism,” 347.

¹²¹ Ibid., 349.

¹²² Ibid., 350.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

something about these objects we must grasp them from the perspective of some affect, and therefore from the perspective of some interest.

This is really another way of explicating the significance of the metaphor of seeing in GM III: 12. As we saw earlier, perspective is a necessary condition of seeing. In order to see an object, it must be seen from some particular perspective. Seeing from a perspective is a condition of seeing something. Likewise, in order to know something, it must be known from the perspective of an affect. Knowing from a perspective is a condition of knowing something. The visual perspective we take on an object determines what aspect of it we see. Similarly, the affect-perspective through which we engage with an object “determines what piece of the object we pick out”.¹²⁵

Thus we have what Leiter calls the “perspectivist thesis (proper): Knowledge of objects in any particular case is always conditioned by particular interpretive interests that direct the knower to corresponding features of the object of knowledge”.¹²⁶ To say that there are no facts, only interpretations, is to say that there is no knowledge that is not conditioned by human affects and interests. We interpret objects by engaging with them from various perspectives. The product of this perspectival and interpretive engagement is the object of knowledge. According to Nietzsche’s perspectivist epistemology, the object of knowledge is not a metaphysical thing-in-itself: it does not “transcend all possible perspectives on it”.¹²⁷ In other words, the object of knowledge would not be left over after the removal of all possible perspectives on it. This is because the perspectives on it are necessary conditions of it being an object that is known, as opposed to it being a mere object in the world. In the absence of perspectives there is an independently existing

¹²⁵ Leiter, “Perspectivism,” 350.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 351.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 350.

object, but it is not then an object *of knowledge*. Knowledge only concerns, and can only concern, the object as it is grasped perspectivally. It does not concern the object as it exists in the absence of perspectives. When knowledge is conceived as being about a super-perspectival object, we then have a metaphysical realism of the type that Nietzsche advocated in TL, one which takes the thing-in-itself as the proper object of knowledge. Perspectivist epistemology denies this and conceives knowledge as being only about objects as they are or can be grasped from affect-perspectives. Human affects and interests are the conditions of the possibility of knowledge.¹²⁸

Clark arrives at a similar conclusion regarding the nature of Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology. Like Leiter, Clark understands Nietzsche's perspectivism to be a rejection of metaphysical realism. It rejects the idea that truth is a matter of correspondence with things-in-themselves and that truth is therefore independent of human interests. As in Leiter's account, truth and knowledge are essentially and fundamentally tied to human interests. For Clark, it is our *cognitive* interests, our "best standards of rational acceptability or theory selection", which allow us to evaluate the epistemic merits of conflicting claims.¹²⁹ Those claims which best meet these standards are accorded epistemic privilege. As noted in the previous chapter, cognitive interests are the "cognitively relevant properties we want from a theory or set of beliefs *other than truth*" and a list of such properties would include simplicity, coherence, explanatory power, predictive success, comprehensiveness, completeness, consistency, and plausibility.¹³⁰ Leiter also offers a list of epistemic criteria that he thinks are amenable to

¹²⁸ Leiter, "Perspectivism," 351.

¹²⁹ Clark, 85.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 48 & 86.

Nietzsche's perspectivism.¹³¹ His list includes two items that appear on Clark's list of criteria (explanatory potency and coherence) and one item (empirical adequacy) that does not. The addition of empirical adequacy to Clark's list of criteria would seem justified by Nietzsche's clear accord of epistemic merit to claims that are rooted in sense experience. By employing these criteria it would be possible to say what is true and what is false of an object of knowledge.

Thus we see that Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology allows for the possibility of truth and knowledge. Truth and knowledge are gained by adopting different affect-perspectives on objects in the world, which perspectives generate objects of knowledge. The more perspectives that one adopts, the better one knows the object of knowledge. Even though the object of knowledge is never known completely – since there are in principle an infinity of perspectives that might be adopted in relation to it – it is nonetheless possible to know it and we can engage in the practice of justifying the claims we make about it. Knowledge is not a matter of knowing a metaphysical thing-in-itself whose nature or essence transcends, or is independent of, all human interests. Rather, objects can only become objects of knowledge if we engage with them from the perspectives of our affects, interests, and needs.

At the same time, not all perspectives allow for genuine knowledge of objects. Some perspectives distort and lead to false conceptions of objects. We can determine the epistemic merit of claims that are made on the bases of various perspectives by evaluating those claims in accordance with our "best standards of rational acceptability or theory selection".¹³² Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology is therefore immanentist in

¹³¹ Leiter, "Perspectivism," 347.

¹³² Clark, 85.

that it does not conceive truth in terms of correspondence with metaphysical things-in-themselves that lie beyond the world of appearance. Rather, truth is gained through interested, affective, and therefore perspectival engagement with the world of appearance.

Interestingly, Nietzsche's denial of the existence of a world beyond appearance is not maintained by Leiter's and Clark's accounts of Nietzsche's perspectivism. According to their accounts, there is a world beyond appearance, a world of mind-independent objects, but these objects are not in themselves objects of knowledge. They become objects of knowledge only when we engage with them perspectivally. While objects of knowledge are not the same as the mind-independent objects in the world, the latter must be presupposed in order for there to be objects of knowledge. That Leiter's and Clark's accounts do not support Nietzsche's claim that the world of things-in-themselves does not exist only goes to show how exaggerated this claim is. Nietzsche's perspectivism does not require the non-existence of the metaphysical world. Rather, it merely claims that things-in-themselves are not as epistemically significant as metaphysical realists claim they are. According to the epistemology of TL the thing-in-itself is superlatively significant: failure to know it means we have no knowledge. In the context of Nietzsche's perspectivism, there is still a reality that is independent of how we perceive and conceive, but its significance for epistemology is not so central. Knowledge is not a matter of knowing things-in-themselves, but a matter of satisfying our cognitive interests as we perspectivally engage with a world of mind-independent objects. In the context of this latter view, our access to the world of independent objects is necessarily mediated by affects. Thus, we never grasp the naked object-in-itself. But this is not an impediment to

knowledge. Rather, it is a necessary condition of our knowing anything at all. Gaining knowledge is a matter of engaging perspectivally and affectively and therefore in a mediated fashion with objects and then evaluating what we grasp via these mediations in terms of our criteria of epistemic evaluation. In essence, the thing-in-itself remains present in Nietzsche's perspectivism, but knowledge is no longer a matter of grasping it in an unmediated way.

3.5 Knowledge, Truth, and Philosophy

Given that knowledge and truth are possible according to Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology, what then is their value? In the 1882 edition of GS Nietzsche generally reserves high praise for the man of knowledge who takes a skeptical attitude toward his beliefs and vigorously seeks out new perspectives. However, by the time he publishes BG in 1886 his great esteem for the man of knowledge is tempered and his evaluation of skepticism more nuanced. In BG 207 we find Nietzsche adopting a critical stance towards skepticism and the pursuit of knowledge by way of a discussion of the "objective spirit".¹³³ The objective spirit is "the *ideal* scholar in whom the scientific spirit blossoms fully and finally after thousands of complete or partial false starts". (BG 207) He is characterized by "intellectual selflessness", "depersonalization", and "disinterested cognition". (BG 207) He exhibits an "openness towards all things and experiences, [a] sunny, unrestrained hospitality with which he welcomes everything that comes his way". (BG 207) In this way he subjugates himself to the world and mirrors it. In giving himself

¹³³ The first sentence of BG 208 makes clear that the discussion of the objective spirit in BG 207 is at the same time a discussion of the skeptic: "When a philosopher today asserts that he is no skeptic (I hope this was clearly understood in the description of the objective spirit offered above?) no one is happy to hear it." (BG 208)

over to knowing the world, his own 'person' recedes. There is in him a lack of personality, a lack of "substance and content". (BG 207) What the objective spirit is is determined by the things outside of himself that he mirrors and knows. We might say that he is the absolute opposite of one who maintains a fanatical faith in a single perspective. The objective spirit has no faith at all. This, however, is worrisome insofar as he even has no faith in himself. He is entirely at the mercy of what comes to him from the outside as he adopts one perspective after another and thereby knows one thing after another. He is a passive observer of the world who "no longer knows how to affirm, no longer how to deny; he does not command, neither does he destroy". (BG 207) His skepticism, his objectivity, has brought him to the point where he does not assert himself. He is a pure voyeur, adrift in the world of appearances, a medium for ever-changing perspectives and nothing more.

BG 208 offers an etiology of the selfless, depersonalized, and disinterested character of the objective spirit. According to Nietzsche, the skepticism exhibited by the objective spirit is "the most spiritual expression" of physiological weakness and degeneration. (BG 208) It is a manifestation of decadence, of a confused and chaotic inner state. Nietzsche traces this state of decadence to a sudden mixture of races and classes. Such intermingling has the effect of upsetting the economy of instincts, drives, passions, and affects within individuals: "everything is restless, agitated, doubtful, experimental"; "body and soul lack balance, gravity, perpendicular sureness". (BG 208) What this amounts to is a weakness and "paralysis" of the will. (BG 208) Skepticism is the epistemological guise assumed by a weak will. It signals a lack of inner fortitude that

prevents the individual from having a firm belief in anything. It is a symptom of the inability to have a perspective that is truly one's own.

Such weakness of will often goes by the names of “‘objectivity’, ‘scientific method’, [and] ‘pure, will-free knowledge’”. (BG 208) As such it is made to seem a virtue. But Nietzsche does not look upon it so positively. Knowledge is indeed gained by means of skepticism, but the higher task of philosophy, the task of creating and asserting ideals and values, cannot be accomplished on the basis of a weak will. One who creates and asserts values must have a strong will and a self-assured personality, which means having a firm inner hierarchy of instincts, drives, passions, and affects. On the basis of such a will the creator of values “sets itself goals”. (BG 208) But he cannot do this by ‘welcoming everything that comes his way’ in the manner of the objective scholar. The philosopher must have a robust power of affirmation and denial, a capacity to say yes and no. This is because in order to affirm an ideal, to choose a goal and a direction, he must perform a selection. He must say yes to some things and no to others. The philosopher has this power to select and exclude. But the scholarly skeptic is not equipped for this. Due to his weakness of will, he is unable to achieve consistency in what he selects and excludes. As Nietzsche says, he exhibits a “dangerous unconcern about Yes and No”. (BG 207) Knowing the totality, embracing and reflecting as much of the world as possible, is not conducive to the accomplishment of the task of creating values. One who suffers from a vitiated will cannot match the enormity of that task. For him, knowing is enough. It is an end in itself. He does not make knowledge serve the end of creating values.

Nietzsche's devaluation of the man of knowledge in BG is thus a consequence of his elevation of the philosophical task of creating and asserting values. Whereas knowing had been something of an end-in-itself in GS, in BG knowing is conceived as rightfully serving the higher philosophical task. Thus the scholar is conceived as the servant of the philosopher, as one who labours beneath him. He is not an end in himself, but merely a means, a valuable tool at the disposal of the philosopher. He is, as Nietzsche puts it, "the most sublime sort of slave". (BG 207)

In GM, his next book after BG, Nietzsche somewhat modifies the idea of objectivity that he put forth in BG 207 & 208. Objectivity had there meant "disinterested cognition" and "pure, will-free knowledge". But in GM III: 12 Nietzsche disavows this notion of objectivity. There we see that the fundamentally affective nature of knowing makes it impossible for it to be "disinterested" and "will-free". The idea of "disinterested contemplation" demands an absurdity, he says. It demands what Schopenhauer demanded, that the knower be a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge". (GM III: 12)

However, the description of knowing offered in GM III: 12 need not amount to a complete rejection of what Nietzsche had claimed about the "objective spirit" in BG 207 and 208. According to the modified idea of objectivity outlined in GM III: 12, even the "objective spirit" must engage his affects in the pursuit of knowledge. This means that he cannot be truly disinterested and will-free in the way that he comes to know things. The perspectives he adopts while pursuing knowledge will be affect-perspectives through which various wills and interests assert their power. However, there is still room for Nietzsche to criticize the objective spirit because even if his knowing is affective and

will-full, it is not necessarily rooted in a strong, governing will. Remember that weakness of will is characterized by an inward chaos of instincts, drives, passions, and affects, not by an absence of instincts, drives, passions, and affects. This inward struggle is conducive to adopting new perspectives and is therefore conducive to attaining a greater knowledge of the world of appearance. But as we have seen, adopting new perspectives and attaining a greater degree of truth is not an end in itself for Nietzsche. Rather, these should serve the philosopher's task of creating and asserting values. In addition to knowledge, what is required for creating and asserting values is a strong will, i.e., a stable order of instincts, drives, passions, and affects within the philosopher. He must have the power of maintaining a fixed perspective that maintains command even as he temporarily adopts and experiments with other perspectives. Without this fixed perspective he would lose himself in the fluctuations of perspective that the search for knowledge requires.

The philosopher must therefore be a skeptic who maintains faith in himself. His skepticism must be a "harsher, more dangerous sort of skepticism [...] a daring, manly skepticism". (BG 209) Importantly, this kind of skepticism "withholds belief, but does not lose itself in the process; to the spirit it gives a dangerous freedom, but the heart it keeps sternly in line". (BG 209) The skeptical instinct for unbelief is the philosopher's "freedom of spirit" (WP 963): it is his freedom from absolute adherence to any particular conviction and his freedom to adopt a variety of perspectives. The philosopher is not a slave to any conviction, nor to the skeptical tendency to shift perspective. He remains always in command: moving through perspectives, discarding them as they cease to serve his task of creating and asserting values. His belief is conditional upon the service it provides to this overarching task.

To be a strong-willed person capable of employing skepticism without losing oneself in the profusion of perspectives that the skeptical attitude moves one through – this is what distinguishes the creator of values from the scholarly labourers. The latter come to know many things by adopting multiple affect-perspectives, but they do not order this knowledge and their affects from the perspective of a dominating will. It is a strong will that gives one “the capacity to have one’s pro and contra *in one’s power*, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the *difference* in perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge”. (GM III: 12) To have one’s pro and contra in one’s power is to have the power of yes and no, the power of affirmation and denial. Each affect has its yes and no, its pro and contra, because each grasps the world in a limited manner. Each constitutes a perspective that at once selects and excludes. To have these perspectives and their yeses and noes in one’s power is to maintain a centre that evaluates, then incorporates or rejects what is learned from different perspectives, always in consideration of what can best serve the value-creating and value-asserting task that dominates the activity of the philosopher.

Like the philosopher, the scholar’s knowing is affective and perspectival. Unlike the philosopher, the scholar loses himself in his knowing. His affects, with their pro and contra, are not in his power. They are disordered and unruly. They lead him from one perspective to the next, allow him to know one thing then another. All the while he is at the mercy of his affects. His will is not strong enough to make his knowledge serve a higher task. He has no higher purpose to which he can subordinate his knowledge. As such, the scholar’s skepticism is decadent. It expresses his lack of faith in himself and his unsuitability for the task of creating and asserting values.

Faith in oneself is a rare thing, says Nietzsche. Some have it by nature, while others must struggle to acquire it. For the latter, “[e]verything good, fine, or great they do is first of all an argument against the skeptic inside them. They have to convince or persuade *him*, and that almost requires genius. These are the great self-dissatisfied people”. (GS 284) The philosopher must be able to employ skepticism without allowing it to undermine his faith in himself, without allowing it to erode his conviction that his creative task is of the utmost worth, his feeling that it is necessary, that above all else *it* must be brought to fruition. Whether he is naturally endowed with this faith in himself or must work to attain and maintain it, he must have it. This is the only way he can maintain control over his affects and his knowledge so that these do not overwhelm him.

I suggest that in GM Nietzsche appropriates the past not as a weak-willed and scholarly knower, but as a strong-willed philosopher – as a creator, affirmer and disseminator of values. This is suggested in GS 345. The section is titled “*Morality as a problem*” and in it Nietzsche criticizes those who approach the problem of morality in an impersonal way. As in BG 207 & 208, Nietzsche takes aim at the weak-willed and impersonal knower, the one who does not approach problems on the basis of a firm perspective:

The lack of personality always takes its revenge: A weakened, thin, extinguished personality that denies itself is no longer fit for anything good – least of all for philosophy. “Selflessness” has no value either in heaven or on earth. All great problems demand *great love*, and of that only strong, round, secure spirits who have a firm grip on themselves are capable. It makes the most telling difference whether a thinker has a personal relationship to his problems and finds in them his destiny, his distress, and his greatest happiness, or an “impersonal” one, meaning that he can do no better than to touch them and grasp them with the antennae of cold, curious thought. In the latter case nothing will come of it; that much one can promise in advance. (GS 345)

A truly philosophical approach to the problem of morality requires that one have a strong personality and a strong will as a precondition for having a creative and value-affirming goal beyond the mere knowing of morality, the mere knowing of what it is and has been. This is how Nietzsche approaches the problem of morality in GM. He uses knowledge of morality in order to assert values that take morality beyond what it is and has been ever since the slave manner of valuation became predominant in Europe. He appropriates the history of European morality in such a way that it serves his goal of overcoming slave morality while at the same time promoting the adoption of values that are conducive to the flourishing of an elite and higher kind of human being.

3.6 The Role of Non-Truth

I have made the case that Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology allows for the possibility of knowledge and truth, and have shown that for Nietzsche the pursuit of knowledge and truth is a task that is subordinate to the philosophical task of creating and asserting values. I now want to lay the groundwork for the claim that, in addition to knowledge and truth, deception and non-truth also play an important role in how Nietzsche appropriates the past in GM.

As we have seen through Leiter's account of Nietzsche's perspectivism, it is in principle the case that some perspectives are not conducive to knowing an object. Just as some visual perspectives distort one's optical grasp of an object, some affect-perspectives distort one's epistemic grasp of an object. For Nietzsche, however, falsehoods and deceptions are not merely possible. Error is not just an unfortunate aberration that occurs every so often in the course of our perspectival engagement with the world. Rather,

Nietzsche thinks there is a definite tendency in human beings to concoct and contrive falsehoods and deceptions. This tendency is not exceptional, but is an essential part of the human condition.

This aspect of Nietzsche's thought is prominent not only in the 1882 edition of GS, but also in his later thought. For example, Nietzsche discusses the human psyche's tendency to distort reality in BG. He speaks there of the "will to appearance", which he also calls "the fundamental will of the spirit". (BG 229 & 230)¹³⁴ His description of the will to appearance makes clear that it is an expression of will to power, a way in which a will can gain dominance and enhance its control over other forces. For simplicity of presentation I will divide the will to appearance into two aspects: the will to appropriation and the will to exclusion.

Will to appropriation is one way in which a will can attain mastery over things that are foreign to it so as to increase its strength and perfect its expression of itself. A will achieves the appropriation of the foreign by fitting "new things into old orders". (BG 230)¹³⁵ Spirit "incorporate[s] new 'experiences'" by "mak[ing] the new resemble the old, [by] simplify[ing] multiplicity, [by] overlook[ing] or reject[ing] whatever is completely contradictory; the spirit likewise arbitrarily underlines, emphasizes, or distorts certain qualities and contours in everything that is foreign to it or of the 'outer world'". (BG 230) By distorting reality in these ways, spirit attains mastery "in itself and around itself". (BG 230) Like all that lives it feels growth, achieves growth, and feels its power increasing by means of its will to appropriation.

¹³⁴ The phrase could also be translated as "the fundamental will of the mind" (*der Grundwillen des Geistes*).

¹³⁵ Cf. BG 192.

Spirit's will to exclusion also serves its will to power. A will cannot appropriate and master all that is foreign to it. Therefore the satisfaction of its will to power requires that it limit its intake. It must limit the scope and horizon of what it is at all willing to consider. Consequently, a healthy will should remain in the dark, remain ignorant, about certain matters. It should refuse the proximity of certain things. Toward this end it will draw "arbitrary conclusions" and thereby close itself off to a great deal of "potential knowledge". (BG 230)

Both spirit's capacity for appropriation and its capacity for exclusion are forms of its will to appearance. In both cases, spirit is not concerned to know the actual nature of things. Rather it is concerned only with how things either can or cannot be made to serve its will to increase and express its strength. To this end, spirit either moulds and distorts something in order to make use of it, or excludes it from consideration entirely. Either way, whether through appropriation or exclusion, the fundamental will of the spirit is not concerned with knowledge, with how things actually are. It is concerned with how things can be made to appear for its own benefit. As such, spirit is not averse to deceiving itself and others. It is not uncomfortable with uncertainty, ambivalence, and arbitrariness. It is fundamentally driven to create and transfigure appearances. This activity of transfiguration is an expression of its power and a means to the greater enhancement of its power.¹³⁶

The propensity of spirit to distort and falsify reality is closely associated in Nietzsche's philosophy with mankind's artistic powers. In TI Nietzsche characterizes art as essentially involving the distortion and at least partial falsification of reality. Art, he says, is a matter of selection and amplification of certain features of the real: it

¹³⁶ In the 1887 Preface to GS Nietzsche calls philosophy an "art of transfiguration".

“*strengthens or weakens* certain value judgements” by praising, dignifying, selecting, and having preferences. (TI Skirmishes: 24) For Nietzsche, this is the essence of art, the “presupposition” of the activity of the artist. (TI Skirmishes: 24)

That art is so intimately tied up with values is the reason why it cannot be utterly purposeless and ‘for its own sake’. Even if the moralizing purpose of art is dispensed with, that is, even if it doesn’t serve to express and promote specifically Christian moral values, it still expresses and promotes some other value perspective. For example, the tragic artist, in his work, selects and affirms the “highly desirable” state of “*fearlessness* in the face of the fearful and questionable”. (TI Skirmishes: 24) He glorifies the “*victorious* state” of “courage and freedom of affect in the face of a powerful enemy, in the face of a sublime hardship, in the face of a horrible problem”. (TI Skirmishes: 24) The tragedian praises the existence of one “who is used to suffering, [of] anyone who goes looking for suffering”. (TI Skirmishes: 24) In this way, his art serves the purpose of asserting values, even if those values are not the typically ‘moral’ values.

Related to the claim that art is essentially a matter of affirming values through praising, selecting, dignifying, and preferring is the claim that life “is the meaning of art”. (TI Skirmishes: 24) We can make the connection between these two claims if we take note of what Nietzsche says in BG 9. He there asks us to “[i]magine a creature constituted like nature, prodigal beyond measure, neutral beyond measure, with no purpose or conscience, with no compassion or fairness, fertile and desolate and uncertain all at once; imagine Indifference itself as a power”. (BG 9) Here Nietzsche paints a picture of nature as something that has no inherent and governing interest, perspective, or desire. He contrasts this image of nature with “life”. Life, he says, cannot be indifferent

the way nature is. “To live – isn’t that precisely the desire to be other than this nature? Doesn’t life mean weighing, preferring, being unjust, having limits, wanting to be Different?” (BG 9) In Nietzsche’s view we cannot help but live according to life as he has characterized it. In other words, we cannot help but live according to a perspective that seeks to assert itself and expand its power. Because we live we must approach nature with some perspectival interest and desire.

Nietzsche thinks that art does what all life does: it affirms and asserts particular values from particular perspectives. Works of art give a certain shape and meaning to reality. Through his work the artist isolates and emphasizes certain aspects of the real so as to empower himself and disseminate his influence. “Art is the great stimulus to life” (TI Skirmishes: 24) because through art a form of life sees its own values expressed and reflected. The power of a work of art originates with the artist who creates it, and the creator is in turn empowered by the more refined and perfect expression of his values that is achieved in the work of art. Art is an intensification of what all life does. It is a particularly powerful form of the value-expressing and value-generating activity that is life itself.

The selective and distorting activity that characterizes life, and which is intensified in art, is further elaborated in Nietzsche’s discussion of intoxication and idealization in TI. Intoxication of some sort, he tells us, is a “physiological precondition” of “art or any sort of aesthetic action or vision”. (TI Skirmishes: 8) Intoxication brings about “the feeling of fullness and increasing strength”. (TI Skirmishes: 8) This feeling leads us to idealize. That is, imbued with a feeling of power we “release ourselves onto things, we *force* them to accept us, we violate them”. (TI Skirmishes: 8) In doing so we

highlight, exaggerate, and emphasize certain features in things so that other features are obscured, overshadowed, and deemphasized. We “*force out* the main features so that everything else disappears in the process”. (TI Skirmishes: 8) Through this process of idealization, art perfects. That is, it constructs a version of reality, one that is amended in accordance with the value-perspective of the life that creates the art. Art is a product of “[t]his *need* to make perfect”. (TI Skirmishes: 9) Overflowing with strength and power, the intoxicated individual imbues all things with his strength and power. He transforms them “until they reflect his own power, – until they are the reflexes of his perfection”. (TI Skirmishes: 9)

That reality must be transformed in order for a work of art to be accomplished is due to the fact that nature as it is does not give expression to any particular perspective or set of values. As Nietzsche implies in BG 9, nature in itself has no inherent interest or perspective. It is too many things at once to be of any direct and immediate service to a form of life that above all seeks to express and assert its values. As it is, nature is not a good model for art. That is why a true artist does not reflect in his works what nature is in all of its particularities. Rather, he transforms nature through his work, using it as raw material to give expression to his own unique form of life. (TI Skirmishes: 7) A painter, a real “born painter”, “never works ‘from nature’”. (TI Skirmishes: 7) He does not copy nature as it is. Rather, without any conscious intention, “his instinct, his *camera obscura*, [...] sift[s] through and express[es] the ‘matter at hand’, ‘nature’, the object of the ‘experience’”. (TI Skirmishes: 7) The “whole and complete” artist, the artist who knows himself (TI Skirmishes: 7), whose instincts are firm, well-ordered, and who creates on the basis of his inner strength and conviction of spirit will transform nature in his work rather

than attempt to capture and represent it as it is. The artist who merely reflects nature makes evident his “subjugation, weakness, [and] fatalism”. (TI Skirmishes: 7) Such a one lacks the inner strength that comes with having a well-structured hierarchy of instincts, drives, passions, and affects. They are inwardly chaotic and decadent, and so lack the ability to assert and create values. They are at the mercy of what impinges upon them and so can do no more than reflect what they experience and know of reality.

Nietzsche thinks that the psychologist should undertake his work in much the same way that the true artist undertakes his. The psychologist’s observing and knowing should be done on the basis of his instincts. He should allow his instincts to give form to what he perceives so that what he produces will not be just a hodgepodge of facts about human beings. “A born psychologist instinctively guards against seeing for its own sake” (TI Skirmishes: 7), for when seeing, observing, and knowing is an end in itself, what is produced is a thing without artistic form and beauty, a work that does not give clear and perfect expression to the values and perspective of the psychologist. “Reality gets ambushed, as it were, and every night you take home a handful of curiosities...And just look at what happens in the end – a collection of blots, a mosaic at best, at any rate something patched together and fidgety, a screaming clash of colours”. (TI Skirmishes: 7) Here (as elsewhere) Nietzsche criticizes the idea of knowing as an end in itself and as highest value. Knowing ought to be subordinate and subservient to the artistic, creative, and active will of the knower, a will that asserts itself on the basis of a well-ordered and firm inner structure of psychic forces. Like the work of the artist, the work of the psychologist should serve the values that characterize his form of life.

As we have seen in the discussion of Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology, knowledge of any matter is gained through an accumulation of perspectival grasps on that matter. Taken singly, the perspectival grasps that lead to knowledge are in some ways similar to the kind of activity that goes into the creation of art. These grasps will by necessity select certain features of the object in question rather than grasp it fully and completely. However, artistic creation differs from the knowledge-oriented kind of perspectival engagement with the world with respect to attitude and intensity. In creating art one injects more of oneself into the objects at hand. One is in an exceptional state of mind, a state of intoxication, which as we have seen leads to a unique kind of engagement with objects. They are not merely grasped, but perfected in light of the values that the artist instinctively expresses, asserts, and affirms. The non-artistic way of engaging with the world is also selective and affect-driven, but it lacks the ardency and forcefulness that characterize artistic creation. The kind of perspectival engagement with the world that leads to knowledge ideally does not distort and transform the object of knowledge. Ideally it grasps some real aspects of the object and therefore truly knows it to some degree. However, the properly artistic perspectival engagement with the world unconsciously and will-fully distorts and transforms the objects it grasps so that the values of the artist can be more fully and perfectly expressed. In art, "the *lie* hallows itself, [...] the *will to deception* has good conscience on its side". (GM III: 25) The intellectual conscience that characterizes the will to knowledge could not rest and be satisfied with the errors and distortions produced by artistic creation.

For Nietzsche, there is great value in the human capacity and tendency to transform and distort reality, in the human propensity for lies and deceptions which is so

pervasive in perception and cognition and which is given free rein in artistic creation. In general, distortions and falsehoods can be valuable insofar as they in some way promote the flourishing and cultivation of some form of life. As we saw earlier in this chapter, Nietzsche makes such claims in GS and we find him making them again in BG. For example, he claims that there are judgements, such as the synthetic a priori judgements, that are false and yet “indispensable” because they help to preserve and cultivate the species. (BG 4)¹³⁷ Likewise, “man could not live without accepting logical fictions, without measuring reality by the purely invented world of the unconditional, self-referential, without a continual falsification of the world by means of the number”. (BG 4)

In BG 11 Nietzsche addresses in greater detail the issue of synthetic a priori judgements. He claims that they are false, or at least that we have no proper justification for them and therefore “no right” to think that they are necessarily and universally true. (BG 11) In addition he poses the question: “Why is the belief in [synthetic a priori] judgements *necessary*?” (BG 11) His answer: “for the purpose of preserving creatures of our kind”. (BG 11) Belief in the truth of these judgements “happens to be necessary as one of the foreground beliefs and appearances that constitute the perspective-optics of life”. (BG 11) In offering this explanation for our belief in the truth of synthetic a priori judgements Nietzsche is invoking his theory of will to power. Being the sort of creatures that we are, it is in our interest to believe that synthetic a priori judgements are universally and necessarily true, for this allows us as a species to maintain ourselves in

¹³⁷ Kant defines synthetic a priori judgements as judgments in which the predicate-concept is not analytically included within the subject-concept, yet which are, like analytic judgements, necessary and universal (50-1). The propositions of mathematics, as well as some basic principles of pure physics, are examples of such judgements.

existence, and this self-maintenance is a necessary condition for the continued expression and further enhancement of our power. The benefit that we derive from such belief is not a sign that these judgements are true. It is simply that from *our perspective* it is helpful to interpret the world by means of synthetic a priori judgements. The world as it is in isolation from our species-perspective need not conform to what our synthetic a priori judgements claim about it.

For Nietzsche, what is of utmost concern when deciding whether or not to object to a judgement is not its truth or falsity, but “to what extent the judgement furthers life, preserves it, preserves the species, perhaps even cultivates the species”. (BG 4) False judgements, he says, are “the most indispensable” type of judgement when it is a matter of furthering the interests of “life” and “the species”. (BG 4) Life for us would be impossible without false judgements. Later, in BG 23, Nietzsche will suggest that theorizing beyond morality leads one closer to the truth. However, in BG 4 he says that theorizing beyond good and evil involves “[a]dmitting untruth as a condition of life”. Paradoxically, this may be one of the truths that are revealed when thought moves beyond morality.¹³⁸

What is most significant about BG 4 is that Nietzsche has presented the falsity of judgements in a purely positive light. Positive theorizing of the sort that employs synthetic a priori judgements and other fictions may misrepresent the real, but such theorizing is not to be rejected for that reason. Nietzsche makes the preservation and cultivation of life of great importance when it comes to accepting or rejecting a judgement or a theory. What ought to be accepted and valued is that which serves the will

¹³⁸ This paradox is typical of Nietzsche’s ambivalent attitude toward truth. His claims to truth often have the unsettling effect of undermining the value of truth.

to power of the form of life in question. If a particular non-truth serves the interests of a form of life, then that form of life should accept this non-truth as an aid in its efforts to preserve and augment its power.

The value of non-truth for life leads Nietzsche to call into question the supposed unconditional value of truth and the unconditional will to truth. In GS 344, as in BG, Nietzsche affirms the positive value of non-truth for life. Experience attests to this positive value. It shows that both “truth and untruth” are useful, that there is great utility in both avoiding deception and in allowing oneself to be deceived. (GS 344) Life evidently benefits from “semblance, meaning error, deception, simulation, delusion, self-delusion”. (GS 344) “[T]he great sweep of life has actually always shown itself to be on the side of the most unscrupulous *polytropoi*” (GS 344), by which Nietzsche means one who is “crafty”, “wily”, and skilled in the arts of deception, as was Odysseus. (GS 344, footnote 9) Deception and untruth are essential to and inextricable from life, nature, and history. However, those who exhibit an unconditional will to truth, who affirm truth as an unassailable value, in effect negate the value of untruth and deception. For if truth has unconditional value, then it must be in every instance more valuable than deception and untruth. Thus, to assign unconditional value to truth is to deny what is actually valuable and essential to life.

Because of its incongruence with what is actually the case in the world, Nietzsche concludes that the unconditional will to truth must be grounded in and derive its impetus from the moral prohibition against deception, from the moral command “I will not deceive, not even myself”. (GS 344) As such, the unconditional will to truth is grounded not in what is the case, but in an idea of what ought to be the case, an idea that expresses

the values of a certain form of life. Since life actually thrives on deception, such a prohibition runs counter to and devalues life, nature, and history as we know them. Consequently, those who affirm morality by affirming an unconditional will to truth “*affirm another world* than the world of life, nature, and history”. (GS 344) Nietzsche characterizes this affirmation of another world as an affirmation of a metaphysical world, a world beyond and other than the world as it appears. The unconditional will to truth is grounded in a “*metaphysical faith*” (GS 344) in this other world.

The unconditional affirmation of a metaphysical world entails for Nietzsche the simultaneous negation of the world as we experience it. As Nietzsche says, “insofar as they affirm this “other world” – look, must they not by the same token negate its counterpart, this world, *our* world?” (GS 344) The answer for Nietzsche is a resounding “yes”: they must indeed negate this world as a consequence of the fact that this world does not conform to the ideal of truthfulness that the unconditional will to truth posits. For this reason, the will not to deceive is “a principle that is hostile to life and destructive. – “Will to truth” – that might be a concealed will to death”. (GS 344) For Nietzsche, deception and untruth are so useful to life, so conducive to its flourishing, that to devalue these things is tantamount to attacking, weakening, even killing life. For this reason, the unconditional will to truth must be called into question and the will to deception must be affirmed (although not unconditionally). The life of this world, life as it appears to us, is the only life there is. Nietzsche’s aim is to promote the intensification of this life, to foster good will towards the will to power that all life is. Life as will to power seeks to express and expand its strength through an assertion of its values. To affirm life as will to power would be to affirm the value of deception and nontruth because these are among

the best instruments that any form of life, any will to power, has at its disposal. For this reason, Nietzsche denies the unconditional value of truth and the unconditional will to truth.

As we saw earlier in the discussion of art, the distortions and transformations of reality that go into the production of works of art serve to express and augment the feeling of power of the artist and all who share the values of the artist. Through his works, the artist promotes the values that emanate from, sustain, and empower his own form of life. In the chapters that follow I want to make the case that in GM Nietzsche appropriates the past as an artist-psychologist-historian. That is, his predominantly psychological account of the origin and development of European morality involves in many respects an artistic transformation, distortion, and idealization of the past as it was available to him in the form of anthropological and textual evidence. As we have seen, the truth about the past is in principle available to Nietzsche. The past can be known perspectivally and the truthfulness of his claims concerning it can be evaluated in terms of their consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, explanatory breadth, empirical adequacy, predictive success, plausibility, and simplicity. However, an *unconditional* will to truth does not govern Nietzsche's appropriation of the past in GM. I will make the argument that alongside a will to truth there is also an artistic will to deception at work in GM. The distortions and transformations of the past that this artistic will produces serve to express and promote values that are characteristic of the form of life that Nietzsche seeks to promote by means of his appropriation of the past in GM. This is a form of life whose flourishing and power is not aided, but is hindered, by the slave morality that became hegemonic with the rise of Christianity in Europe. Thus, the

values that Nietzsche expresses in GM are non-Christian: he asserts the values of nobility and thereby affirms a more positive valuation of the natural or animal self that Christian morality has made an object of shame and guilt. By affirming these values Nietzsche seeks to promote the flourishing of a form of life that is healthier than the form of life that Christian morality favours. Qua artist, he selects, praises, dignifies, and glorifies a form of life that does not do battle with its own essential nature, but unabashedly embraces its will to power and seeks to augment its power in good conscience.

Chapter 4 – Truth and Non-Truth in the Second Treatise of the *Genealogy*

As we saw in Chapter 3, Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology allows that we can have truth and knowledge by means of a perspectival and affective engagement with the world. According to this epistemology, such engagement is a necessary condition of having any knowledge whatsoever. We also saw that Nietzsche's own philosophical practice accords epistemic privilege to empiricist and naturalistic claims. Such claims are essentially rooted in the world of appearance. Leiter's and Clark's interpretations of Nietzsche's perspectivism make plausible the idea that the epistemic merit of such claims can be evaluated in terms of how well they meet certain cognitive criteria, e.g., consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, explanatory power, empirical adequacy, plausibility, and simplicity. These are at least some of the "cognitively relevant properties we want from a theory or set of beliefs *other than truth*"¹³⁹, properties which allow us to adjudicate the epistemic merits of conflicting claims.

In this chapter I will undertake an analysis of the second treatise of GM in order to show how it both is and is not concerned with telling the truth about the past. Since Nietzsche can have no direct empirical access to the past, his concern with telling the truth about the history of European morality is evident in the naturalistic character of the narratives he constructs. The plausibility of the second treatise's narrative is in large part due to its naturalistic approach to specifying the causal determinants that led to the emergence of sovereign individuals and human beings of bad conscience. Its plausibility is also enhanced by the simplicity of the basic principles it employs. However, while the naturalistic narrative of GM II does a good job of meeting the simplicity criterion of

¹³⁹ Clark, 48.

truth, it falls short of meeting some of the other criteria of truth that Leiter and Clark specify. We will see that in important ways the narrative of GM II lacks coherence, consistency, completeness, and explanatory power. Ultimately, these shortfalls significantly reduce the plausibility of the narrative.

However, the failure of the narrative of GM II to meet certain criteria of truth need not be construed in a purely negative fashion. I will argue that falling short of these criteria is in certain respects indicative of Nietzsche's tendency to appropriate the past in an artistic and unhistorical manner, one which serves his aims of promoting a revaluation of Christian morality and asserting alternative values that foster a healthier relationship to mankind's essential will to power.

4.1 Nietzsche as Naturalist

Before presenting my reconstruction and analysis of the narrative of GM II, I will briefly address the manner in which Nietzsche's approach to philosophy from HA onward is naturalistic.

Nietzsche's naturalism emerged in conjunction with his rejection of the Schopenhauerian paradigm. By the time he wrote GM he had already long surpassed the Schopenhauerian metaphysics that had influenced his ideas on history and historiography in HL. In HA, his next book after he abandoned his project of writing thirteen *Untimely Meditations*, his rejection of Schopenhauer's metaphysics is made explicit. In that book, Nietzsche no longer makes any appeal to a perspective beyond time and history, as he had done with the concept of the suprahistorical in HL. He militates against any philosophizing that attempts to implicate such a perspective and argues for the need to

radically historicize philosophy. “Lack of historical sense is the family failing of all philosophers,” he claims. (HA 2) They have failed to understand that all things, including human beings, are in a state of constant flux and becoming. To take any particular manifestation of human being, to take any particular phenomenon at all, as something eternally fixed is to begin with a false presupposition. To properly understand anything one must understand its historical nature, how it has changed through time and come to be what it is. Philosophers lack this historical sense and so misconceive many things. If they were to gain an historical sense they would realize that “there are *no eternal facts*, just as there are no absolute truths”. (HA 2) Nietzsche advocates “*historical philosophizing*, and with it the virtue of modesty” (HA 2). He even goes so far as to claim that “[t]he whole of philosophy is here forfeit to history”.¹⁴⁰

In HL Nietzsche had argued that historians, scholars, and his culture at large suffered from an excess of historical sense. He conceived it as excessive because it stifled creativity. In HA Nietzsche’s concern has shifted: he is now more concerned with truth than he is with creativity. A lack of historical sense has led philosophers into error. The ideal of truth will be better served if they acquire and use the historical sense.

In HA 37 Nietzsche again argues that philosophical inquiry should become a kind of historical inquiry, this time with specific reference to investigations of morality. He criticizes “the older philosophy” for failing to inquire into “the origin and history of the moral sensations”. (HA 37) As a consequence of this failing, they have misunderstood morality. The fruit of such an historical approach to investigations of morality is evidenced, claims Nietzsche, in the work of Paul Rée, whose historical analyses led him

¹⁴⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, in *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), section 10. Cited hereafter cited as AO with section number.

to conclude that “[m]oral man [...] stands no closer to the intelligible (metaphysical) world than does physical man”. (HA 37)¹⁴¹ Here we see that the historicizing of philosophical and moral inquiry leads to the naturalization of man. The “moral” characteristics of human beings are not to be understood by way of metaphysics – i.e., by way of a world beyond the natural world we experience, as Schopenhauer had attempted – but by way of a thoroughly naturalistic understanding of man and the moral phenomena associated with him. Man and morality are to be explained solely with reference to nature and the causes residing within it. Historical investigations play a vital role in achieving a naturalistic understanding of man: “knowledge of the entire historical past [...] demolish[es] the ancient walls between nature and spirit, man and animal, morality and the physical world”. (AO 185)

The contrast between the metaphysician and the historian is one of Nietzsche’s favourite themes at this period in his thinking. The metaphysician posits things eternal and unchanging, such as the “immortal soul” and other elements of a “backworld”. (AO 17) The historian on the other hand exults in the feeling of change. He inhabits the “Kingdom of heaven of change” and feels himself continually transformed. (AO 17) He does not conceive himself to have an immortal soul, but “many mortal souls”, the deaths and births of which constitute his perpetual becoming. (AO 17) Self-knowledge requires knowledge of history because the past lives on within us insofar as we are each constituted of and by things past. To fully know oneself would be to know all things past. Perfect self-knowledge is this universal knowledge of history. (AO 223)

¹⁴¹ Although in GM Nietzsche will criticize and disagree with Rée’s approach to explaining the origin of morality, he will nonetheless continue to agree with this quote from Rée.

This naturalist, non-metaphysical, and historicist way of thinking remains intact in GM. Nietzsche holds true to the assertion that a proper philosophical understanding of morality requires an understanding of its historical development, in particular an understanding of the drives, instincts, and passions that have constituted it over time. That morality as we know it in fact came into being, that it is not an ahistorical and a priori given of human nature, is one of Nietzsche's central claims in GM. He asserts this claim against the "English psychologists", whom he accuses of "lack[ing] the *historical spirit*" and consequently conceiving morality ahistorically. (GM I: 2)¹⁴² That is, they assume that "the value of the unegoistic, of the instincts of compassion, self-denial, [and] self-sacrifice" (GM Pref: 5) which characterize the dominant morality of their time have always and everywhere been supremely valued by human beings. They have "taken the *value* of these "values" as given, as a fact, as beyond all calling-into-question". (GM Pref: 6) Nietzsche thinks the English psychologists are in error on this count and that what is required for a true understanding of the dominant morality of his time is an understanding of the historical development of this morality. What Nietzsche claims to seek is the "real *history of morality*", "the morality which has really existed, really been lived", "that which can be documented, which can really be ascertained, [...] the very long, difficult-to-decipher hieroglyphic writing of the human moral past". (GM Pref: 7) This historical approach to the phenomenon of morality as we know it is in Nietzsche's view the "correct method" (GM Pref: 7) when it is a question of attaining a true understanding of morality.

¹⁴² Rée is included among the "English psychologists" on account of his thoroughly "English" way of approaching the problem of morality. See Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 78-80.

I will now proceed to reconstruct and analyze the narrative of GM II up as far as the emergence of bad conscience in human beings as a result of the creation of states by noble conquerors. The reconstruction begins with an explication of Nietzsche's account of the emergence of sovereign individuality and then moves on to an explication of his account of the emergence of bad conscience. This reconstruction provides the basis for my critical analysis of the narrative, wherein I show that while the narrative has an air of plausibility it nonetheless exhibits significant epistemic shortcomings. I conclude by demonstrating how the epistemic shortcomings of the narrative are indicative of Nietzsche's tendency to appropriate the past in an artistic and unhistorical manner.

4.2 Morality of Custom and the Sovereign Individual

One of the sub-narratives of the larger overarching narrative of GM II concerns the coming into existence of what Nietzsche calls "conscience" and the "sovereign individual". By all indications this sub-narrative is temporally prior to all other narratives in GM, including those concerned with the origin of bad conscience and the slave revaluation of noble values. While the principle portion of this sub-narrative is contained in sections 1-3 of the second treatise, clues that significantly enrich the narrative can be found in later sections of the treatise, as well as in various sections of *Daybreak* (DB), HA, and GS that concern morality of custom and sovereign individuality.¹⁴³ I will therefore draw upon these sources in order to make more complete the story of the emergence of conscience and the sovereign individual, a story which can so easily vex

¹⁴³ Nietzsche actually says very little about morality of custom in GM. Instead, he refers his readers to DB, his previous book on morality, particularly to sections 9, 14, and 16, and to HA 96, 99, and volume II 89, for illumination on this topic. Although Nietzsche's views in GM are in important respects different from his views in HA and DB, there is also considerable similarity and overlap. Since he refers his readers to his earlier writings, there is good reason to think that he stands by what he has to say about morality of custom in those earlier works.

the reader on account of the compressed nature of its content and the non-linear, fragmented, and even backwards nature of its form.

I have yet to read a commentary on GM II that gives due consideration to how the story of the emergence of conscience and the sovereign individual relates to the rest of the treatise. Mathias Risse provides an exemplary discussion of how the early, non-Christian form of bad conscience developed into the later, Christian form of bad conscience that he calls “bad conscience as a feeling of guilt”.¹⁴⁴ However, he does not discuss the difference between conscience and bad conscience, or the significance of the sovereign individual, although he acknowledges the importance of exploring these issues. Aaron Ridley addresses the difference between conscience and bad conscience by way of an awkwardly worded distinction between “bad conscience” and “*bad* bad conscience”.¹⁴⁵ However, he does not present the development of conscience (or in his terms “bad conscience”) as a development that occurs through the workings of a distinct kind of morality called “morality of custom” that precedes the creation of states by noble conquerors. My account will go some way toward remedying this oversight. Other commentators address these issues, but in ways that are cursory and superficial. By explicating the narrative of how conscience and the sovereign individual came into existence I hope to fill this lacuna in the secondary literature.

A central feature of the story of how human beings came to be sovereign individuals possessing conscience is a form of morality that Nietzsche calls “morality of

¹⁴⁴ Mathias Risse, “The Second Treatise in *On the Genealogy of Morality*: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 9, no. 1 (2001).

¹⁴⁵ Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience: Six Character Studies from the Genealogy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

custom” (*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*).¹⁴⁶ According to Nietzsche, the sovereign individual is the “ripest fruit” of “society and its morality of custom”. (GM II: 2) Thus, in order to understand the nature and origin of the sovereign individual, it is necessary to understand what Nietzsche means by morality of custom and what effect he thinks it has had on human beings.

According to Nietzsche, morality of custom has played a decisive role in the development of the human species by virtue of the fact that it is the kind of morality that has been in effect for the vast majority of mankind’s existence and in the vast majority of human communities that have so far been established. Morality of custom has been “the true work of man on himself for the longest part of the duration of the human race, his entire *prehistoric* work”. (GM II: 2) It held sway in “all the communities of mankind [for] many millennia before the beginnings of our calendar and also on the whole during the course of it up to the present day (we ourselves dwell in the little world of the exceptions and, so to speak, in the evil zone)”.¹⁴⁷ (DB 14) Nietzsche thus contrasts “all the long path-seeking and foundation-laying millennia” during which morality of custom was everywhere in force with “‘world history’ – that ludicrously tiny portion of human existence [...] which is at bottom much ado about the latest news”. (DB 18) It is the former, the “tremendous eras of ‘morality of custom’ which precede ‘world history’ [that are] the *actual and decisive eras of history which determined the character of mankind*”. (DB 18)

¹⁴⁶ See David S. Thatcher’s article “Nietzsche, Bagehot and The Morality of Custom” [*Victorian Newsletter* 62 (Fall 1982)] for a discussion of Nietzsche’s unacknowledged debt to Walter Bagehot with respect to the concept of morality of custom.

¹⁴⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), section 14. Cited hereafter as DB with section number.

In his early naturalistic writings Nietzsche locates the origin of all moralities of custom in judgements of utility. More specifically, he thinks they originate in judgements concerning what is useful to a community in the sense of that which promotes its preservation, whether these judgements are erroneous or well-founded. Custom “is above all directed at the preservation of a *community*, a people” (HA 96); it “represents the experiences of men of earlier times as to what they supposed useful and harmful”. (DB 19)

However, the origin of moralities of custom in utility is ultimately forgotten by those who live according to such moralities, such that these moralities are then taken to be in force unconditionally. The true “*sense for custom*” is thus not an awareness of the utility of judgements concerning use or harm that give rise to customs; rather, it is a “feeling” regarding “the age, the sanctity, the indiscussability of the custom”. (DB 19) The authority of morality of custom goes so far that where a morality of custom holds sway, an action is moral only if it is performed expressly because custom demands it. If an action is performed for any other reason or on the basis of any other motive, such as its usefulness to the community or the individual, then it is immoral, even though its usefulness was the reason or motive which originally gave rise to the custom. (DB 9) The “*chief proposition*” of morality of custom is therefore as follows: “morality is nothing other (therefore *no more!*) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be; customs, however, are the *traditional* way of behaving and evaluating. [...] What is tradition? A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is useful to us, but because it *commands*”. (DB 9)¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Nietzsche thinks that in prehistoric times the scope of morality of custom was broad and included “all education and care of health, marriage, cure of sickness, agriculture, war, speech and silence, traffic with

The idea that customs must be obeyed unconditionally is a function and consequence of the idea that customs originate with and are commanded by the ancestors of the community. According to Nietzsche, the living community whose life is governed by a morality of custom understands itself as owing obedience to its ancestors. This point is reiterated a number of times in GM. For example, Nietzsche says that “[w]ithin the original clan association – we are speaking of primeval times – the living generation always acknowledges a juridical obligation to the earlier generation, and particularly to the earliest one, which founded the clan”. (GM II: 19) More specifically, “the relationship of *those presently living* to their *ancestors*” is interpreted in terms of “[t]he civil-law relationship of the debtor to his creditor”. (GM II: 19) The living community believes that it exists thanks to “the sacrifices and achievements of the ancestors”. (GM II: 19) In addition, the ancestors continue to exist “as powerful spirits” and can “bestow on the clan new benefits and advances”. (GM II: 19) Thus, the living community owes its existence and what strength and prosperity it has to its dead ancestors. It is in debt to them and feels it must pay this debt. The community enacts repayment through various means: “Sacrifices [...], festivals, shrines, tributes, [and] above all obedience [to the community’s customs] – for all customs, as works of the ancestors, are also their statutes and commands”. (GM II: 19)

Nietzsche also posits a tendency among clan communities to deify their ancestors, with the result that customs come to be conceived as having a divine origin. During “the longest period of the human race, its primeval period”, says Nietzsche, the tendency among powerful clans to transform in imagination their progenitors into gods would have

one another and with the gods [...]. Originally [...] everything was custom”. (DB 9) “In things in which no tradition commands there is no morality; and the less life is determined by tradition, the smaller the circle of morality”. (DB 9)

been motivated by fear of the progenitors and their power to affect and determine the lives of the living. (GM II: 19) This view is foreshadowed in DB, where Nietzsche claims that tradition inspires a kind of fear in the living: “It is fear in the presence of a higher intellect which here commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal – there is *superstition* in this fear”. (DB 9) As a consequence of the deification of the ancestors “the “community” organized according to blood-relationships” came to be characterized by “the consciousness of having debts to the deity”. (GM II: 20)

In communities structured by moralities of custom all transgressions of custom constituted failures to pay the debt owed to the ancestors or gods. Punishment of the debtor (the community) was thought to satisfy the creditor (the ancestors or gods) in case of such failures. Punishment made up for the loss incurred by the creditor on account of the debtor’s negligence. This explanation for how punishment could have operated as a remedy for failures to uphold custom involves the idea that making-suffer is inherently pleasurable, and therefore intrinsically valuable, for human beings. In DB Nietzsche claims that in communities governed by moralities of custom the “pleasure in *cruelty*” is the greatest pleasure, “for to practice cruelty is to enjoy the greatest gratification of the feeling of power”. (DB 18) In GM this point is reiterated and generalized: “Seeing-suffer feels good, making-suffer even more so – that is a hard proposition, but a central one, an old powerful human-all-too-human proposition”. (GM II: 6) That pain and suffering have value gives rise to the notion that there can be “an equivalence between injury and pain”. (GM II: 4) Nietzsche posits that “[t]hroughout the greatest part of human history” punishment was an expression of “anger over an injury suffered, which is vented on the

agent of the injury – anger held within bounds, however, and modified through the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* in something and can really be paid off, even if only through the *pain* of its agent”. (GM II: 4) This was the logic of punishment at work wherever a morality of custom held sway. Debts could be paid off with suffering because “*making-suffer* felt good, and in the highest degree”; such “an extraordinary counter-pleasure” made up for “the displeasure over the loss”. (GM II: 6) Since human beings naturally felt this delight in cruelty and making-suffer, they imagined the ancestors and gods also taking delight in it and thereby receiving compensation for transgressions against custom. “Cruelty,” says Nietzsche, “is one of the oldest festive joys of mankind. Consequently it [was] imagined that the gods too are refreshed and in a festive mood when they are offered the spectacle of cruelty”. (DB 18) Punishment puts the community in better standing with their creditors: “[the gods] smile because they are amused and put into a good humour by our suffering”. (DB 18)

Punishment also functions in this context as a direct payment to the living community for an injury done to it. Just as the relationship between the living community and its ancestors and gods was understood in terms of the debtor-creditor relationship, so can the relationship between an individual and the living community of which he is a member be characterized as one of debtor to creditor. And just as the living community conceives itself as receiving help and benefit from its ancestors and gods, so does the individual gain many advantages from life in the community. One lives in security, in relative “peace and trust”, within the community. (GM II: 9) One does not need to fear “certain injuries and hostilities” that an individual outside the community would have to fear. (GM II: 9) In effect, “one has pledged and obligated oneself to the community

precisely in view of these injuries and hostilities”. (GM II: 9) The criminal is “one who breaks his contract and word *with the whole*” community, and through punishment the community “exact[s] payment” from the criminal for his violation of the implicit contract. (GM II: 9) The criminal had been given the advantages of communal life, but by breaking the law he failed to uphold his side of the implicit bargain. Consequently, he is no longer permitted to enjoy the protections provided by life in the community. He is expelled from the community, “outlawed”, and thereby exposed to injuries from which he was formerly safeguarded: “now every kind of hostility may vent itself on him”. (GM II: 9)

One of the effects of the punishments inflicted on individuals who disobeyed custom was that it curbed their deviant behaviour so as to make it conform to the dictates of custom. Nietzsche hypothesizes that punishment had this effect because it fostered the development of the power of memory, both in those who were punished and in those who witnessed the punishments. He conjectures that prehistorical human beings originally lacked the power of memory. They had a “partly dull, partly scattered momentary understanding, [a] forgetfulness in the flesh”. (GM II: 3) Their forgetfulness was a major factor contributing to their tendency to deviate from custom, and so the question of how to make the “human animal” remember anything at all, including their obligations to custom, was an “age-old problem” (GM II: 3).

A solution to this problem was found in the practice of inflicting pain on people’s bodies. Man possessed an “instinct that intuited in pain the most powerful aid of mnemonics” (GM II: 3). By means of this instinct he discovered that painful punishments could be used “to achieve victory over forgetfulness and to keep a few primitive

requirements of social co-existence *present* for these slaves of momentary affect and desire”. (GM II: 3) The more forgetful people were, the more pain was needed to make memory in them and the more intense and prolonged the pain had to be. The severity of ancient penal laws is an indication of how much effort it took to overcome forgetfulness. (GM II: 3)

Nietzsche therefore establishes the following as “a first principle from the most ancient (unfortunately also longest) psychology on earth”: “One burns something in so that it remains in one’s memory: only what does not cease *to give pain* remains in one’s memory”. (GM II: 3) This is the basis of man’s prehistoric “*mnemo-technique*”. (GM II: 3) Thus it was by means of painful punishments (whether experienced first-hand or observed) that man was made to acquire memory and thereby remember at least a few rules, a few “I will nots”, that served to proscribe his behaviour within society. (GM II: 3) Memory developed in reaction to pain. In effect, individuals were induced through pain to remember to abide by certain rules of conduct so as to have the privilege of living “within the advantages of society”. (GM II: 3)¹⁴⁹

Nietzsche assigns great significance to the power of memory. With its creation, certain other powers take shape within human beings. These powers come into existence as a result of the expanded scope of consciousness that pain creates. One of the most important of these powers is the power to promise. The power to promise develops in tandem with memory and, like memory, in opposition to the ability to forget. Man, a “necessarily forgetful animal [...] has now bred in itself an opposite faculty

¹⁴⁹ Nietzsche thinks that a great range of practices in ancient times can be understood as contributing to the establishment of the power of memory in the human species: “the most gruesome sacrifices and pledges (to which sacrifices of the firstborn belong), the most repulsive mutilations (castrations, for example), the cruelest ritual forms of all religious cults (and all religions are in their deepest foundations systems of cruelties)”. (GM II: 3)

[*Gegenvermögen*]¹⁵⁰, a memory, with whose help forgetfulness is disconnected for certain cases, – namely for those cases where a promise is to be made”. (GM II: 1)

Both the ability to forget and the ability to remember and promise that Nietzsche speaks of here are “active” capacities. The power (*Kraft*) of forgetting¹⁵¹ is active insofar as it is an unprovoked and spontaneous (i.e., un-reactive) expression of life’s essential will to power. Such forgetting puts things out of consciousness and thereby makes room in it for “new things” (GM II: 1): new feelings, new experiences, new ideas, and new projects. It helps provide the conditions that make possible a fresh engagement with the world, a new form-giving that is not perniciously burdened with and limited by what has occurred in the past.

Memory and promise-making are likewise active powers. They are not based on “a passive no-longer-being-able-to-get-rid-of the impression once it has been inscribed”. (GM II: 1) It is not a matter of something being stuck in consciousness which one would prefer to forget but cannot. Rather, the ability to remember and promise that Nietzsche discusses here is a matter of willfully holding to an act of will. It is “an active no-longer-wanting-to-get-rid-of, a willing on and on of something one has once willed, a true *memory of the will*”. (GM II: 1) It is an active power insofar as it is an assertive and masterful expression of life’s essential will to power.

One who has the power of memory and the ability to promise can be taken as responsible and answerable for what he will do. In other words, he is “able to vouch for himself *as future*”. (GM II: 1) This is because he is capable of making his willing consistent over time: his acts of will can be linked in a “long chain” from the initial act –

¹⁵⁰ Another possible translation of this term could be “counter-capacity” or “counter-ability”.

¹⁵¹ Nietzsche twice refers to forgetting as a *Kraft* in GM II: 1.

the “I want” or “I will do” – to “the actual discharge of the will, its [concluding] *act*”.

(GM II: 1) Consequently, the history of how man came to be able to remember and promise, i.e., the history of how moralities of custom were enforced through corporal punishment, is “the long history of the origins of *responsibility*”. (GM II: 2)

In GM II Nietzsche calls the kind of human being who has memory, the ability to promise, and who can be held responsible for his actions the “sovereign individual”. The sovereign individual, as I have already mentioned, is the “ripest fruit” of “society and its morality of custom”. (GM II: 2) He is “the human being with his own independent long will, the human being who is *permitted to promise*”. (GM II: 2) For him, “[t]he proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and fate, has sunk into his lowest depth and has become instinct, the dominant instinct”. (GM II: 2) He calls this dominant instinct “his conscience”. (GM II: 2)

In the above quotation Nietzsche characterizes the responsibility that is the privilege of the sovereign individual as a kind of freedom: it is a “rare freedom, [a] power over oneself and fate”. (GM II: 2) Nietzsche emphasizes the freedom of the sovereign individual several times over the course of his all too short and compressed discussion of that figure in the early sections of GM II. For instance, he says that the sovereign individual possesses “a true consciousness of power and freedom”, and refers to him as “[t]his being who has become free, who is really *permitted to promise*, this lord of the *free will*, this sovereign”. (GM II: 2) What then does Nietzsche mean when he says that the sovereign individual is free?

In GM II: 18 we find a clue concerning what Nietzsche means by freedom in this context. In that section Nietzsche offers the phrase “*instinct for freedom*” as a synonym for the phrase “will to power”: “that *instinct for freedom* (speaking in my language: the will to power)”. On the basis of this, it is reasonable to conclude that freedom and power can be synonymous terms for Nietzsche. Freedom is, in a certain positive sense, a matter of power. So what does Nietzsche mean by power? Power is the ability or capacity to do something, the ability or capacity to have an effect in the world. To have power is to have the ability to have such an effect. To have *a* power is to have some means, some particular capacity, through which one can have an effect in the world. In other words, to have power is to have agency and wherewithal, and there are many particular powers or capacities by means of which one can exercise agency.

According to the narrative of GM II the practice of administering painful punishments to individuals who disobeyed custom in communities governed by moralities of custom had the effect of creating new powers or abilities within the members of those communities. For example, and as we’ve already seen, it created in them the power of memory, the ability to hold in consciousness an impression of that which has transpired in the past. Punishment also created in individuals the power to promise. It made them capable of holding true to a momentary act of will, of making their subsequent acts of will consistent with that initial act of will, and of ultimately discharging that initial act of will at some future time. By creating within them this power to promise it also gave them the power to be responsible for their actions. By virtue of these powers, individuals no longer had to act in conformity with every momentary

impulse and desire. They could distance themselves from these impulses and desires, override them, and instead hold true to a previous act of will.

Thus we can see that when human beings came to have these new powers of memory, promise-making, and responsibility, they became capable of doing things that they had not previously been capable of doing. In other words, and in accordance with Nietzsche's synonymizing of power and freedom, human beings became *free* to do certain things that they had not previously been free to do. They became free to hold the past in consciousness, to conform their future actions to a previous act of will, and to therefore be responsible for their actions. Through socialization and punishment human beings became free and able to do things that they could not have done before. They became a new kind of animal possessing new powers and freedoms.¹⁵²

These new powers and freedoms made man capable of new kinds of mastery. As we have seen, forgetfulness can be an active power. In its active form it is the ability to put out of consciousness the impressions of things that have transpired in the past, things which might over-burden consciousness and prevent one from engaging in an effective and forward-looking manner with the world as it is in the present. However, when evaluated from the perspective of the sovereign individual who has the power of memory in addition to the power of forgetfulness, the forgetfulness of those who lack memory is a kind of slavery. This is because the power of memory is a counter-power with respect to the power of forgetfulness. By means of this counter-power the sovereign individual can master forgetfulness. He can be free from it to some extent and is therefore not

¹⁵² Christa Davis Acampora's reading of GM II: 2 also understands freedom in terms of power, ability, and capacity. For example, she offers the term "capacity" as a synonym for "freedom": "[Nietzsche] is clearly implying a kind of *freedom*, a capacity, not an entitlement, when he writes [...]". [Christa Davis Acampora, "On Sovereignty and Overhumanity: Why it matters how we read Nietzsche's *Genealogy* II:2," *International Studies in Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (2004): 142-3.]

necessarily subject to it. Unlike the sovereign individual, those who lack memory do not possess any counter-power that can act against the power of forgetfulness. They lack the ability to master forgetfulness and are necessarily held within its power.

One criticism that can be brought against Christa Davis Acampora's interpretation of the sovereign individual is that she greatly exaggerates the degree to which the development of his power of memory diminishes his power of forgetting. On her reading, a major part of what is distinctive about the sovereign individual is that in him the power of remembering has won out over the power of forgetting. She emphasizes this point on several occasions: "promising relies upon some kind of power (we soon learn that it is remembering) that has been cultivated to the point that it outstrips forgetting"; it is "chiefly by hypertrophic development of the power of memory and the withering of forgetting" that the "human animal" is made "capable of promising"; "the hyper-cultivation of remembering and the withering of forgetting yields a so-called sovereign individual"; "human beings have (perversely) embraced their characteristic deformity (that is, the atrophy of forgetting that occurs through the hyper-development of remembering)"; "humans have even instigated their own further deformity (i.e., more sophisticated mnemonics and the extirpation of forgetfulness)".¹⁵³

In response to these characterizations of the effect of the power of memory on the power of forgetting, it should be said that while the development of memory as a counter-power to forgetting can hardly fail to diminish to some degree the power of forgetting, there is no indication in GM II that the power of forgetting "withers" or is "outstripped" and exceeded as a result of this development. And there is certainly no indication that it ceases to exist or operate in individuals who undergo this development, as is suggested

¹⁵³ Acampora, 129-36.

by Acampora's use of term "extirpation". On the contrary, that the sovereign individual retains the power to forget is clearly indicated when Nietzsche says that forgetfulness makes room for "the nobler functions and functionaries, for ruling, foreseeing, predetermining". (GM II: 1) As one reads past the first section of GM II it becomes evident that ruling, foreseeing, and predetermining are distinctive characteristics of the sovereign individual: he has "mastery over himself [...] over circumstances, over nature and all lesser-willed and more unreliable creatures"; he has "command over the future in advance"; and he can "see and anticipate what is distant as if it were present". (GM II: 2) Thus it seems that in Nietzsche's account the power to forget is actually a precondition of exercising certain powers that are distinctive of the sovereign individual. We find further indication that the sovereign individual retains the power to forget when Nietzsche states that man, "this necessarily forgetful animal [...] has now bred in itself an opposite faculty, a memory, with whose help forgetfulness is disconnected *for certain cases* [emphasis added]". (GM II: 1) This clearly shows that once human beings have gained the power of memory, forgetfulness is still retained as a power, one that is *only sometimes* overridden by the power of memory.

Acampora also suggests that there is an unhealthy balance between remembering and forgetting in the sovereign individual when she speaks of the "hypertrophy" of memory and the "atrophy" of forgetting. While it is true that in GM II: 1 Nietzsche assigns an exceedingly positive value to forgetting, this does not lead him to cast aspersions on the power of memory. Rather, the tone of his discussion of the sovereign individual indicates that the power of memory has positive value and is worthy of

affirmation. The negative value that Acampora assigns to remembering is really quite foreign to Nietzsche's account of the sovereign individual in GM II.

4.3 The Sovereign Individual as Creator of Values

Another way of understanding the kind of freedom enjoyed by the sovereign individual, one that is related to and yet distinct from the kind of freedom discussed so far, is by way of the notion of autonomy. According to Nietzsche, autonomy is one of the distinguishing features of the sovereign individual. He is “the individual resembling only himself, free again from the morality of custom [*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*], autonomous and supermoral [*übersittliche*] (for “autonomous” and “moral” [*sittlich*] are mutually exclusive)”. (GM II: 2) In this quotation autonomy is linked with a certain freedom from and incompatibility with the kind of morality that structured early human communities. In being autonomous the sovereign individual is in some sense beyond that kind of morality. In order to understand in what sense the sovereign individual is autonomous and the nature of the incompatibility that ultimately obtains between morality of custom and the sovereign individual, we will first have to gain a better understanding of the kind of individual that Nietzsche thinks *is* compatible with morality of custom.

The kind of individual who is compatible with morality of custom is one who acknowledges the complete authority of the existing regime of custom and acts in conformity with its laws. As Nietzsche tells us, morality was for “whole millennia” strictly a matter of obeying custom. (DB 9) It “demanded [that] one observe prescriptions *without thinking of oneself* as an individual”. (DB 9) Thus, when “[t]he most moral man is he who *sacrifices* the most to custom”, when “difficulty of obedience to custom is the

mark of morality”, then the self-overcoming that an individual undertakes in order to be moral goes to show “that the hegemony of custom, tradition, shall be made evident in despite of the private desires and advantages of the individual: the individual is to sacrifice himself – that is the commandment of morality of custom”. (DB 9)

Due to such severe restriction on individuality and deviance, moralities of custom tended to be characterized by the idea that there is for human beings “one normal type and ideal”. (GS 143)¹⁵⁴ Each community prescribed through its customs what was normal and what was ideal such that “[h]ostility against [the] impulse to have an ideal of one’s own was formerly the central law of all morality. There was only one norm, *man*; and every people thought that it possessed this one ultimate norm”. (GS 143) Anyone who deviated from the norm, who posited his own ideals and values, who was “‘individual’, ‘free’, ‘capricious’, ‘unusual’, ‘unforeseen’, ‘incalculable’”, was evil, and this was the case “in all the original conditions of mankind”. (DB 9)

The enforcement of a morality of custom by means of punishment had the effect of inducing conformity to the community’s norms and ideals. It did this, as we have seen, by making individuals sovereign: it endowed them with the power to remember rules of conduct, to promise to abide by those rules, and to be responsible for their actions. Punishment created these powers by expanding the space of consciousness and thereby giving individuals distance from and power over their immediate affects and desires. By attaining this kind of sovereignty individuals became “to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and accordingly predictable”. (GM II: 2) However, although they were sovereign to the extent that they could remember, make promises, and

¹⁵⁴ Kaufmann translates *Sittlichkeit der Sitte* as “morality of mores” in his translation of GS. The phrase appears in GS 143 and elsewhere in the book.

be responsible for their actions, they remained unsovereign insofar as they were not autonomous from morality of custom. Their sovereignty was actually the means by which they became subordinate to and ruled by morality of custom.

Be that as it may, it would seem that in the long run the use of pain to enforce moralities of custom had the effect of producing a kind of individual who *was* autonomous from morality of custom, a kind of sovereign individual who was not predictable, calculable, regular, uniform, and like his fellows, but one who was an “individual resembling only himself”. (GM II: 2) One who was sovereign in this stronger and more exclusive sense was autonomous from morality of custom insofar as he had the power to create his own ideals and values rather than receive them from beyond himself in the form of custom and tradition. Although the narrative of GM II is not as clear as it might be on this point, it would appear that the powers that human beings came to possess by virtue of the expanded consciousness that pain created allowed at least some of them to be self-determined not only with regard to their momentary affects and desires, but also with regard to their ideals and values. It made them not just calculable in their behaviour, but eventually *incalculable* in their power to create new ideals that exceeded the limits of what morality of custom prescribed. Consequently, in creating the sovereign individual morality of custom also, and paradoxically, created a kind of animal that was free and autonomous with respect to morality of custom.¹⁵⁵ Morality of custom had for millennia defined the good and virtuous individual as one who acts on the basis of what is demanded by custom and tradition. But in time its administration through punishment produced a kind of human being who did not act on this basis. Man in the

¹⁵⁵ It created “human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves”. (GS 335)

form of the autonomous sovereign individual was no longer moral in the sense of “obedient to what custom dictates”. On the contrary, this kind of sovereign individual acted on the basis of his own will and his own commands rather than the commands of custom. To act on the basis of individual motivation is precisely what is immoral from the perspective of morality of custom.¹⁵⁶

Thus, in creating the autonomous sovereign individual morality of custom in effect overcame itself. What Nietzsche says of justice, that “it ends like every good thing on earth, by *cancelling itself*” (GM II: 10), could just as well be said of morality of custom. It created human beings who were no longer governed by the impersonal ideals and values that were supposed to have been commanded by the original progenitors of the clan. It created individuals who, by means of an expanded consciousness and enriched psyche, were capable of creating their own ideals and values. Nietzsche warns that individuals who have asserted their own ideals and lived at odds with custom have lived precariously: “those who do not regard themselves as being bound by existing laws and customs [...] had lived, corrupt and corrupting, denounced as criminals, free-thinkers, immoral persons, and villains, and under the ban of outlawry and bad conscience”. (DB 164) But despite such ignominy, they demonstrate that ideals need not be merely received, but can also be created. They are “a counter-force which is a constant reminder that there is no such thing as a morality with an exclusive monopoly of the moral”. (DB 164)

Ken Gemes and Christopher Janaway recognize only this stronger and more exclusive sense of sovereign individuality. As a result, they conclude that the vast

¹⁵⁶ “The free human being is immoral because in all things he is *determined* to depend upon himself and not upon a tradition”. (DB 9)

majority of human beings are not sovereign individuals. Gemes makes this point a number of times: “Nietzsche describes the sovereign individual in hyperbolic tones clearly not applicable to ordinary individuals”; “autonomy and free will are achievements of great difficulty, achievements which they themselves [i.e., the majority of Nietzsche’s readers] have by no means attained”; “under the right conditions genuine agency, a truly great achievement, is possible, albeit only for a special few”.¹⁵⁷ Janaway agrees: when Nietzsche writes of the sovereign individual he “is writing of a mere aspiration that he thinks has rarely, if ever, been realized”; and the kind of self-knowledge that is characteristic of the sovereign individual “is rare among human beings, [...] a task set for a few of us rather than a given”.¹⁵⁸ I agree that most human beings are not sovereign in the rare and exceptional sense: human beings in general do not create their own ideals and values in the self-determined manner that Nietzsche describes. For this reason, most people cannot liberate themselves from the systems of values that are imposed upon them from without. However, while the highest exemplars of the type “sovereign individual” are rare occurrences, it is clear that most human beings are sovereign in the weaker and broader sense, i.e., insofar as they have the power to remember, make promises, and be responsible for their actions. Gemes and Janaway tend to conflate the two senses of sovereign individuality. Consequently, they overlook the sense in which most human beings are indeed sovereign individuals.

This concludes my explication of Nietzsche’s account of the emergence of the sovereign individual. I will move on now to explicate one of the other sub-narratives within GM’s second treatise, viz., the narrative concerning the emergence of bad

¹⁵⁷ Ken Gemes, “Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy and the Sovereign Individual,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* suppl. vol. 80 (2006): 326-30.

¹⁵⁸ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 119 & 123.

conscience. According to this narrative, bad conscience came into existence as a result of the turning inward of will to power that occurred as a consequence of the administration of justice within the highly stratified form of community that Nietzsche calls the “state”. My explication and analysis of this narrative will show that it lacks comprehensiveness, completeness, and explanatory power and that it is in significant ways inconsistent with Nietzsche’s account of the emergence of sovereign individuality. These epistemic shortcomings will be explained and at least to some extent redeemed as indications of an artistic and unhistorical appropriation of the past, one which Nietzsche undertakes for the sake of persuading his readers to overcome bad conscience and embrace a more positive and affirmative attitude toward the will to power.

4.4 The State-Form of Community

Late in the second treatise Nietzsche conjectures that the primeval period, characterized by communities “organized according to blood-relationships” (GM II: 20) and structured by moralities of custom, went into decline and was followed by a “*middle period*” in which larger communities dominated by “noble clans” came into existence. (GM II: 19) Nietzsche calls these larger communities “states”. (GM II: 17) The subsumption of various clan communities into states was effected by powerful clans who conquered and subjugated weaker clans. The conquering clans then established themselves as nobles and lords, ranking themselves above the clans they had conquered. (GM II: 20) As Nietzsche describes it, a state would have been created by “some pack of blond beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and lords, which, organized in a warlike manner and with the power to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible paws on a population enormously superior in

number perhaps, but still formless, still roaming about. It is in this manner that the “state” begins on earth”. (GM II: 17)

Although Nietzsche does not elaborate much on this point, it is clear that noble morality emerged as a result of the creation of states.¹⁵⁹ As a consequence of the new state-form of political and social organization, the noble value distinctions “good” and “bad” came into existence. Once established as rulers of large populations, the nobles judged themselves and all that was like them to be good. They conceived themselves as “men of noble descent, of happiness, of optimal form, of the best society, of nobility, of virtue”. (GM II: 23) In contrast to this, they judged all that was beneath and unlike them to be bad. The conquered peoples then inherited “the concepts “good and bad” from the clan nobility (together with its basic psychological propensity for establishing orders of rank)”. (GM II: 20) Noble morality thus emerged as a “self-celebration” and “self-congratulation” on the part of the conquerors.¹⁶⁰ Whereas clan communities had been relatively non-hierarchical, hierarchy was a salient feature of states. Their hierarchical structure gave rise to and constituted a new form of morality that was distinct from morality of custom. The narrative of GM II makes this “noble morality” the immediate successor to morality of custom.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Nietzsche’s term for morality in “morality of custom” (i.e., *Sittlichkeit*) marks a demarcation between this early kind of morality on the one hand, and both noble morality and slave morality on the other. The German word “*Moral*” is the word that is translated as “morality” in the latter two. [See Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swenson, “End notes,” in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swenson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1998), 140-1.]

¹⁶⁰ “Friedrich Nietzsche,” *Ideas*, featuring Brian Leiter, Rebecca Comay, and Christine Daigle, aired August 6, 2014, on CBC. I will have more to say about noble morality when I discuss the first treatise of GM in Chapter 5.

¹⁶¹ The hierarchical nature of states and noble morality is closely linked with another difference between clans and morality of custom on the one hand, and states and noble morality on the other. The customs and traditions that structured life in clan communities were conceived as having been commanded by the original progenitors of the clan, whether these were thought of as ancestors or gods. As a result, customs had a highly impersonal and egalitarian nature. They were held in common by all living and deceased members of the community. Those who enforced the customs were not enforcing the will of any specific

In creating states, the noble clans created new social and political structures that ordered the conquered clans in new ways. The creation of states was

an instinctive creating of forms, impressing of forms; they [the conquerors] are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are: – where they appear, in a short time something new stands there, a ruling structure that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and related to one another, in which nothing at all finds a place that has not first had placed into it a “meaning” with respect to the whole. (GM II: 17)

Through this creating and impressing of forms the conquerors’ will to power acted upon “the *other* human, the *other* humans”. (GM II: 18) Human beings were the matter to which the conquerors gave form. Nietzsche depicts in violent terms the nature of the conquerors’ form-giving:

this fitting of a previously unrestrained and unformed population into a fixed form, given its beginnings in an act of force, could be brought to its completion only by acts of force – [...] the oldest “state” accordingly made its appearance as a terrible tyranny, as a crushing and ruthless machinery, and continued to work until finally such a raw material of people and half-animals was not only thoroughly kneaded and pliable but also *formed*. (GM II: 17)

The laws created by the conquerors were an important aspect of how the new social and political structure of the state was articulated. Laws were the means by which the conquerors administered justice within the state. Justice for Nietzsche is a matter of determining who owes what to whom and how much is owed. It is a matter of equalization, of paying off debt, and is premised upon the notion that “every thing has its price; *everything* can be paid off”. (GM II: 8) This is “the oldest and most naïve moral canon of *justice*”. (GM II: 8) How justice is administered and comes to bear in particular situations depends on how much power one has with respect to others. For instance,

person, but rather the will of the community at large, whose will was imaginatively sublimated into the will of those divine or semi-divine original progenitors of the community. The laws that structured states did not exhibit this impersonal and egalitarian quality. On the contrary, they were commanded and instituted by individuals, viz., by the conquerors who created and ruled the states.

justice can be “the good will among parties of approximately equal power to come to terms with one another, to reach an “understanding” again by means of a settlement”. (GM II: 8) This is how justice was administered among the nobles in their dealings with one another. For those who find themselves in positions of extreme subordination, the situation is different. As Nietzsche says, “in regard to less powerful parties, [justice is a matter of *forcing*] them to a settlement among themselves”. (GM II: 8) This is how justice was imposed upon those who had been conquered and subsumed within states.

As Nietzsche sees it, the primary function of justice and the laws used to administer it within the state was to control the dangerous feelings of resentment that were generated among the conquered population when they committed injuries against one another. The imposition of a system of law did this by establishing an impersonal manner of appraising injuries and determining how the debts owed as a result of injuries were to be paid off: “the eye is trained for an ever *more impersonal* appraisal of deeds, even the eye of the injured one himself”. (GM II: 11)¹⁶² In connection with this function of law, Nietzsche tells us that as a community grows stronger

the evildoer is no longer “made an outlaw” and cast out; the general anger is no longer allowed to vent itself in the same unbridled manner as formerly – rather, from now on, the evildoer is carefully defended against this anger, particularly that of the ones directly injured, and taken under the protection of the whole. Compromise with the anger of the one immediately affected by the misdeed; a striving to localize the case and prevent a further or indeed general participation and unrest; attempts to find equivalents and to settle the entire affair (the *compositio*); [...] these are the traits that are imprinted with increasing clarity onto the further development of penal law. (GM II: 10)

With specific reference to justice, Nietzsche states that

¹⁶² The sense of “impersonal” here is different than the sense in which customs are impersonal. Customs are impersonal in the sense that the community as a collective pronounces them. Laws, on the other hand, are commanded by the nobles, and so have a “personal” origin. However, laws function to make misdeeds more impersonal in the sense that under the rule of law the misdeed is conceived as primarily injuring the state and its system of law rather than the individual upon whom the misdeed is committed.

[c]onsidered historically, justice on earth represents [...] precisely the battle *against* reactive feelings, the war against them on the part of active and aggressive powers that have used their strength in part to call a halt to and impose measure on the excess of reactive pathos and to force a settlement. Everywhere justice is practiced and upheld one sees a stronger power seeking means to put an end to the senseless raging of *ressentiment* among weaker parties subordinated to it (whether groups or individuals), in part by pulling the object of *ressentiment* out of the hands of revenge, in part by setting in the place of revenge the battle against the enemies of peace and order, in part by inventing, suggesting, in some cases imposing compensations, in part by raising certain equivalents for injuries to the status of a norm to which *ressentiment* is henceforth once and for all restricted. But the most decisive thing the highest power does and forces through against the predominance of counter- and after-feelings [...] is the establishment of the *law*, the imperative declaration of what in general is to count in its eyes as permitted, as just, what is forbidden, as unjust: after it has established the law, it treats infringements and arbitrary actions of individuals or entire groups as wanton acts against the law, as rebellion against the highest power itself, thereby diverting the feeling of its subjects away from the most immediate injury caused by such wanton acts and thus achieving in the long run the opposite of what all revenge wants, which sees only the viewpoint of the injured one, allows only it to count[.] (GM II: 11)

By inhibiting the subjects of the state from reacting in an immediate and direct fashion to injuries suffered, and thereby preventing them from settling their own scores, the conquering lords prevented the *ressentiment* among the conquered population from disrupting the internal order of the state. The system of laws by means of which justice was administered therefore functioned to create a peaceful society, and it was in the interest of the lords to maintain such peace within the state. A peaceful population was more easily maintained, increased, and employed for whatever purposes the nobles saw fit. A conflict-ridden society in which everyone personally sought recourse for injuries suffered could not have been so easily employed by the nobles. The state would have had difficulty increasing its wealth and would have been in constant peril of disintegration. The rulers would have been too preoccupied with subduing civil strife to wage external campaigns for the expansion of territory. Internal conflict would have bred challenges for

the rule of the state. A peaceful and subdued population was therefore desirable from the rulers' perspective. Laws were conducive to this pacification.

One of the consequences of the administration of justice within the state was that it inhibited the outward expression of will to power on the part of those who were conquered. It did this for the sake of increasing the power of the conquering lords who ruled them. As Nietzsche says, "from the highest biological standpoint, conditions of justice can never be anything but *exceptional conditions*, as partial restrictions of the true will of life – which is out after power – and subordinating themselves as individual means to its overall end: that is, as means for creating *greater* units of power". (GM II: 11) It is in this sense that a legal system was for the conquering lords "a means in the battle of power complexes". (GM II: 11) It allowed them to order the people they ruled so that the state could more effectively engage with and dominate rival states. Through the structuring of the population by means of laws the lords were better able to wield it for the purpose of expressing and increasing their own power. This is the ultimate explanation for why the conquerors created states in the first place.

4.5 *Bad Conscience*

A major upshot of the inhibiting effect that the enforcement of law had on the subjects of states was the creation of human beings of "bad conscience". Nietzsche explicitly associates the emergence of bad conscience with the creation of states:

They [the conquerors] are not the ones among whom "bad conscience" grew, that is clear from the outset – but it would not have grown *without them*, this ugly growth, it would be missing, if an enormous quantity of freedom had not been banished from the world, at least from visibility, and made *latent* as it were, under the pressure of the blows of their hammers, of their artist's violence. (GM II: 17)

What does Nietzsche mean by bad conscience in this early, non-Christian form?¹⁶³ For Nietzsche, man is naturally and originally an egoistic animal that seeks to express and increase its power through outward action, i.e., through contest and strife with things in the external world. This will to power or instinct for freedom is man's dominant instinct. However, according to the narrative of GM II, individuals who were formerly at liberty to express their will to power outwardly were prevented from doing so when they became subjugated within states by powerful clans. The creation of states imposed severe limits on their natural expression of will to power. For example, and as we saw above, it curtailed their ability to redress and seek revenge for injuries done to them by others. More generally, the enforcement of law by means of punishments trained people to not so readily seek the satisfaction of their will to power through outwardly violent and appropriative acts. Punishments were the "bulwarks with which the organization of the state protect[ed] itself against the old instincts of freedom". (GM II: 16)

However, the will to power of conquered individuals was not destroyed by the enforcement of law through punishment. It remained active despite the prevention of its outward expression, only it now took on a new form. Where once it had expressed itself outwardly, now it turned inward according to the rule that "[a]ll instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn themselves inward* – this is what I call the *internalizing of man*". (GM II: 16) As a result of this turning inward of will to power, a new field of contest and strife was created within the subjects of the state. Individuals

¹⁶³ My explication of bad conscience will focus only on the early, non-Christian form of bad conscience. I will not explicate the transformation of this form of bad conscience into bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. The nature of this transformation is explicated admirably by Risse. In brief, Risse argues that bad conscience becomes bad conscience as a feeling of guilt as a result of 1) bad conscience becoming associated with the feeling of indebtedness to the ancestors and gods, and 2) the intensification of both bad conscience and the feeling of indebtedness through Christian metaphysics.

who had formerly sought to satisfy their will to power through the domination and appropriation of things external now sought to satisfy it through the domination and appropriation of things internal. They were deprived of “external enemies and resistance” (GM II: 16), so they made enemies of themselves. Distances opened up within them: “The entire inner world, originally thin as if inserted between two skins, has spread and unfolded, has taken on depth, breadth, height to the same extent that man’s outward discharging has been *obstructed*”. (GM II: 16) By virtue of these distances human beings attained a certain detachment from their natural manner of expressing will to power. They became critical of their most basic instinct, sought to dominate it, subordinate it, and suppress it. In these subjugated human beings the self became divided against itself. In them man no longer engaged in that single-minded and unabashed pursuit of power. There was no longer that simple unreflective expression of the instinct for freedom. Instead man devalued and did battle with this instinct. In doing so the will to power continued to express itself, but now in a more complex and paradoxical fashion. The will to power turned against its drive to outwardly manifest. Where man had once vented his instinct for violence on external objects, now his “[h]ostility, cruelty, pleasure in persecution, in assault, in change, in destruction” was exercised against himself, against what he was by nature: a hostile, cruel, persecuting, assaultive, destructive animal. (GM II: 16) Nietzsche’s name for this state of being at war with one’s most basic instinct, for this “animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself” (GM II 16), is bad conscience: “This *instinct for freedom*, forcibly made latent [...], driven back, suppressed, imprisoned within, and finally discharging and venting itself only on itself: this, only this, is *bad conscience* in its beginnings”. (GM II: 17)

A major ingredient of bad conscience is the feeling of shame with respect to the animal self and its basic instinct for power. Before the creation of bad conscience man had been well disposed towards his will to power. But with the emergence of bad conscience he came to look down upon this instinct and its most natural manner of expression. He came to think that what was most natural to him was inherently wrong. In essence, “man [grew] ashamed *of man*”. (GM II: 7) He became “ashamed of all his instincts” and “the joy and innocence of the animal [became] repulsive”. (GM II: 7)

For example, as a wild and untamed animal who had been free to express his will to power outwardly, man had naturally taken delight in being cruel to others. Back then “humanity was not [...] ashamed of its cruelty”. (GM II: 7) However, as a result of having the outward expression of his will to power blocked, man became ashamed of his delight in cruelty. Of course shame was not enough to destroy his pleasure in cruelty. As is generally the case with the turning inward of will to power, man’s pleasure in cruelty found an alternative means of satisfaction. His experience and enjoyment of pain became sublimated and subtilized, “imaginative and inward”. (GM II: 7) Through bad conscience he came to take pleasure in inflicting psychic pain upon himself. For the man of bad conscience there is “pleasure in giving oneself – as heavy resisting suffering matter – a form, in burning into oneself a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a “no””. (GM II: 18) Bad conscience is the “uncanny and horrifying-pleasurable work of a soul compliant-conflicted with itself, that makes itself suffer out of pleasure in making-suffer”. (GM II: 18) This demonstrates how bad conscience is a kind of “hypocritical conscience”. (GM II: 7) Bad conscience condemns the animalistic pleasure in causing pain, and is at the same time a form of cruelty which the animal “man” takes pleasure in

inflicting upon himself. The man of bad conscience at once condemns and delights in cruelty.

Risse is of the view that “what matters most for calling this early form of the mental the bad conscience is that the bad conscience as a feeling of guilt derives from it. It is what the bad conscience that we have nowadays [i.e., bad conscience as a feeling of guilt] was in its beginning, and I submit that it is mostly for that reason that Nietzsche calls it [i.e., the early form of bad conscience] bad conscience”.¹⁶⁴ I disagree with Risse’s interpretation on this point. The early form of bad conscience is not “bad” only in a derivative sense, i.e., only because it eventually becomes bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. Rather, the early form of bad conscience is in itself “bad” because it involves feeling bad, i.e. feeling negatively, about one’s natural instinct for power. With the onset of bad conscience one devalues and negates this basic instinct. That is why the early form of bad conscience is “bad”.

4.6 The Double Effect of Socialization and Punishment

While in GM II: 17 Nietzsche makes the creation of bad conscience a result of the creation of states, in GM II: 16 he speaks as if it is a result of socialization per se. In that section it is simply “society and peace” which cause the animal instincts of man to become “devalued and “disconnected””. However, we have already seen that it is not necessarily the case that punishment and socialization have the effect of making man ashamed of his most basic instincts and what he most essentially is. We have seen that the socialization that man underwent through the enforcement of morality of custom created the sovereign individual possessing conscience. Now the man of bad conscience

¹⁶⁴ Risse, 75n12.

would indeed seem to be a kind of sovereign individual, for he possesses powers of soul that are characteristic of the sovereign individual. For example, he has within him, as a result of punishment and socialization, the inner distances and expanded consciousness that are characteristic of personal sovereignty. Furthermore, Nietzsche tells us that when people came to have bad consciences, “they were reduced to thinking, inferring, calculating, connecting cause and effect, these unhappy ones, [they were] reduced to their “consciousness,” to their poorest and most erring organ”. (GM II: 16) All of these psychic powers are defining features of the sovereign individual. As Nietzsche told us earlier in GM II, the “command over the future in advance” that the sovereign individual’s power of promise-making involves presupposes the possession of certain other powers: “man must first have learned to separate the necessary from the accidental occurrence, to think causally, to see and anticipate what is distant as if it were present, to fix with certainty what is end, what is means thereto, in general to be able to reckon, to calculate”. (GM II: 1) Presumably then, the man of bad conscience would have memory, the capacity to make promises, autonomy from his immediate affects and desires, powers of reason and reflection, and a feeling of responsibility for what he wills. In short, he would be a man of conscience. But in addition to this he would be a man of *bad* conscience, for he is not only autonomous and free with respect to his immediate affects and desires – he is also *ashamed* of these affects and desires. He is ashamed to be the kind of animal that is subject to feeling these affects and desires at all. As a result he wants to be rid of his animality altogether, to be a being that is not governed by the instinct of will to power, all the while not realizing that his desire to overcome his animality is itself an expression of this animality, of this will to power.¹⁶⁵ The man of bad

¹⁶⁵ His animality is “inescapable”. (GM II: 22) As Fink says, “[m]an is [for Nietzsche] always beast, either

conscience is a sovereign individual who is ashamed of his will to power. But the sovereign individual need not feel this shame. Punishment and socialization can also produce a man of conscience *tout court*, a sovereign individual who is free and autonomous with respect to his affects and desires, but who is not ashamed of them and who does not seek to deny his animalistic will to power, who instead embraces it and seeks to satisfy it with the help of the powers of soul that punishment and socialization create.

Nietzsche speaks (seemingly unwittingly) of this latter effect that punishment and socialization can have on individuals in GM II: 14-15. Punishment, he says, does not arouse “the *feeling of guilt* [...] that reaction of soul called “bad conscience,” “pang of conscience.”” (GM II: 14) In assuming that it does “one lays a hand on reality and on psychology, even for today – and how much more for the longest part of the history of man, his prehistory! Precisely among criminals and prisoners the genuine pang of conscience is something extremely rare”. (GM II: 14) And not only is punishment unlikely to produce bad conscience in the criminal, but it can even hinder its development and instead produce feelings that are quite opposed to bad conscience. Thus Nietzsche claims that during the “millennia *before* the history of man [...] it [was] precisely through punishment that the development of the feeling of guilt [was] most forcefully held back – at least with respect to the victims on whom the punishing force vented itself”. (GM II: 14) The feeling of guilt was held back because punishment could not convince the criminal that his deed was “*in itself* reprehensible”, since through the administration of justice the criminal saw actions committed “with a good conscience” which would be considered criminal if they were committed by others in some other context. (GM II: 14)

outwardly – or inwardly in the self-torture of [bad] conscience.” (132)

For example, “spying, outwitting, bribery, entrapment, [...] robbing, overpowering, slandering, taking captive, torturing, murdering” were all employed by those who prosecuted and punished the criminal. (GM II: 14) “[A]ll of these thus actions his judges in no way reject and condemn *in themselves*, but rather only in a certain respect and practical application”. (GM II: 14) Consequently, one who was punished for transgressing law or custom did not regret committing the deed on account of any realization that the deed was intrinsically wrong. In general, punishment did not eventuate in any such realization on the part of the criminal.

According to Nietzsche, what the criminal *did* feel as a consequence of being punished is summed up in Spinoza’s definition of the “sting of conscience” or “*morsus conscientiae*”: “The opposite of *gaudium* [joy] [...] a sadness, accompanied by the image of a past matter that has turned out in a manner contrary to all expectation”. (GM II: 15) Punished criminals have felt precisely what Spinoza describes: ““something has unexpectedly gone wrong here,” *not*: “I should not have done that” (GM II: 15) In being apprehended and punished the criminal feels sadness and regret because things did not go as he had planned. He did not gain what he had hoped he would gain, but was caught and reprimanded to his disadvantage. He experiences the punishment not as something called for by the intrinsic nature of the deed, but as an unfortunate accident and submits himself “to the punishment as one submits to a sickness or a misfortune or to death, with [a] stout-hearted fatalism”. (GM II: 15)

Furthermore, rather than inculcating in the transgressor a bad conscience concerning his deed, punishment’s effect was to make him sharper, more prudent, more cautious, to lengthen his memory, to improve his power of self-assessment, to make him

more a master of his appetites. (GM II: 15) In other words, the effect of punishment was to move the transgressor toward sovereign individuality, towards having what Nietzsche calls “conscience”. (GM II: 2)

GM II: 14-15 serves to highlight an ambiguity and inconsistency within the narrative of GM II. The ambiguity and inconsistency concerns the effect of socialization and punishment. In those two sections it is suggested that not all individuals who were held within society and subject to its punishments developed bad conscience. Some merely developed conscience, i.e., a state of circumspection with regard to their affects and desires, and a feeling of responsibility for their actions that attends the possession of the powers of soul that are characteristic of the sovereign individual. However, immediately after these two sections, in GM II: 16, Nietzsche speaks as if bad conscience is in all cases the outcome of socialization: “I take bad conscience to be the deep sickness into which man had to fall under the pressure of that most fundamental of all changes he ever experienced – the change of finding himself enclosed once and for all within the sway of society and peace”. (GM II: 16) The double effect of socialization and punishment – the creation of both conscience and bad conscience – is to some extent acknowledged by the narrative, albeit obliquely and confusedly. At times it is hinted at, suggested, but not explicitly recognized. Often the two effects are conflated, with the result that the emergence of conscience is elided, while the emergence of bad conscience is emphasized to the point that it seems to be the inevitable result of socialization and punishment. This inconsistency within the narrative of GM II is an example of how the narrative falls short of the consistency criterion of truth. Such inconsistency subtracts from the overall coherence and completeness of the narrative.

Risse offers an apologetic explanation for the inconsistency between Nietzsche's statements about the effect of punishment in GM II: 14-15 and what he goes on to say about that topic in GM II: 16. He posits that in section 16 Nietzsche is saying that punishment operates to produce in the transgressor the earlier, non-Christian form of bad conscience, while in sections 14 and 15 he is saying that punishment fails to produce in the transgressor the later, Christian form of bad conscience, i.e., bad conscience as a feeling of guilt.¹⁶⁶ If this is correct, then there is no inconsistency because Nietzsche is speaking of the causal relationship between punishment and two distinct kinds of bad conscience.

I think Risse's interpretation is implausible. Firstly, Nietzsche's language in sections 14 and 15 does not make clear that he is only talking about bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. In part, this is because the meaning that Nietzsche attaches to the term "guilt" (*Schuld*) in GM II is variable and not always clear. That *Schuld* can be translated as both "guilt" and "debt" only complicates matters. Later in the treatise "guilt" clearly refers to an emotional state that is distinct from simple bad conscience, an emotional state that Risse calls bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. In GM II: 14, however, the meaning of the term "guilt", and the relationship between "the *feeling of guilt*" and "that reaction of soul called "bad conscience," "pang of conscience"" (GM II: 14), are by no means clear. Risse concludes, perhaps in part because these terms are used in close proximity to each other, that in GM II: 14 Nietzsche intends to speak exclusively of bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. But there are other interpretive possibilities. Nietzsche might be using "guilt" and "bad conscience" synonymously in this instance, or he might be keeping these terms distinct and intending his discussion of punishment to pertain to both of these

¹⁶⁶ Risse, 58.

emotional states. Due to the vagueness of Nietzsche's language in section 14, I think Risse is wrong to limit what Nietzsche says about the effect of punishment in that section to the issue of bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. It is more likely that Nietzsche is speaking, at least in part, of a possible failure of punishment to produce the early, non-Christian form of bad conscience. This interpretation is suggested by the fact that in section 14 Nietzsche explicitly intends his comments to apply to man's "prehistory", to "those millennia *before* the history of man", that is, to a time when the development of bad conscience as a feeling of guilt was still a long way off. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that the aim of punishment, especially during man's prehistory, would be to produce in the transgressor bad conscience as a feeling of guilt, for this would be equal to claiming that the aim of punishment is to convince the transgressor that his existence is intrinsically sinful, that is, intrinsically deviant from the will of God and out of harmony with the divine order of things, and that he is therefore infinitely indebted to God. Such notions are clearly foreign to man's prehistory as Nietzsche has portrayed it. It is more plausible that the aim of punishment was simply to lead the criminal to the conclusion: "I should not have done that". (GM II: 15) In order to achieve this effect, it is not necessary to produce in him bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. Rather, it is sufficient to produce in him bad conscience *tout court*, i.e., the feeling that it is shameful and wrong to violate the norms of the community for the sake of personal gain. On the other hand, and as Nietzsche suggests in GM II: 14-15, it might also be sufficient to teach the transgressor that it is not in his long-term self-interest to violate the laws of the community. Prudence dictates that he be more careful.

Risse's attempt to make Nietzsche's statements about the effects of punishment in GM II: 14-16 mutually consistent does not succeed. The inconsistency stands as an example of how the narrative of GM II falls short of the consistency criterion of truth.

4.7 The Nobles as Men of Conscience

One way in which the tension between the two effects of socialization and punishment manifests itself is in Nietzsche's characterization of the nobles. If we follow the implicit logic of the narrative of GM II, extrapolating from what it states explicitly, then the noble lords must be considered products of the socializing work of morality of custom. As such, they must also be sovereign individuals possessing conscience. According to Nietzsche's conjecture, the clans to which these nobles belonged would have been governed by some form of morality of custom prior to their pre-eminence over rival clans and attainment of noble status. Throughout the "primeval" period these clans would have been held together by a commitment to ancient traditions and prohibitions which would have held in check each individual's tendency to seek immediate satisfaction for his will to power. The members of these clans would have been trained to resist the urges of momentary affect and desire, to remember the rules of custom, to bring reflection and reason to bear upon what their most basic instincts demanded. In short, morality of custom would have made the members of these clans sovereign and responsible individuals, at least with respect to their dealings with one another. The nobles who created states must therefore have been sovereign individuals in possession of conscience.

Despite the unavoidability of this conclusion on the basis of the narrative, Nietzsche insists on characterizing the noble conquerors and creators of states in terms of

the pre-social and pre-sovereign individual. The nobles are portrayed as “instinctive”, “involuntary”, and “unconscious” animals who lack any feeling of responsibility for their actions. (GM II: 17) “They do not know what guilt, what responsibility, what consideration is, these born organizers”. (GM: II 17) They are forgetful and have neither the need nor the ability to be calculating or prudent with respect to how they conduct themselves in the world and seek satisfaction for their will to power. As we will see in the next chapter, the noble conquerors and creators of states in GM II are characterized in much the same manner as the nobles in GM I. They are pictured as acting on instinct rather than reflection, as being virtuously forgetful and governed purely by unconscious drives.

Nietzsche surely exaggerates the unreflective and uncalculating nature of the nobles. Perhaps the nobles did possess to a great degree the active power of forgetting and the capacity to be guided by instinct and affect, but they could not have been wholly unconscious and instinctive in their comportment towards the world. They must also have possessed the characteristics of personal sovereignty. The effective actualization of their power as rulers would have required such sovereignty and its attendant abilities. As we have seen, building and ruling states required the nobles to administer justice through laws. The laws they created determined how injuries were to be compensated and disputes settled. In this way misdeeds could be appraised impersonally as offenses committed against the state rather than as offenses committed against individuals for which vengeance must be sought by the injured party. To administer justice in this fashion one must be able to measure and calculate the value of various injuries, pains and powers, to hold these valuations in mind, compare them, determine equivalences, recall

past events and foresee possible outcomes.¹⁶⁷ One must have the power of holding oneself to the law rather than lashing out reactively with anger and vengeance. Justice within the state must therefore have been an expression of the prudent, calculating, and sovereign nature of the lords. Individuals who were entirely instinctual and forgetful could not have functioned effectively as rulers. They would have been unable to channel their power so as to conquer and organize large populations.

At times Nietzsche does seem to vaguely and indirectly suggest the sovereign nature of the nobles. For instance, he valorizes the sovereign individual in much the same way as he valorizes the noble, describing him as standing above those who do not have the power to promise, who are not responsible, and who have no conscience. Like the noble, the sovereign individual's manner of valuation is active. He is his own "*standard of value*". (GM II: 2) He feels his own strength and power, judges it as good, honours those who are like him, and contemns those who lack his unique powers and freedoms. In Nietzsche's description of the lofty sovereign individual there are echoes of how he describes the noble lord.

More often than not, however, Nietzsche exaggerates the difference between the noble conquerors and those whom they conquer and rule. Too often he conflates having no *bad* conscience with having no conscience or feeling of responsibility whatsoever. These must be kept distinct if we are to properly grasp the nature of the noble conquerors. While it may be the case that the noble conquerors were without bad conscience, they must nonetheless have been sovereign individuals with conscience. The lack of

¹⁶⁷ "[G]auging values, thinking out equivalents, [...] comparing, measuring, calculating power against power" are preconditions of justice. (GM II: 8)

acknowledgment of this implication of the narrative contributes to its inconsistency, incoherence, and incompleteness.

4.8 The Conquered as Human Beings of Conscience

Just as Nietzsche imagines the noble conquerors as pre-social, unsovereign animals, those whom they conquer and subjugate are also made to seem lacking in the powers of consciousness that characterize the sovereign individual. The conquering nobles are supposed to have confronted their future subjects as one wild animal confronts another in the midst of a trackless wilderness. Both were thoroughly unsocialized and free to vent their instinct for power outwardly. But the conflict between them was bound to eventuate in the entrapment and subjugation of one party by the other, the subjugated party thereby losing its freedom to express its will to power in the manner that it had formerly. As a result of the subsequent turning inward of will to power, the subjugated party is supposed to have become a creature possessing a bad conscience concerning its animal self, a creature who not only seeks to control and channel his ferocious affects and desires, but feels ashamed of them as well. As Nietzsche puts it, “all those instincts of the wild free roaming human turned themselves backwards *against man himself*”. (GM II: 16) Thus, a non-social animal, lacking any kind of personal sovereignty, is supposed to have become a socialized animal of bad conscience.

However, following again the implicit logic of Nietzsche’s narrative, the members of the clans who were conquered and subjugated must have been sovereign individuals in possession of some degree of conscience prior to being conquered and subjugated. This is because they would have previously existed in some form of society governed by custom

and tradition. Like the noble conquerors, they too would have already been products of morality of custom. Consequently, they would have already been endowed with some restraint with respect to their immediate affects and desires. Nietzsche's claim that the noble lords gave form to an "unrestrained and unformed population" (GM II: 17) is therefore an exaggeration. It would be more accurate to say that they gave a *new* form to this population, that its freedom and power was constrained in a *new* way by the conquerors. The population could not have been completely unrestrained and unformed prior to the intervention of the conquerors.

So we see that while Nietzsche portrays both the noble conquerors and the people they conquer as individuals who initially lack the powers of soul characteristic of personal sovereignty, this cannot be the case. It is an implication of the narrative of GM II that morality of custom would have already done its work to make them sovereign individuals before they were transformed into conquerors and conquered respectively. Even if the emergence of bad conscience required the creation of states by conquering nobles, it is still the case that those who were conquered would have already existed as sovereign individuals on account of the constraints placed upon them by their respective moralities of custom. Thus, the notion that the conquered peoples lived any kind of wild and unrestrained form of existence wherein they were free to outwardly vent their instinct for power is not supported by the overall drift of the narrative.

On the basis of this analysis of the narrative of GM II it is evident that human beings existing in society need not be human beings of bad conscience. The narrative allows that human beings existing in society can be sovereign human beings of conscience, rather than sovereign human beings of bad conscience. It is important to

emphasize this point, given that Nietzsche tends to speak as if life in society necessarily breeds human beings of bad conscience. Greater clarity on this point would have improved the consistency, coherence, and completeness of the narrative, and thereby given it a greater air of truth.

4.9 The Emergence of Bad Conscience Reconsidered

The emergence of bad conscience as opposed to mere conscience still presents us with a problem. Why is it that some human beings possess conscience while others possess bad conscience?

Nietzsche claims that bad conscience arose through the forced and violent entrapment of people within states at the hands of powerful conquerors. However, there is a potential problem with this conjecture: since those who became subjugated to the conquerors had existed in societies prior to being conquered by the noble lords, it is possible that all the conditions necessary for the emergence of bad conscience would have already obtained prior to the emergence of the state-form of community. Already those who were to be conquered would have learned to have power over their momentary affects and desires, to constrain themselves so as to exist peacefully in community with others. Already moralities of custom and the punishments used to enforce them would have turned their will to power inward. Perhaps they would have already become ashamed of their animalistic will to power as a result of not being able to freely express it outwardly. One might therefore argue that Nietzsche's claim that bad conscience would not have grown without the conquerors is inconsistent with his narrative. It may be that clan communities, characterized by moralities of custom, would have been sufficient to

turn will to power inward and produce bad conscience. Societies formed and governed by conquerors may not have been necessary for this to occur.

On the other hand, there is reason to think that clan communities may *not* have provided the right conditions for the emergence of bad conscience. According to Nietzsche, such communities existed in a “constant state of war” with one another. (DB 18) The frequent violent confrontations between them and the concomitant unleashings of will to power may have allowed the members of these communities – who would have normally held their will to power in check within the context of their communities – to blow off steam. This venting of appropriative and destructive energy may have been enough to ward off bad conscience.

With the creation of states and the consequent gathering of conquered clans into larger political units, the opportunities for the outward release of will to power would have been fewer and farther between for the subjugated peoples and largely reserved for the privileged class of nobles. The nobles would have continued to enjoy a healthy outward release of power – both in their dealings with rival states and in their administration of order within their own states – and as a result would not have developed bad conscience. They would no doubt have been sovereign individuals with conscience, but their will to power would not have been turned inward to the same degree as those whom they subjugated. The will to power of the subjugated, on the other hand, lacking sufficient opportunities for outward release, would have turned inward to a much greater degree, changing these sovereign individuals with conscience into sovereign individuals with *bad* conscience.¹⁶⁸ This bad conscience would later become an aspect of

¹⁶⁸ We might say that the difference between having conscience and having bad conscience is a matter of the degree to which one’s will to power is turned inward.

slave consciousness and slave morality, but it would have existed prior to the emergence of slave morality and initially developed as a feature of the psychology of the conquered peoples.

So it may be that clan communities provided sufficient opportunity for their members to outwardly express their will to power, enough to prevent the onset of bad conscience, whereas the creation of states by noble conquerors created a social and political situation in which the subjects of the state lacked sufficient opportunity to express their will to power outwardly. As a consequence, conscience may have been transformed into bad conscience among the conquered.

This, however, does not suffice to fully explain the existence of both conscience and bad conscience. This is because in GM II: 14-15 Nietzsche claims that in both prehistory and modern times there are those who are punished in accordance with the law who nonetheless fail to develop bad conscience. Punishment generally fails to arouse a “*feeling of guilt*” or “bad conscience” in the criminal. Rarely does it break the criminal’s will in this way. More often it makes him harder, more resistant to the powers that dominate, and more alienated from the community and the institutions of the state. As we saw above, through being punished the offender sees that his misdeeds and other crimes are not blameworthy in themselves, but only in certain circumstances, for punishment involves deeds that would be considered vicious or criminal if committed by people who were not officially sanctioned by the community or the state to commit them. In this way, punishment works against the occurrence of bad conscience. The “inner pain” that is felt by the criminal who is caught breaking the law is usually not the pain of bad conscience, but the shock and disappointment at being overpowered by a superior force. (GM II: 14)

As I have already demonstrated, Nietzsche's claim in GM II: 14 that punishment rarely produces bad conscience in the criminal throws a wrench into his narrative since he then goes on to claim in GM II: 16 that it was precisely the enforcement of law through punishment that brought about the emergence of bad conscience among the subjects of states.

One way of accounting for this discrepancy would be to conjecture that when Nietzsche speaks in GM II: 14 of the effect of punishment on criminals, he is speaking not of its effect on the subjects of the state in general, but of its effect on a specific type of person. For Nietzsche, the criminal is a representative of the strong, rare, "active", "attacking", "aggressive", "encroaching" (GM II: 11) type of human who by nature tends to diverge from and be at odds with the norms of his community. (TI Skirmishes: 45) His strength sets him against society and the constraints it tries to put on his will to power. Such an individual is naturally resistant to the shame and self-loathing that are essential to the "reaction of the soul" called bad conscience. (GM II: 14) He has by nature a "better conscience" (GM II: 11) concerning his animal instincts. Consequently, it is more likely that punishment would teach this type of human to be more cunning and adept in his pursuit of power. It would more likely improve his powers of memory, calculation, reason, reflection, and all the other capacities of the sovereign and responsible individual so that he might more effectively actualize his will to power and achieve his goals. Punishment would give him greater mastery over himself, but not make him ashamed of what he essentially is.

It would be another, more common type of human being who would develop bad conscience in reaction to punishment or even the mere threat of punishment. This would

be the reactive type of human whose constitution and will are weaker. The will to power of such an individual would be more likely to turn violently against itself and cause him to feel shame for his most basic animal instinct.

The sovereign individual can therefore be one who feels no guilt, but who becomes more careful through punishment; or he can be one who is laid low by bad conscience and feels shame for his misdeeds. In both cases punishment expands the space of consciousness in the individual, thereby allowing him to distance himself from his immediate affects and desires. The difference is that in one case he becomes ashamed of his instincts, while in the other he becomes not ashamed, but more prudent with respect to how he seeks to satisfy them. Whether an individual becomes shameful or prudent might depend very much on his type. That the narrative of GM II does not adequately explain and account for these two distinct reactions to socialization and punishment means that it falls short of providing a complete and comprehensive explanation for the phenomena that are included within its purview. This is another way in which the narrative fails to meet the relevant criteria of truth.

4.10 Pre-Social Man

Another questionable feature of the narrative of GM II, one which I have not yet explicitly addressed, is its invocation of the idea that human beings once existed outside of society altogether. Some commentators acknowledge this aspect of the narrative of GM II in passing, but do not broach the topic of its validity or problematize it in any way. For example, Leiter notes that according to Nietzsche “adult human beings [...] lacked [a capacity for internal self-assessment] until forced into civilized intercourse with their

fellow human beings”.¹⁶⁹ He also says with reference to GM II: 3 that “we are discussing what the animal man had to be like before regular civilized intercourse with his fellows (“the advantages of society”) would even be possible”.¹⁷⁰ With reference to GM II: 16 and 17, Risse says only that “[t]he idea seems to be that people are living more or less by themselves, following their instincts for food, shelter, sex, and, as Nietzsche emphasizes, their drives for aggression”.¹⁷¹ In contrast to these commentators, I will now problematize this aspect of the narrative.

Nietzsche makes reference to the pre-social existence of man on a number of occasions over the course of the treatise. For example, in GM II: 8 he says that “[p]urchase and sale, together with their psychological accessories, are older than even the beginnings of any societal associations and organizational forms”. This claim implies that “societal associations and organizational forms” had a beginning, and that human beings with certain “psychological accessories” and economic relations existed prior to the beginning of these associations and forms. Later, in GM II: 16, Nietzsche again insinuates a distinction between social and pre-social man. He claims that bad conscience was produced “under the pressure of that most fundamental of all changes [man] ever experienced – the change of finding himself enclosed once and for all within the sway of society and peace”. Nietzsche describes this change as “a leap and plunge [...] into new situations and conditions of existence” (GM II: 16); it “was not gradual, not voluntary, and [...] presented itself not as an organic growing into new conditions, but rather as a break, a leap, a compulsion, an inescapable doom”. (GM II: 17) Prior to this break there had been “the wild free roaming human”, “happily adapted to wilderness, war, roaming

¹⁶⁹ Leiter, *Nietzsche On Morality*, 178.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 182.

¹⁷¹ Risse, 57.

about, adventure”. (GM II: 16) Afterwards there was “the one locked up in the “state” for the purpose of taming” (GM II: 22), “this animal that one wants to “tame” and that beats itself raw on the bars of its cage; this deprived one, consumed by homesickness for the desert, who had to create out of himself an adventure, a place of torture, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness” (GM II: 16). Here Nietzsche makes the socialization and taming of human beings a function of the creation of states.¹⁷²

However, if we take into account the temporal priority of clan communities and their moralities of custom, then it must be the case that the “taming” of man was initially accomplished by the punishments used to enforce moralities of custom. To make the narrative as consistent and coherent as possible, the enforcement of custom by means of punishment should be understood as the means by which human beings became socialized. Such socialization changed human beings from forgetful animals who were governed completely by momentary affect and desire to animals who had the power to resist momentary passions, who had the ability to remember, to reason, to reflect, to make plans and adhere to them: socialization in conjunction with morality of custom endowed human beings with consciousness and sovereignty.

Indeed we find evidence for this conclusion in the first three sections of GM II, where Nietzsche discusses the creation of the sovereign individual through the enforcement of morality of custom. For example, he claims that “with the help of the morality of custom and the social straightjacket man was *made* truly calculable”. (GM II:

¹⁷² Nietzsche’s invocation of the idea of pre-social man brings to mind Odysseus’ description of Cyclops in *The Odyssey*: “A huge man slept alone in that place and herded his animals there, all alone. He had no doings with others, but lived in solitude, without laws. For truly he was an unearthly monster, not like a man who lives by bread, more like a wooded peak of a high mountain range that stands out alone above all others.” [Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Barry B. Powell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 174.] The resonance between this description of Cyclops and Nietzsche’s idea of pre-social man suggests the mythic quality of the figure of pre-social man in GM II.

2) This implies that human beings were at one time not so calculable, but more erratic in their behaviour, more subject to the influence of momentary impulses. This idea is reinforced when Nietzsche says that the sovereign individual is “free *again* [emphasis added] from morality of custom” (GM II: 2), which suggests that man was already at some prior time free from morality of custom. Presumably this would have been before he entered into society and became subject to the demands of custom. In the next section we find further evidence of man’s movement from pre-social to social existence. There Nietzsche states that “the harshness of penal laws in particular provides a measuring stick for the amount of effort it took to achieve victory over forgetfulness and to keep a few primitive requirements of social co-existence *present* for these slaves of momentary affect and desire”. (GM II: 3) Again, it is implied that human beings had to *become* fit for society. In their original state they were unfit for it because they were too impulsive and forgetful.

It is difficult, however, to see how Nietzsche’s idea of a pre-social kind of human being who lacks consciousness and sovereign individuality makes much sense. According to the logic of the narrative, there could not have been a time when unconscious affect and desire ruled human beings so completely. For without the power to remember, to promise, to plan, and to resist momentary affect and desire, how could early human communities like the ones Nietzsche imagines have ever existed in the first place? These powers would have been necessary from the very “beginning” in order for the community to maintain itself as a cohesive unit. Individuals possessing freedom from momentary affect and desire would have been needed so that the selfish pursuit of power could be curbed for the sake of preserving the community as a greater unit of power. In

theory, the customs that structured clan communities would have served the same basic purpose as the laws that later governed the subjects of states: they would have served to maintain the collective as a greater unit of power which, through collective action, could more effectively maintain its existence and augment its power.¹⁷³ Presumably, a form of justice would have also been administered in early human communities and, as in states, its functioning would have required memory, forethought, prudence, reflection, calculation, self-control, in short, sovereignty. In addition, the idea put forth by Nietzsche in DB that moralities of custom originate in notions of what is useful for the community suggests a kind of calculative rationality at work. It therefore suggests the existence of the powers of the sovereign individual at the very “beginning”.

Society and morality of custom as Nietzsche has portrayed them could not have been the cause of the emergence of the sovereign individual endowed with memory, responsibility, and power over momentary affect and desire, for according to the logic of the narrative the sovereign individual and his unique powers are necessary conditions if there is to be society and morality of custom in the first place. Nietzsche’s story, if taken literally, does not make sense. It presupposes at the beginning what it intends to explain and what is ostensibly the outcome. The powers of soul that are supposed to be created by social constraint and punishment must already exist if there is to be any community at all. This is another way in which the narrative of GM II fails to meet the epistemic requirements of coherence and consistency.

Interestingly, in a particularly anomalous passage from GM II, Nietzsche claims that certain powers of soul that are characteristic of the sovereign individual did actually

¹⁷³ The fundamental difference is that the conquerors who created states were self-conscious progenitors of law as opposed to mere upholders of the laws of the ancestors and gods.

exist prior to the “beginnings of any societal associations and organizational forms”. (GM

II: 8) He states that

[m]aking prices, gauging values, thinking out equivalents, exchanging – this preoccupied man’s very first thinking to such an extent that it is in a certain sense thinking *itself*: here that oldest kind of acumen was bred, here likewise we may suspect the first beginnings of human pride, man’s feeling of pre-eminence with respect to other creatures. Perhaps our word “man” (*manas*) still expresses precisely something of this self-esteem: man designated himself as the being who measures values, who values and measures, as the “appraising animal in itself.” Purchase and sale, together with their psychological accessories, are older than even the beginnings of any societal associations and organizational forms. (GM II: 8)

Here we get some insight into the kinds of “psychological accessories” that are supposed to pre-date any kind of society. These are the powers of valuation and measurement which are, according to Nietzsche, almost synonymous with thinking itself. Yet it is clear that these powers of soul require precisely the kind of expanded consciousness that is characteristic of the sovereign individual and which, at least according to the main line of Nietzsche’s narrative, should not have existed prior to the socialization of human beings by means of corporal punishment. As Nietzsche tells us, the ability to promise, which is one of the hallmarks of the socialized human being, presupposes that man is “able to reckon, to calculate”. (GM II: 1) Reckoning and calculating are close in meaning to measurement and valuation, so close that they can be taken in this context as virtually synonymous with those latter terms. But according to the main thrust of the narrative, man is supposed to have gained these powers as a result of socialization and punishment. Thus, within the context of the narrative of GM II these powers should not be characteristic of pre-social man.

This passage from GM II: 8, in which we find Nietzsche ascribing powers of soul to pre-social man which had previously been presented as products of socialization, is

particularly outstanding in its lack of consistency and coherence with the rest of the narrative. Its inconsistency is so glaring that it really can't be taken as part of the narrative at all.

4.11 Darwin on the Origin of Human Sociability

In order to better grasp the unlikely nature of Nietzsche's idea that man had to be coerced into living in society with others, it might help to consider by way of contrast Charles Darwin's theory of human sociability. Darwin understands human beings to be deeply social animals: they have a strong desire for the company of other human beings and derive a great "feeling of pleasure from society"¹⁷⁴, so much so that extended periods of solitude are extremely unpleasant for them, as is evident from the fact that solitary confinement is one of the most severe punishments that can be inflicted upon a human being.¹⁷⁵ Darwin posits that the social nature of human beings is the consequence of a prolonged process of natural selection, a process which extends back in time to a period before the existence of the human species. According to Darwin's theory, "primeval men [and] the ape-like progenitors of man"¹⁷⁶ were the kinds of animals whose chances of survival were improved by living in the company of others of their kind. Consequently, the individuals of these species who most enjoyed society would have lived longer and produced more offspring than those who preferred to be solitary.¹⁷⁷ Over time, this would have had the effect of augmenting and perpetuating the tendency within the species to be social. It would have favoured the existence individuals possessing strong social instincts,

¹⁷⁴ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1974), 102.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 105.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 126.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 102.

such as a tendency to feel discomfort when isolated from their fellows, a tendency to be concerned for the well-being of their fellows, a tendency to be faithful to their comrades and to love them, a tendency to defend and aid their comrades, a willingness to obey the leader of the group, an ability to be in sympathy with the other members of the group, and the ability of self-command.¹⁷⁸ Groups comprised of individuals that were better endowed with these social instincts would have cohered better and have therefore been able to outcompete other groups whose members were more “[s]elfish and contentious”.¹⁷⁹ In this way, natural selection favoured the propagation of the social instincts. As Darwin tells us: “A tribe including many members who, from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection”.¹⁸⁰ It can therefore be said that social instincts developed for the general good of the species, where “general good” means “the rearing of the greatest number of individuals in full vigor and health, with all their faculties perfect, under the conditions to which they are subjected”.¹⁸¹ On this account, the human tendency to be social was first inherited from the pre-existing animal species that were the ancient progenitors of the human species, and is continually reinforced by the usefulness of the social instincts. If Darwin’s theory is correct, then human beings have always been fundamentally social creatures.

Darwin acknowledges that despite the predominant strength of the social instincts due to natural selection, there is frequently “a struggle in man between his social

¹⁷⁸ Darwin, 106 & 126.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 127.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 129.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 117.

instincts, with their derived virtues, and his lower, though momentarily stronger impulses or desires”¹⁸², impulses or desires which are in various ways “opposed to the good of others” or disapproved of by the community.¹⁸³ However, Darwin thinks that man’s social instincts more often than not override these momentary anti-social impulses, and that this can happen even when the latter are felt more strongly. This occurs because an individual presently affected by an anti-social impulse can at the same time remember past occasions when he gave in to anti-social impulses and afterwards felt remorse once the strength of the impulses had subsided. He can thereby foresee that giving in to a present anti-social impulse could lead him to suffer greatly in the future once the force of his social instincts has again become predominant.¹⁸⁴ In this way, individuals can learn – with the help of memory, reason, and imagination – to resist impulses that are in some way contrary to the good of the community or otherwise disapproved of by the community. Through experience and learning “man comes to feel [...] that it is best for him to obey his more persistent [social] impulses”.¹⁸⁵ Of course, there are those individuals who are constituted such that their social instincts are not strong enough to counter their anti-social impulses. Darwin thinks that the only way to deal with such individuals is to threaten them with punishment so that they might become convinced that it is in their best interest over the long run “to regard the good of others rather than [their] own”.¹⁸⁶ But for Darwin, such individuals are the exception. Generally speaking, natural selection has made man’s social instincts strong enough that they win out over his more selfish impulses.

¹⁸² Darwin, 121.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 112.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 121.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 112.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

In advocating this theory of human sociability, Darwin in effect rejects Nietzsche's idea that human beings were forcibly "rendered social"¹⁸⁷ by means of corporal punishment. For Darwin, "it is a more probable view that [the social] sensations [e.g., comfort in society and discomfort in solitude] were first developed, in order that those animals which would profit by living in society, should be induced to live together, in the same manner as the sense of hunger and the pleasure of eating were, no doubt, first acquired in order to induce animals to eat".¹⁸⁸ Contrary to Nietzsche, Darwin thinks it was through a gradual and organic process (viz., natural selection) that human beings acquired their social tendencies.

This brief sketch of Darwin's theory of human sociability helps bring into relief a significant weakness in Nietzsche's account of how human beings came to be social. In positing the existence of a pre-social kind of human being who must be brought into society by force, Nietzsche fails to recognize the deeply social nature of human beings. In Nietzsche's view human beings are naturally and fundamentally egoistic. Consequently, in order to be fit for life in society they must be made to restrict their egoistic will to power. The problem is that Nietzsche emphasizes this aspect of human nature too much. He conceives humans as too radically self-centred and does not give enough weight to instinctual fellow-feeling. There is undoubtedly a strong element of selfishness and egoism in human nature, and Darwin agrees with Nietzsche that this element is in active conflict with our social instincts. But Darwin is right to emphasize the profoundly social nature of human beings. Excluding the rare exceptional cases, human beings cannot survive for long in solitude; to persevere in existence we must persevere in groups. The

¹⁸⁷ Darwin, 102.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

satisfaction of any selfish will to power requires perseverance as a necessary condition, and such perseverance can only be achieved by living in society with others. Thus, the egoistic pursuit of power that Nietzsche thinks is at the basis of human nature, and that he thinks predominates before the existence of communities, can really only operate on the basis of social existence. Sociability is really more basic to what it means to be human than Nietzsche is willing to allow. On this view, it is highly improbable that human beings had to be brought out of isolation and coerced into living socially.

A more fruitful and coherent line of thought would have been for Nietzsche to posit that the members of primeval clan communities were held together in community by instinctual fellow-feeling. However, Nietzsche's tendency to want to posit an immoral foundation for capacities that are considered estimable from a moral point of view, in this case a foundation in cruelty, pushes him to posit that human beings had to be forced into society by means of corporal punishment. Whereas Nietzsche posits an immoral basis for the powers of soul that are necessary for the existence of morality, Darwin posits a non-moral basis in natural selection for those same capacities. Nietzsche's idea of solitary animals being made social by means of violence is ultimately less tenable than Darwin's theory based on natural selection.

4.12 Nietzsche's Concern with Truth in GM II

Despite the epistemic deficiencies of the narrative of GM II – in terms of its consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, and explanatory power – it nonetheless has an air of plausibility and shows evidence of a concern on Nietzsche's part to appropriate the past in a truthful manner. The overarching naturalistic character of Nietzsche's

explanations in GM II is evidence of his concern to appropriate the past truthfully.

Naturalistic explanations explain observable phenomena in terms of natural facts and natural causes; they refrain from invoking supernatural causes and a priori explanations. In GM II Nietzsche offers naturalistic explanations for how the sovereign individual and the human being of bad conscience came into existence. According to the narrative, both the sovereign individual and the human being of bad conscience came into existence as a result of the inhibiting effect of socialization and the power of pain to alter the human psyche. The infliction of pain upon the bodies of some human beings by other human beings for the purpose of making the former amenable to life in society brought into existence these two human types. In this way, Nietzsche posits naturalistic explanations for the emergence and existence of various capacities which are characteristic of human beings and often thought of as uniquely human: memory, responsibility, reason, reflection, thought, self-surveillance, conscience, and bad conscience. Since Nietzsche accords epistemic privilege to naturalistic claims, it is significant that the approach he takes to explaining the origin of these powers is so thoroughly naturalistic. This should be taken as indicative of a concern on his part to appropriate the past in a truthful manner.

It can also be said that the narrative's plausibility is enhanced through the simplicity of the basic principles that it employs. For example, to explain the emergence of the sovereign individual, Nietzsche employs such basic principles as "[s]eeing-suffer feels good, making-suffer even more so" (GM II: 6); "to practice cruelty is to enjoy the greatest gratification of the feeling of power" (DB 18); and "only what does not cease *to give pain* remains in one's memory". (GM II: 3) By means of these basic principles Nietzsche offers a naturalistic explanation of how the inhibiting effect of socialization

and punishment led to the expansion and complexification of the conscious aspect of the human psyche and ultimately gave rise to the sovereign individual. Similarly, Nietzsche's explanation for the emergence of the human being of bad conscience makes use of the principle: "All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn themselves inward*". (GM II: 16) By means of this principle he explains how human beings became ashamed of their most basic natural instinct. Nietzsche conceives human beings as fundamentally driven and determined by their will to power. The inhibiting effect that socialization and punishment had on their ability to outwardly express their will to power led to the expansion and complexification of human consciousness. This is the naturalistic mechanism by which the human being of bad conscience came into existence. Ultimately, all of Nietzsche's explanations in GM II in some way rely on a single basic naturalistic principle, the principle of will to power. As Nietzsche says, "all happening in the organic world is an *overpowering, a becoming-lord-over*"; "the essence of life [is] its *will to power*". (GM II: 12) That Nietzsche explains a diverse range of phenomena by means of a single principle gives his explanations an air of simplicity and plausibility.

With respect to Nietzsche's naturalism, it is particularly important to note the emphasis he places on physiology in his explanations of human phenomena. For example, physiology is basic to how he accounts for the emergence of the powers of memory and promise-making in humans. As we have seen, Nietzsche thinks that human beings were originally prone to forgetfulness. Later their capacity to forget became diminished due to the demands of living in society. Social coexistence required that people be trained to remember and abide by customary rules of conduct. Physical pain was essential to this process of training: individuals learned what it was they ought to

refrain from doing by being made to feel pain. By inflicting violence upon their bodies new mental abilities came into existence, including the ability to remember and abide by rules of action which benefitted the community as a whole.¹⁸⁹

Nietzsche suggests that acting upon the body in this way did not merely alter the “mind” of the individual. It also altered the body, the flesh, the physiological constitution of the individual. Previously, he says, there had been an irresistible “forgetfulness in the flesh”. (GM II: 3) However, once punishment had inculcated in man the powers of memory and promise-making, the consciousness of these powers “twitch[ed] in all his muscles” and “[became] flesh in him”. (GM II: 2) Pain aided in “hypnotizing the entire nervous and intellectual system”. (GM II: 3) We should not take these references to muscle, flesh, and nervous system as purely metaphorical. Rather, it is consistent with Nietzsche’s naturalism and his view concerning the causal priority of the physiological to take him as saying that the use of violence and pain on the body can literally change its physiological constitution. It can alter the configuration of forces that comprise the body, such that as a consequence new conditions are instituted in the body, which conditions manifest themselves in new mental or psychic abilities.

Nietzsche’s account of the emergence of memory and promise-making out of the practice of doing violence to bodies is an example of how he gives physiology a central role in his naturalistic explanations of human phenomena. Nietzsche’s claims often make appeal to physiology. For example, in GS 39 and 368 he appeals to physiological processes and conditions to explain matters of aesthetic taste. In GM III: 13 he invokes

¹⁸⁹ The naturalistic character of Nietzsche’s explanations in this instance is highlighted by his use of the concept of breeding: man, a “necessarily forgetful animal [...] has now bred in itself an opposite faculty, a memory”; “[t]o breed an animal that *is permitted to promise* – isn’t that precisely the paradoxical task nature has set for itself with regard to man?” (GM II: 1) The development of the power of memory and the ability to promise are here conceived as consequences of breeding, a process that is immanent to nature.

physiology to explain the appeal of the ascetic ideal. He invokes it again in GM III: 16 to explain the origin of the concepts of guilt and sin. And in sections 227, 229, and 233 of WP he offers physiological explanations of certain moods and feelings as a way of debunking the Christian interpretations of those moods and feelings. Such appeals to physiology are in accord with Nietzsche's clear tendency to give epistemic priority to naturalistic and empirical claims.

We find further indication of Nietzsche's concern to give a truthful naturalistic account of the development of certain human capacities in his reliance on the writings of Albert Hermann Post and Josef Kohler. Post and Kohler were pioneers in the field of ethnological or comparative jurisprudence. (It was Post who coined the term "ethnological jurisprudence" in 1872.¹⁹⁰) Both thinkers understood law from an essentially historical perspective. According to Post, an historical approach to jurisprudence leads to the conclusion that law is "the slowly ripened product of a course of development that extended over many centuries"; "law was not founded on immutable ideas and principles, but [...] was the product of the creative mind of a nation, that this product was subjected to processes of transformation and development, and did not admit of regulation by the individual reason of a single philosophical enquirer".¹⁹¹ Kohler's approach to legal philosophy was likewise historical. He "opposed the nonhistorical natural law theories of Kant", was against the idea that there is any kind of static ideal

¹⁹⁰ R.H. Barnes, "Introduction," in *On the Prehistory of Marriage*, trans. R.H. Barnes and Ruth Barnes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 19.

¹⁹¹ Albert Hermann Post, "Ethnological Jurisprudence," trans. Thomas J. McCormack, *The Monist* 2, no. 1 (1891): 31-2.

law, and believed that law changes and indeed must change in order to best serve the needs of a particular culture at a particular time.¹⁹²

Post and Kohler combined their historical approaches to jurisprudence with ethnology to create ethnological jurisprudence. Ethnology, says Post, is “the science that has for the subject of its investigations the totality of the phenomena of social life of all the peoples of the earth, and which makes use, in this investigation, of the methods of inductive inquiry exclusively employed by physical and natural science”.¹⁹³ Since laws are a universal aspect of the social life of human beings, they believed that allowing the findings of ethnology to inform the study of law would provide important insight into the general nature of law.

Ethnological jurisprudence expanded not only the cultural breadth of the study of law, but its temporal depth as well. Post’s and Kohler’s studies in ethnological jurisprudence are properly conceived as extensions of the historical approach to jurisprudence. As it was commonly practiced in their time, historical jurisprudence was limited insofar as it only drew upon documented portions of the human past. However, Post and Kohler believed that ethnological jurisprudence could exceed these temporal limits because the results of ethnological research can allow jurists to make valid conjectures about the laws that existed in prehistoric communities. It supplies “complementary information at a point where the threads of the history of law are lost in the obscurity of early times”.¹⁹⁴ It can do this because, according to Post, the laws that presently exist among “the uncivilised peoples, the so-called primitive peoples or *Naturvölker*”, represent the kinds of laws that existed during the early undocumented

¹⁹² Barnes, 17-8.

¹⁹³ Post, 32.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 34.

periods, or prehistory, of present-day “civilised peoples”.¹⁹⁵ For Post it is remarkable and significant that “the most singular parallel phenomena” exist among present-day “uncivilized” peoples.¹⁹⁶ Along with many differences and peculiarities, ethnological jurisprudence discovers many agreements – some universal, some frequent – among their various systems of law.¹⁹⁷ Post conjectures that the ancient ancestral communities of present-day “civilized” peoples would have exhibited these same parallel phenomena and agreements since they so frequently occur among so-called primitive peoples.

Kohler was likewise of the view that comparative jurisprudence could provide insight into the “prehistory of modern legal institutions”.¹⁹⁸ His approach assumed that “human society has passed through universal stages of evolution”¹⁹⁹ and that the earlier stages of this evolution are manifest in present-day simple societies. Thus, for Kohler, comparative jurisprudence offers insight into the “evolutionary history of legal institutions”.²⁰⁰

So we see how the ethnological jurisprudence championed by Post and Kohler “allow[s] the eye to range over the legal systems of all the peoples of the globe, instead of, as before, restricting it to very narrow limits”.²⁰¹ By bringing “the comparative study of the institutions of simple societies and ancient civilizations” within the ambit of legal scholarship²⁰², these two thinkers proposed to expand the scope of historical

¹⁹⁵ Post, 34.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 33.

¹⁹⁸ Barnes, 20.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 19.

²⁰¹ Post, 32. Cf. BG 186 where Nietzsche calls for a wide-ranging comparison of diverse moralities as an antidote to the parochialism that constrains the study of morality in Europe.

²⁰² Barnes, 19.

jurisprudence. The naturalistic character of their project is evident in the historical and inductive nature of their methods.

Nietzsche's approach to the history of morality in GM II resembles the historical and ethnological approach to jurisprudence advocated by Post and Kohler insofar as he employs conjectures regarding the psychologies and societies of prehistoric human beings as a way of explaining the present existence of various human capacities and moral phenomena. Beyond mere resemblance of approach, it is significant that Nietzsche's discussion of punishment in GM II relies to a great extent on Post's and Kohler's naturalistic studies in ethnological and comparative jurisprudence. As David S. Thatcher notes, "In his general line of argument, particularly about the meaning of punishment, and in his specific terminology (e.g. "Äquivalenz," "Ausgleich," "Obligations-rechte," "compositio" etc.) [Nietzsche] is very much indebted to Post and, to a lesser degree, to Kohler and other writers on jurisprudence".²⁰³ In particular, it is evident that Nietzsche's list of "old German punishments" in GM II: 3 is indebted to Post's 1880 book *Building Blocks for a Universal Science of Law on a Comparative-Ethnological Basis*. The punishments that Nietzsche refers to are all touched upon within the space of ten pages in that book and as Clark and Swenson note, Nietzsche owned a copy of Post's book and had marked numerous passages in the first volume.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, they note that Nietzsche's claim in GM II: 13 that punishment can be "a means for preserving the purity of the race or maintaining a social type" derives from Post's claim that in China "state-of-emergency punishments [are used] for the

²⁰³ David S. Thatcher, "Zur Genealogie der Moral: Some Textual Annotations," *Nietzsche-Studien* 18 (1989): 591.

²⁰⁴ Clark and Swenson, 141-2.

preservation of ethnic balance”.²⁰⁵ Clark and Swenson also show that Nietzsche’s discussion in GM II: 5 of the creditor-debtor relationship and the consequences for the debtor if he failed to pay the creditor relies on Kohler’s 1885 book *Law as Cultural Phenomenon*.²⁰⁶ Overall we can say that Nietzsche’s use of the writings of Post and Kohler shows his concern with telling the truth about the past insofar as the researches of these two authors were conducted in the same naturalistic spirit as Nietzsche’s endeavour in GM II to explain the historical development of various human feelings, ideas, and capacities. Since Nietzsche accords epistemic privilege to naturalistic claims, we can presume that he considered the claims of Post and Kohler to have high epistemic value.

However, we also find a certain lack of concern with truth and factual accuracy in Nietzsche’s handling of some historical evidence. For example, Clark and Swenson suggest that Nietzsche’s discussion in GM II: 5 of the value of various body parts takes inspiration from a passage in Post’s book where “he gives two examples of lists assigning value to body parts”.²⁰⁷ However, Post offers these lists as examples of how it was determined what amount a perpetrator must pay to an injured party (e.g., how many cattle) or what punishment follows (e.g., how many lashes) after the perpetrator has been found liable for the injury of some particular part of another’s body. These lists do not determine “the amount the injured party can cut off [the perpetrator’s body] as compensation”.²⁰⁸ Nonetheless, in GM II: 5 Nietzsche speaks as if the creditor could cut off parts of the debtor’s body in compensation for failure of repayment:

the creditor could subject the body of the debtor to all manner of ignominy and torture, for example cutting as much from it as appeared commensurate to the

²⁰⁵ Clark and Swenson, 146.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 142-3.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 143.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

magnitude of the debt: – and everywhere and early on there were exact assessments of value developed from this viewpoint – some going horribly into the smallest detail – *legally* established assessments of the individual limbs and areas on the body. (GM II: 5)

Post provides no direct evidence for any such practices. At best, Nietzsche would seem to be making an unwarranted extrapolation from the evidence provided by Post.

Nietzsche does, however, offer some evidence from ancient Roman law to support his claim that a creditor could exact payment from his debtor by cutting off parts of the debtor's body. He claims that "the Twelve Tables legislation of Rome decreed it was of no consequence how much or how little the creditors cut off in such a case, "*si plus minusve secuerunt, ne fraude esto* [If they have secured more or less, let that be no crime]"" (GM II: 5) However, it is by no means clear that the provision in the Twelve Tables that Nietzsche is referring to actually means what Nietzsche thinks it means.

Johnson, Coleman-Norton, and Bourne, the translators and commentators of *Ancient Roman Statutes*, note that the wording of the laws of the Twelve Tables as we now have them, even where the exact words are preserved, is exceedingly brief, "even to the point of obscurity".²⁰⁹ Consequently, interpretation of the laws of the Twelve Tables is necessary so as to bring out the implied words and meanings. And this was the case even in ancient Rome where the "extreme brevity and consequent obscurity in the law encouraged the early rise of jurists [...] to interpret the law for the people".²¹⁰ Thus, due to the obscure way in which the laws of the Twelve Tables were written and are now preserved, there is no settled and infallible opinion concerning the meaning of many of

²⁰⁹ *The Corpus of Roman Law*, ed. Clyde Pharr, vol. 2, *Ancient Roman Statutes*, trans. Allan Chester Johnson, Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, and Frank Card Bourne. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 9.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

the provisions it contains. This is the case with respect to the provision that Nietzsche makes reference to in GM II: 5.

Johnson et al. render this provision of the twelve Tables (Table III paragraph 6) as follows: “On the third market day [at which time the debtor has still not paid his debt] the creditors shall cut shares [*partes secanto*]. If they have cut more or less of their shares it shall be without prejudice”.²¹¹ The meaning of this provision depends very much on how one interprets the phrase “shall cut shares [*partes secanto*]”. The translators note that its meaning is far from clear and give a list of possible interpretations: “to divide the debtor’s functions and capabilities”, “to claim shares in the debtor’s property”, “to divide the price obtained for the sale of the debtor’s person”, “to divide the debtor’s family and goods”, “to announce to the magistrate their shares of the debtor’s estate”, and “to cut their several shares of the debtor’s body”.²¹² This last interpretation is the one on which the validity of Nietzsche’s claim in GM II: 5 rests. And indeed there are indications among some Latin writers (Gellius, Quintilian, Dio Cassius, and Tertullian) that *partes secanto* means what Nietzsche’s claim requires it to mean. This evidence, however, is not entirely in Nietzsche favour, for although these writers agree that *partes secanto* means something like “to cut their several shares of the debtor’s body”, they also indicate that the law was either “repudiated” by “public custom” (Quintilian) or “eradicated later by common consent” (Tertullian).²¹³ According to M. Radin, all the Latin writers in question agree that the law “was contrary to public feeling and [...] quickly became obsolete”.²¹⁴ Gellius in particular says that “he never read or heard that anyone in antiquity was

²¹¹ *The Corpus of Roman Law*, 10.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 14n25.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ M. Radin, “Secare Partis: The Early Roman Law of Execution against a Debtor,” *The American Journal of Philology* 43, no. 1 (1922): 33.

dissected through operation of this law”.²¹⁵ The evidence provided by these authors is clearly ambiguous. They affirm the meaning of *partes secanto* that Nietzsche’s claim requires. At the same time their testimony suggests that common practice was not in accordance with the law. This would tend to undermine, or at least diminish, the force of Nietzsche’s claim that creditors in ancient Rome could legally cut pieces from the body of a debtor who had failed to repay his debt.

To further complicate the issue, Radin argues that the authority of these four Latin writers regarding the original meaning of *partes secanto* is far from unquestionable. Quintilian is the earliest of these writers and even he was born over four hundred years after the writing of the Twelve Tables, by which time their memorization, which was still practiced in Cicero’s time, had apparently been out of fashion for over a century.²¹⁶ Consequently, whether their interpretation of *partes secanto* as “to cut their several shares of the debtor’s body” is actually correct is open to doubt.²¹⁷

Nietzsche’s citation of a portion of paragraph 6 Table III of the Twelve Tables in GM II: 5 takes no account whatsoever of the difficulties surrounding the interpretation of that ancient piece of text. He merely assumes the truth of one possible interpretation, one which happens to fit nicely with his thesis concerning the power of pain to transform the mental life of human beings. If Nietzsche’s preferred interpretation is correct, then this provision of Roman law does seem to place a kind of value on the various parts of a human body in certain circumstances. But it is by no means clear that Nietzsche’s preferred interpretation is correct. The fact that Nietzsche does not explore and weigh the

²¹⁵ *The Corpus of Roman Law*, 14n25.

²¹⁶ Radin, 34.

²¹⁷ For this and other reasons, Radin argues in favour of an alternative interpretation of *partes secanto*. A complete explication of Radin’s interesting argument would take me too far beyond the proper scope of this dissertation.

various interpretive options shows a lack of concern on his part with determining the most probable meaning of the provision. By choosing not to weigh the evidence both in favour of and against the various possible interpretations, Nietzsche has failed to demonstrate his claim that in ancient times a creditor could cut as much from a debtor's body "as appeared commensurate to the magnitude of the debt". (GM II: 5)

4.13 The Unhistorical in GM II

Despite Nietzsche's evident interest in offering a naturalistic account of the development of certain human capacities in GM II, there are clearly ways in which his account falls short of satisfying basic criteria of truth. We have seen that in various ways the narrative lacks consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, explanatory power, and plausibility. In addition, we have seen that Nietzsche's use of documented historical evidence sometimes lacks the kind of rigour that is appropriate to the task of telling the truth about the past. However, these epistemic shortcomings need not be construed in an entirely negative fashion. Certain features of the narrative that render it implausible can also be said to contribute positively towards Nietzsche's goal of persuading his readers to adopt a healthier attitude toward their natural will to power.

One implausible aspect of the narrative of GM II is the way in which Nietzsche sets up a contrast between pre-social and socialized man. This contrast appears in two guises. The first involves a movement from pre-social to social existence by way of the enforcement of morality of custom. The second involves a movement from pre-social to social existence by way of the creation of states. In both cases corporal punishment is instrumental to the socializing process. As we have already seen, such a movement is in

itself implausible due to the deeply social nature of human beings. In addition, that the narrative establishes two distinct instances of socialization – the first (socialization through the enforcement of morality of custom) being temporally prior to the second (socialization through the enforcement of the laws of states) – introduces a pernicious incoherence. Such incoherence greatly diminishes the truth-adequacy of the narrative.

Despite these drawbacks, the trope of socialization can be understood as contributing something significant to the narrative. What it contributes is a sense of direction. According to the narrative, socialization moved mankind away from its original state of existence towards an altered state of existence. In their original non-social form, human beings expressed their will to power outwardly in an immediate and unreflective manner. They were instinctive, involuntary, and unconscious animals, prone to forgetting the past and adept at seizing the moment. Through socialization human beings became sovereign individuals. To varying degrees their will to power was turned inward such that their consciousness became expanded. With this expansion came powers of memory, reason, calculation, foresight, self-command, self-control, and responsibility. Man became able to act in a more deliberate and voluntary manner. He gained the ability to forego the satisfaction of the moment in favour pursuing a delayed satisfaction.

This movement from pre-social to social existence is not portrayed altogether negatively in GM II. In the early sections of the treatise the movement from pre-social existence to sovereign individuality is characterized as a great achievement. The new powers that man gains as a consequence of this transformation make him an admirable creature, worthy of reverence and respect. However, this valorization of socialized man quickly recedes as the treatise moves on past the first few sections. Thereafter, the

socialization of man becomes a matter debasement and deformation. Bad conscience becomes the most prominent outcome of socialization: the process of taming is portrayed as not only expanding the inner world of man, but also as making man ashamed of his basic instinct for power. In this state of deep self-conflict man becomes a diseased and degenerate form of life, an animal that has been ruined by socialization. By the end of the second treatise, the dominant contrast is between the healthy and happy pre-social man on the one hand, and the sick and hapless man of bad conscience on the other.

Given the untenability of the idea of pre-social man, it must be concluded that the idea of a contrast between pre-social and socialized man, as well as the idea of a movement in time from one to the other, is likewise untenable. What, then, is the value of positing such a contrast and such a movement? The first thing to notice in this regard is that by means of this contrast Nietzsche is placing an emphatically negative valuation upon the characteristics that he associates with the man of bad conscience. Nietzsche selects, praises, dignifies, and idealizes the unconscious, unreflective, and instinctual mode of life that is captured by the idea of pre-social man. This has the effect of intensifying the devaluation of the man of bad conscience, whose mode of life is pictured by contrast as viciously self-aware and self-critical. It also has the effect of offering a clear alternative to the mode of life embodied by the man of bad conscience. This would seem to be what Nietzsche is after. He wants to turn his reader against the negative attitude towards will to power that is characteristic of bad conscience. He wants his readers to embrace their “natural inclinations”, their instinctual and animal selves: “For all too long now man has regarded his natural inclinations with an “evil eye,” so that in him they have finally become wedded to “bad conscience.”” (GM II: 24) Instead, man

ought to “wed to bad conscience the *unnatural inclinations*, all those aspirations to the beyond, to that which is contrary to the senses, contrary to the instincts, contrary to nature, contrary to the animal – in short the previous ideals which are all ideals hostile to life, ideals of those who libel the world”. (GM II: 24) Bad conscience is an essential aspect of that complex of ideals that “libel the world”. For Nietzsche, bad conscience is the initial manifestation of the ascetic devaluation of the world. With the emergence of bad conscience man first turns against his worldly self, against what he is by nature, namely, an aggressive power-seeking animal. This is the source of his sickness. If man is to be healthy, he must adopt a more positive attitude toward his essential nature. Nietzsche offers us an image of this more positive disposition towards the self in the figure of pre-social man. Such a man is unhindered by inner doubts and conflicting considerations. He goes after what he wants without hesitation. Such a man stands in bold contrast to the man of bad conscience and offers the reader who wishes to adopt a different attitude toward his animal self a clear target and model.

The figure of the noble conqueror and creator of states is the specific manifestation of pre-social man in the latter part of GM II. He embodies the instinctive, involuntary, unconscious, and unreflective mode of life that is characteristic of pre-social man. However, as we have already seen, in offering his readers such an image of the noble conqueror, Nietzsche has departed from the implicit logic of his own narrative. According to the narrative, the noble conqueror must be a kind of sovereign individual, for he is a member of a community governed by a morality of custom. By simplifying the noble conqueror through the elision of his sovereign characteristics, Nietzsche heightens the contrast between the noble and the man of bad conscience who, according to the

narrative, comes into existence as a result of the noble's violent creativity. In this way Nietzsche once again intensifies the devaluation of the man of bad conscience by setting up a stark contrast between his repressed inwardness and the noble's unhindered outward expression of will to power. A more coherent narrative would acknowledge that both the noble conqueror and the man of bad conscience are sovereign individuals who share in common the capacities of soul that are characteristic of the sovereign individual, and that they differ mainly with regard to their respective attitudes toward their instinct for power: the noble is well-disposed towards it while the man of bad conscience is ashamed of it.

So we see that Nietzsche conceives the noble conqueror, and by implication the pre-social type of man that he represents, by way of a selection of characteristics. He gives emphasis to certain of his features so as to distinguish him sharply from the man of bad conscience. By highlighting, exaggerating, and emphasizing certain of his features in this way, he idealizes the noble conqueror. In artistic fashion, he forces out what he considers to be his main features "so that everything else disappears in the process". (TI Skirmishes: 8) Here we find Nietzsche appropriating the past unhistorically. He constructs a less than truthful image of the noble conqueror which, by contrast with the image of the man of bad conscience, motivates the reader to break with the attitude toward will to power that the man of bad conscience exhibits and, at the same time, moves him toward adopting the attitude toward will to power that the noble conqueror, in his exaggerated simplicity, exhibits in unalloyed purity. In effect, Nietzsche essentializes the goal that he wants his readers to pursue by eliding the real similarities between the noble conqueror and the man of bad conscience.

The narrative therefore depicts not only a movement away from a pure origin represented by the image of pre-social man and the noble conqueror, but also holds out the promise of a return to this pure origin. Man's departure from his original condition was a movement away from naturalness and strength towards deformity and weakness. His return to the pure origin will result in the reclamation of that lost naturalness and strength. But just as the idea of a departure from a pure origin must be understood as the fictitious product of an unhistorical attitude towards appropriating the past, so must the idea of a return to a pure origin be understood as fictitious. Ultimately, there can be no human type who is not to some degree sovereign, who does not have the inner distances and capacities of soul which, according to Nietzsche's unlikely account, are created by violent processes of socialization. A return to an original condition characterized by purely unconscious, unreflective, and involuntary expressions of will to power is not a prospect that can be taken seriously, despite the second treatise's compelling evocation of such a return.

Notwithstanding the contradictory and improbable nature of the narrative of GM II, and regardless of the exaggerations and distortions it employs, the idea of a departure from, and possible return to, a pure original condition is a compelling structure for the narrative. It presents a stark contrast between what human beings are on the one hand (creatures exhibiting a vicious form of self-critique called "bad conscience"), and what human beings were and ought to be on the other (creatures who unthinkingly and in good conscience affirm their will to power). It is possible that this stark contrast might turn the reader's feelings against what he is more effectively than could an open and frank acknowledgement that what he is actually overlaps significantly with what he ought to

be. By purifying and simplifying what human beings were and ought to be, the goal is made easier to grasp. Indeed, the goal as Nietzsche presents it has the appeal of all that is natural and easy. Readers are urged to believe that an instinctive and unreflective life was and would be less difficult and more pleasant than a life of bad conscience. With a return to “wilderness, war, roaming about, [and] adventure” (GM II: 16), our instincts would once again be valued and connected. The “horrible heaviness” (GM II: 16) that was laid upon human beings when they entered into society would be lifted, with the result that we would once again be carried along by the automatic and unfettered functioning of our will to power. The fiction of a pure origin thus serves to put the present in ill-repute. It persuades the reader to quit feeling ashamed of his will to power and recommends to him the possibility of rediscovering mankind’s original condition, the attainment of which would involve the overcoming of bad conscience. It is possible that in the absence of Nietzsche’s rhetorical simplifications and exaggerations the imperative to overcome bad conscience might be lessened. As it stands, Nietzsche’s fictional presentation of how human beings came to be what they are serves his ultimate purpose of persuading his readers to adopt a healthier attitude toward their natural will to power, and may in some respects serve it better than would a more sober and truthful telling.

Chapter 5 – Truth and Persuasion in the First Treatise of the *Genealogy*

In undertaking an examination of Nietzsche's appropriation of the past in GM I we leave behind the largely prehistoric terrain of GM II to focus instead upon an historically demonstrable shift in moral attitudes, one that coincides with the rise of Christianity in Europe. Nietzsche presents in GM I a narrative account of this shift from pre-Christian "noble" morality to Christian "slave" morality, and just as he offers a naturalistic account of the development of certain human capacities and moral phenomena in GM II, he offers in GM I a naturalistic account of the transition in Europe from a predominant noble morality to a predominant slave morality. His explanation of the shift emphasizes the role of political, social, and economic hierarchies and the kinds of feelings or sentiments generated in individuals as a consequence of occupying different positions within those hierarchies. The values of noble morality are expressions of the psychology that is peculiar to those who occupy positions of dominance, while the values of slave morality are expressions of the psychology that is peculiar to those who occupy positions of subservience. Thus, in GM I Nietzsche explains the genesis of these two kinds of morality in terms of the psychologies of those whom he takes to be responsible for creating these moralities. In addition to the psychological mode of explanation, he also presents etymological and textual evidence to support his claims, and suggests a physiological basis for the psychological states that are central to his account. As such, the treatise exhibits an overall naturalistic approach to explaining the origin and existence of different kinds of morality and thereby manifests Nietzsche's concern to tell the truth about the past.

In addition to exhibiting a concern to tell the truth about the past, GM I also exhibits a concern with persuading the reader through the arousal of affects. This tendency is evident in the way Nietzsche portrays both the nobles and the advocates of slave morality. His depictions of these two types will, if successful, persuade his readers to overcome slave morality through the adoption of the noble manner of valuation. The depictions operate by eliciting strong emotional reactions in the reader. The figure of the noble is made attractive by way of a monumental characterization of his manner of valuation, while the corrupt and degenerate state into which man has entered as a result of the revaluation of noble morality is personified in the figure of the slave moralist. The latter is made unattractive by way of an undignified and critical depiction. Through these highly affective characterizations, Nietzsche attempts to mobilize the reader's emotions in favour of noble morality and against slave morality, thereby provoking a revaluation of the latter from the perspective of the former. My account of how Nietzsche arouses the affects of his readers to accomplish his goal of revaluating slave morality will present a significant challenge to some aspects of Christopher Janaway's interpretation of GM I as presented in his book *Beyond Selflessness*.

I conclude the chapter with an analysis of Nietzsche's critique of the idea of neutral subjectivity as presented in GM I: 13. By means of this analysis I will show how Nietzsche once again employs the fiction of a pure origin, this time as a means of persuading his readers to repudiate slave morality and adopt instead the noble manner of valuation.

It is evident that Nietzsche's intention to relate the "real history of morality" (GM Pref: 7) does not exclude an affective and rhetorical approach to persuading his readers to

negate and deny the value of slave morality. The way he dramatizes the shift from a predominant noble morality to a predominant slave morality shows the workings of a will other than the will to truth. He tells the story not only out of a concern with attaining a true understanding of the historical development of moral phenomena, but also with the polemical intent to defame contemporary European morality while praising and recommending noble morality as a worthy alternative. The affect-arousing elements of GM I serve this polemical intent.

5.1 The Natural Origins of Noble Morality and Slave Morality

Although Nietzsche does not explicitly connect the narrative of GM I with the narrative of GM II, it is evident that in GM I he is speaking of a time when the state-form of political and social organization had already supplanted the clan- or tribal-form of political and social organization. Morality of custom had already given way to noble morality. Consequently, GM I is concerned with highly stratified societies in which a noble class dominates and orders a mass of slaves and commoners who, although a numerical majority, have relatively little power. Within the state-form of community, the nobles glorify themselves through their manner of valuation. They call themselves “good” while the slaves and commoners are deemed “bad”. Meanwhile, the slaves and commoners, full of bad conscience regarding their own desire for power, are resentful towards the nobles. They envy the nobles’ power and good conscience. Their envy intensifies into hatred, resulting in the emergence of a new manner of valuation through which the nobles and their characteristic traits are condemned as “evil” while the slaves and commoners deem themselves and their own characteristic traits to be “good”.

Through this revaluation of noble values, the slaves and commoners seek to assure themselves of their power and worth despite their relative lack of worldly power and their low worth in the eyes of the nobles. Eventually, through the influence of the Jewish and especially the Christian religions, the slave revaluation of values takes hold in a significant way. Slave morality becomes the dominant morality in Europe, thus bringing an end to the predominance of noble morality. This in a nutshell is the story that Nietzsche tells in GM I.

Early in the treatise Nietzsche presents his most explicit and concrete evidence in support of the claim that a noble morality existed and predominated in Europe prior to the advent of slave morality. As is fitting for a trained philologist such as Nietzsche, the evidence is etymological. By tracing the etymologies of words for both “good” and “bad” in different languages, Nietzsche concludes that these words originated as ways of designating the character traits commonly associated with the various estates or social ranks, i.e., traits associated with either the aristocracy or the commoners. This etymological evidence is meant to show that, contrary to the assumption of the English psychologists and others, the concept “good” has not always designated actions and characters of the unegoistic, selfless, and compassionate kind.

The first example Nietzsche offers is the German word *schlecht*, which means “bad”. He traces this word to *schlicht*, which means “plain” or “simple”, as well as *schlechtweg* and *schlechterdings*, which mean “simply” or “downright”. Nietzsche’s interpretation of these etymological links is that *schlecht* “originally designated the plain, the common man [...] simply in opposition to the noble one”. (GM I: 4)

Nietzsche finds a similar pattern in ancient Greek. He interprets both *kakos* (“bad, ugly, ill-born, base, cowardly, ignoble”) and *deilos* (“cowardly, worthless, low-born, miserable, wretched”) as demonstrating a conceptual link in that language between that which is morally censured as “bad” and the plebeian or common man. (GM I: 5)

In Latin, Nietzsche links *malus* (“bad, evil”) with *melas* (“black, dark”). Here the common man is designated as one with dark skin and hair, characteristics which Nietzsche associates with those people who had earlier occupied Italy (and Europe more generally) and who were later conquered and subjugated by light-skinned and blond-haired Aryans (GM I: 5) who then became the ruling aristocrats.

On the basis of this evidence Nietzsche concludes that the moral concept “bad” is the outcome of a “*conceptual transformation*” through which words designating that which is “common”, “vulgar”, and “base” became words designating that which is bad or worthy of a kind of moral censure. (GM I: 4)

Nietzsche also adduces etymological evidence to show that words for “good” in various languages can be linked to ways of designating members of the aristocratic estate and their character traits. He thinks that in these words “that main nuance still shimmers through with respect to which the nobles felt themselves to be humans of a higher rank”. (GM I: 5) From Greek he offers the word *esthlos*. It means “good, brave, noble” (GM I: 5, footnote), but also “according to its root one who *is*, who possesses reality, who is real, who is true [...] the truthful one”. (GM I: 5) This, says Nietzsche, is how the Greek nobility understood itself; it is how they distinguished themselves “from the *lying* common man”. (GM I: 5) The Greek term *agathos* (“good, well-born, noble, brave, capable”) is also taken to be an expression of the nobility’s high regard for itself,

although Nietzsche seems to qualify this conjecture by saying that it “can be interpreted in many ways”. (GM I: 5)

Nietzsche again invokes the idea of an Aryan invasion and links skin and hair colour with social rank when he adduces evidence from Gaelic. The Gaelic word *fin* (“white, bright”) is a way of designating “the good, noble, [and] pure one, originally the blond-headed one, in contrast to the dark, black-haired original inhabitants” (GM I: 5) whom the fairer Aryans subjugated.

The Latin *bonus* (“good”) is interpreted as meaning “the warrior” on the basis of its relation to *duonus* (“good”), which is linked to an “older, poetic” (GM I: 5, footnote) form of the word for war (“*bellum=duellum=duen-lum*”). Nietzsche concludes that being a good nobleman in ancient Rome meant being a “man of strife, of division (*duo*), [a] man of war”. (GM I: 5) Clark and Swenson claim that Nietzsche’s etymology in this case is “untenable” since the “sense of “division”” that Nietzsche highlights “did not develop until the late Middle-ages”.²¹⁸

Finally, Nietzsche cites the German word *gut* (good), claiming that it originally named the Gothic noble and meant “the godly one”, the man “of godly race”. (GM I: 5) Interestingly, he asserts this in the form of two questions and closes the discussion by saying that “[t]he reasons for this supposition do not belong here.” (GM I: 5)

On the basis of this evidence Nietzsche concludes that the concept “good” – in the sense of “noble of soul”, “high-natured of soul”, and “privileged of soul”, i.e., as it had currency prior to the advent of slave morality – was the outcome of a conceptual transformation, one running parallel to that which produced the concept “bad”. By means of this transformation, words designating what was noble and aristocratic in the political,

²¹⁸ Clark and Swenson, 134.

social, and economic sense became words designating what was good or worthy of moral praise and approbation, the term “moral” here understood in its older, pre-slave morality sense. (GM I: 4)

Mark Migotti expands upon the etymological evidence offered by Nietzsche, both as a way of confirming Nietzsche’s claim that a noble morality predominated prior to the emergence of slave morality and as a way of clarifying the significance of this evidence for Nietzsche’s diagnosis of contemporary European morality. Migotti offers the English words “noble”, “common”, “vulgar”, and “mean”, the German words *vornehm* and *gemein*, and the French words *noble* and *commun* as further examples of words whose meanings suggest the existence of a manner of valuation that is at odds with slave morality.²¹⁹ Migotti points out that each of these words has both descriptive and evaluative senses, and that the evaluative senses are significantly at odds with the descriptive senses from the perspective of an egalitarian morality such as slave morality. For example, one of the descriptive senses of “noble” is “illustrious by rank, title, or birth; belonging to that class of the community which has a titular pre-eminence over the others”, while one of the evaluative senses of the word is “having high moral qualities or ideals; of great or lofty character”.²²⁰ Migotti notes that from the perspective of an egalitarian morality it would be contradictory to associate high moral worth with “a politico-genealogical conception of superiority”.²²¹ A similar sort of contradiction holds among the meanings of the word “common”. One of the descriptive senses of “common” is “belonging equally to more than one”, while one of the evaluative senses of the word

²¹⁹ Mark Migotti, “Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58, no. 4 (1998): 767-9.

²²⁰ Ibid., 767.

²²¹ Ibid., 768.

when used in reference to “ordinary persons, life, language, etc.” is “lower class, vulgar, unrefined”.²²² Again, from the perspective of an egalitarian morality it would be contradictory to associate a negative evaluation of persons, life, and language with the idea of something being “shared equally by many”.²²³

In GM I Nietzsche offers an hypothesis to explain why the descriptive and evaluative senses of words like noble and common are at odds with one another. He argues that the incongruous descriptive and evaluative senses are evidence that a noble manner of valuation was formerly predominant. Due to the occurrence of a slave revolt in morality that revalued the noble manner of valuation, the descriptive and evaluative meanings came to be contradictory. These senses are therefore contradictory only from the perspective of slave morality. From the perspective of noble morality, words such as noble and common “unproblematically blend together aesthetic, ethical, and socio-economic qualities”.²²⁴ “What today might seem a grossly tendentious *yoking* of disparate senses was once, according to Nietzsche, the unhesitating *fusion* of elements regarded as natural brethren.”²²⁵

With respect to Nietzsche’s diagnosis of contemporary European morality, the incongruities in the meanings of words like noble and common show that our moral language is heterogeneous. It contains within it elements of an older manner of valuation and a newer manner of valuation. The older manner of valuation was aristocratic, while the newer shows “an accelerating tendency to identify the truly moral with a distinctively

²²² Migotti, 767-8.

²²³ Ibid., 768. Migotti quotes the Oxford English Dictionary when defining the words “noble” and “common”. He also offers the Liddell and Scott translations of four of the Greek words that Nietzsche adduces – *agathos*, *esthlos*, *deilos*, and *kakos* – to show that the senses comprehended by these words also exhibit what are, from the perspective of an egalitarian morality, contradictory descriptive and evaluative meanings. (768-9)

²²⁴ Ibid., 769.

²²⁵ Ibid., 768.

impartial, egalitarian mode of evaluation”.²²⁶ In making us aware of the heterogeneous nature and origins of our moral language, Nietzsche is offering evidence to the effect that contemporary morality itself is heterogeneous. There is confusion inherent within it insofar as it has roots in both noble and slave morality. By drawing our attention to this confusion, Nietzsche is inviting us “to rethink the nature and foundations of moral value. Such a response requires us, in Nietzsche terms, to open ourselves to the battle between noble and slave modes of evaluation”.²²⁷

As already noted, the ways of designating the estates that Nietzsche finds in various languages, and which he believes are indicative of a largely surpassed or overshadowed manner of valuation, are the products of a particular perspective, namely, the perspective of the nobles. The nobles in all times and places, those who occupied the highest social ranks, had, Nietzsche claims, the power of naming. Through naming they bestowed meanings and values on things. An affective state that Nietzsche calls “pathos of distance” (GM I: 2) was essential to the noble perspective: they *felt* themselves to be at a distance from those who were common and vulgar. By virtue of this distance they also felt themselves to be superior and of greater value. “Pathos of distance” names this feeling of superiority that the nobles felt vis-à-vis those who occupied subordinate positions within the hierarchy of the state. Out of this feeling of superiority came the distinction between good and bad. As Nietzsche puts it, “the pathos of nobility and distance, this lasting and dominant collective and basic feeling of a higher ruling nature in relation to a lower nature, to a “below” – *that* is the origin of the opposition “good” and “bad”” (GM I: 2); “it was “the good” themselves, that is the noble, powerful, higher-

²²⁶ Migotti, 770.

²²⁷ Ibid.

ranking, and high-minded who felt and ranked themselves and their doings as good, which is to say, as of the first rank, in contrast to everything base, low-minded, common, and vulgar”. (GM I: 2)

In tracing the origin of noble morality to the political, social, and economic conditions within states, and to the psychology that characterizes individuals who occupy positions of dominance within the hierarchies of states, Nietzsche is offering an explicitly naturalistic account of how the noble manner of valuation came into existence. Insofar as his account is naturalistic, he is showing a concern with offering a true account of the emergence of this manner of valuation.

Nietzsche’s account of the origin of the slave manner of valuation is, like his account of the origin of the noble manner of valuation, naturalistic in that it implicates human psychology in the genesis of slave morality. However, the affective state of those who find themselves in positions of subordination is quite different from the affective state of the ruling nobles. The most significant affective state that Nietzsche identifies as a cause of the coming-into-being of slave morality is “ressentiment”.²²⁸ As Nietzsche tells us, “[t]he slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values”. (GM I: 10) He goes so far as to call slave morality “the morality of *ressentiment*”. (GM I: 11) Ressentiment, as Nietzsche uses the term, is a complex emotional state characterized by hatred and vengeful resentment. It is felt predominantly by the relatively weak and powerless who find themselves oppressed and subjugated by stronger parties. Leiter defines ressentiment along these lines. It is, he says, “Nietzsche’s term of art for a special kind of festering hatred and vengefulness, one

²²⁸ Other affects – such as anger (GM I: 13) and fear/horror (GM I: 11) – are implicated in the genesis of slave morality, but they are not given as prominent a role as ressentiment in Nietzsche’s account.

motivated by impotence in the face of unpleasant external stimuli, and that leads (at least among the impotent) to the creation of values that *devalue* (or at least make sense of) those unpleasant stimuli”.²²⁹ Yirmiyahu Yovel defines the term similarly as “vengeful animosity toward the “other,” usually a person of higher worth, which mediates the inferior person’s sense of selfhood and makes it possible”.²³⁰ The creation of values out of resentment, values which devalue the strong and powerful, allows the weak and powerless to affirm themselves as valuable, contrary to the devaluation they suffer according to the noble manner of valuation.

According to Nietzsche’s account the concept “evil” was the first creation of resentment. Under the sign of this concept – “through the poisonous eye of *ressentiment*” and “out of the brewing cauldron of unsatiated hate” – the noble was “recoloured, [...] reinterpreted, [...] reseen”. (GM I: 11) He was conceived as worthless in the extreme: as godless, damned, and doomed to failure and destruction, if not in the earthly life, then on the day of the last judgement, at the coming of the Kingdom of God. As a counterpart to the concept of evil, the subjugated created their own concept of good. Like the nobles, they conceived themselves as good. Good for them was associated with qualities like weakness, compassion, humility, selflessness, meekness, and lowliness. The good lacked power and success in the earthly life, but according to their worldview they would have success and rewards in the long run. Their weakness and humility gave them favour with the one true God, which they conceived as the legitimating metaphysical ground of their morality. Through their manner of valuation the weak and powerless felt assured that they would find eternal life and power in the Kingdom of God.

²²⁹ Leiter, *Nietzsche On Morality*, 163.

²³⁰ Yirmiyahu Yovel, “Nietzsche, the Jews, and *Ressentiment*,” in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, ed. Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994): 227.

So we see that whereas the concepts “good” and “bad” were generated out of the noble perspective, the concepts “good” and “evil” were created from the perspective of those who were subordinate to the nobles. Through their creation of values the weak and subjugated revaluated the noble manner of valuation. Those who were conceived as good from the perspective of the slaves were precisely those who were conceived as bad from the perspective of the nobles, while those who were conceived as good from the perspective of the nobles were precisely those who were conceived as evil from the perspective of the slaves. By way of this revaluation “the noble dynasties together with their ideals were finally brought to ruin and overwhelmed”. (GM I: 11)

By positing an affective psychological state called resentment, one that results from certain conditions of political, social, and economic inequality, as the proximate cause of the slave manner of valuation, Nietzsche is offering his readers a naturalistic explanation for the origin of that manner of valuation. In offering such an explanation he is demonstrating a concern to tell the truth about how this manner of valuation came into existence.

According to the narrative of GM I the Jews have played a unique and significant role in the rise of slave morality in Europe. In Nietzsche’s view, the greatest example of a slave revaluation of noble values is the case of the Jewish revaluation of Roman values. In their confrontation with the Roman Empire the Jews found themselves unable to defeat their enemy outright in physical combat. As a consequence of this incapacity they enacted a “*spiritual revenge*” by way of a “radical revaluation” of the values of their conquerors. (GM I: 7) They inverted the Roman “aristocratic value equation”: whereas “good” had been equated by the Romans with noble, powerful, beautiful, and happy, for

the Jews it came to mean miserable, poor, powerless, and lowly. (GM I: 7) Consistent with his overall analysis of the slave revolt in morality, Nietzsche gives special emphasis to the role of hatred in the Jewish revaluation of Roman values: “Jewish hate is the deepest and most sublime hate, [...] an ideal-creating, value-reshaping hate whose like has never before existed on earth”. (GM I: 8)

Ironically, it was with the help of a new kind of love that grew out of this hate that the Jewish revaluation gained victory over Roman values. This new kind of love found its most complete expression in the Christian religion and is exemplified in the image of a loving God sacrificing himself on a cross for the sins of man. Nietzsche characterizes this sublime image of compassionate and selfless love as a great seducer to the ideals of slave morality. With its help Israel’s “revenge and revaluation of all values [...] has thus far again and again triumphed over all other ideals, over all *more noble* ideals”. (GM I: 8) The prevalence and currency of slave values “over almost half the earth” is ultimately a consequence of the historical victory of Jewish values over Roman values, of Judea over Rome (GM I: 16), a process that was significantly advanced by the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity in the early 4th century B.C.²³¹

Nietzsche posits that the conflict between Judea and Rome, between slave values and noble values, has continued since the time of the Roman Empire and occasionally flared up in dramatic fashion. During the Renaissance there was a “reawakening of the classical ideal, of the noble manner of valuing all things”, one that was defeated by “that thoroughly mobbish (German and English) *ressentiment* movement called the Reformation, and that which had to follow from it, the restoration of the church”. (GM I:

²³¹ Nietzsche’s use of the phrase “*sub hoc signo*” in GM I: 8 is “no doubt a reference to Constantine’s famous motto “in hoc signo vinces”” (Thatcher, “Textual Annotations,” 589).

16) Later, by way of the French Revolution, slave values defeated the French nobility, “the last political nobleness there was in Europe”. (GM I: 16) This was followed in short order by a new, albeit short-lived, manifestation of the classical ideal in the person of Napoleon.

Thus, according to the narrative of GM I it was the Jews who initiated the European slave revolt in morality two millennia ago and the only reason why we are no longer aware of it as a revolt is because slave values have won out over noble values. (GM I: 7) Europe has been more or less “caught and stuck” (GM I: 2) within the slave manner of valuation ever since Rome fell to Judea. Since that time there has been an overall decline in aristocratic value judgements and a rise in the valuation all things unegoistic, compassionate, and disinterested. (GM I: 2) In Nietzsche’s view, it is “only when aristocratic value judgements begin to *decline*” and “*the herd instinct* finally finds a voice” that the opposition between egoistic and unegoistic becomes a prominent distinction in the realm of values. (GM I: 2) The high value accorded to the unegoistic in the Europe of Nietzsche’s day was a consequence of the fact that slave morality had become the dominant manner of valuation. Such a manner of valuation is therefore not, as the English psychologists assume, a fixed and essential feature of human nature.²³²

Nietzsche offers textual evidence from the Christian tradition to support his claim that hatred, resentment, and a desire for revenge on the part of the oppressed are at the root of the coming-into-being of slave morality. He finds evidence to this effect in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and Tertullian. For these two Christian writers, the

²³² Migotti is correct in claiming that the story told in GM I has an “historically and geographically specific ambit”; it is “a history of Western [or European] morality. Using an outdated but more revealing designation, GM I can be described as attempting to lay bare the ethical significance of Christendom by laying bare its true origins”. (771)

blessedness of the Christian paradise consists to a significant degree in the faithful having the satisfaction of revenge against their oppressors. St. Thomas imagines the Kingdom of Heaven in this way: “The blessed in the kingdom of heaven will see the punishments of the damned, *in order that their bliss be more delightful to them*”. (GM I: 15) Here we see that revenge against the enemies of Christianity is understood to heighten the pleasure that Christians will experience in the afterlife. Tertullian has a similar view, and Nietzsche offers an extended quote from one of his works as further evidence that a desire for revenge inspires the oppressed to create the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven. According to Tertullian, on the “last and eternal day of judgement” there will be many sights to “admire” and “laugh at”, to feel “joy” and “exult” in. (GM I: 15) Great kings, praesides, philosophers, poets, tragedians, actors, charioteers, athletes, Jews – all those “who raged against the lord” and persecuted Christians – will be destroyed in flames. (GM I: 15) The praesides in particular will be “liquefied by flames fiercer than those with which they themselves raged against the Christians”. (GM I: 15) Tertullian recommends these spectacles of suffering as “more pleasing than circus and both theatres and any stadium”. (GM I: 15) All this implies that Christians will have the satisfaction of vengeance in the Kingdom of Heaven for harms inflicted against them in their earthly lives. Tertullian’s own heightened state of vengefulness is revealed when he says that he has an “*insatiable gaze*” for the spectacle of the burning of “those who raged against the lord”. (GM I: 15) He claims that only faith in God can guarantee this kind of satisfaction. Faith has this to recommend it. (GM I: 15)²³³

²³³ Nietzsche also interprets the Book of Revelation and its vision of the day of judgement as an expression of hate and vengefulness on the part of the weak. He calls it “this book of hate” and “that most immoderate of all written outbursts that revenge has on its conscience”. (GM I: 16)

On the basis of this textual evidence from the Christian tradition Nietzsche concludes that “the Christian paradise and its “eternal blessedness”” was created by “eternal *hate*”. (GM I: 15) It, along with all slave values and ideals, is the consequence of “the *ressentiment* of beings denied the true reaction, that of the deed, who recover their losses only through an imaginary revenge”. (GM I: 10) The weak posit a life and a world other than the earthly life in which they are oppressed and suffer, a new life and a new world in which their weakness is valued and rewarded, and in which those who oppress them are punished and made to feel pain. Their anticipated revenge against their oppressors is imaginary because there will be no such new life and new world. It is the *ressentiment* of the weak that makes them want such a world. Their vision of it brings them comfort, but it is nothing more than a delusion.

In addition to *ressentiment*, the idea of will to power serves as a basic, if implicit, psychological principle in Nietzsche’s account of how slave morality came into existence.²³⁴ Just as noble values originate in “a desire to overwhelm, a desire to cast down, a desire to become lord, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs” (GM I: 13), in other words, in a physical expression of will to power which leads physically powerful and assertive conquerors to subjugate populations and create states, slave values originate in a desire on the part of the conquered and oppressed to gain dominance over their oppressors. Lacking physical means, their victory must be won through the exercise of the psychic power of value-creation. In this regard it is important to recognize that despite their real lack of power in many respects, the weak nonetheless have the power to create values. By creating a manner of valuation that is opposed to the noble manner of

²³⁴ The *ressentiment* that conditions the slaves’ manner of creating values arises out of the long frustration of their will to power.

valuation they exercise and express this value-creating power. Through its exercise the weak give a new meaning to the nobles and their manner of expressing and augmenting their power: these are devalued as “evil”. At the same time, they reinterpret and give a new significance to their own form of life: they affirm it and call it “good”. The weak create the value opposition “good” and “evil” out of a will to power: they want to be strong and superior. And in fact, the more currency their manner of valuation can gain at the expense of the noble manner of valuation, the more their political, social, and economic power will increase. Insofar as they can cause the nobles to adopt the slave manner of valuation, to that extent they decrease the ability of the nobles to dominate and oppress them. The slave revaluation of noble values therefore not only allows the weak to express what power they have through the creation of values, but also allows them to gain power over the nobles by undermining noble morality. This way of understanding slave morality is a key part of Nietzsche’s psychological, and therefore naturalistic, explanation of its genesis.²³⁵

As in GM II, Nietzsche emphasizes in GM I the physiological determinants of the moral phenomena under consideration. Nietzsche makes a number of references to physiology in GM I. For example, the victory of the slave revaluation of values is referred to as a “poisoning” of bodies. He speaks of “[t]he progress of this poisoning through the entire body of humanity”. (GM I: 9) It is “a blood poisoning”, a “toxication”, because “it mixe[s] the races together”. (GM I: 9) He suggests that the Aryans, “that *race of lords* and conquerors”, are “in the process of succumbing physiologically” to the slave

²³⁵ St. Thomas’ and Tertullian’s visions of the Kingdom of Heaven also help demonstrate how the creation of slave values is driven by a will to power. The coming of the Kingdom of Heaven is really the coming of a world in which the weak will rule and be strong, where their qualities will be positively valued and where they will be dominant over those who are dominant in the earthly life.

reevaluation of values and the mixing of races in Europe. (GM I: 5) In the same section he vaguely adduces a predominance of dark hair colour and “shortness of skull” as evidence that “the subjected race has in the end regained the upper hand [in Europe]”. (GM I: 5) He also makes reference to “ethnographic maps of Germany” that purportedly show “tracts of an essentially dark-haired population” where “the *pre-Aryan* population of Germany [...] comes to the fore”. (GM I: 5) Given that Nietzsche understands racial and ethnic differences to be essentially rooted in physiological differences, these comments indicate his concern with the physiological determinants of moral phenomena.

Although the psychological mode of explanation predominates over the physiological in GM, these invocations of physiological determinants are significant for Nietzsche. In the Note appended to the end of GM I Nietzsche places great emphasis on the need for investigations into the physiological underpinnings of value estimations. He tells us that before the psychological aspects of value estimations can be enquired into properly, “medical science” and “*physiological* illumination and interpretation”, along with historical, philological, and ethnological perspectives, should be brought to bear on value estimations. (GM I: Note) “*All sciences*,” says Nietzsche, should contribute to the work of solving the philosophical problem of value. (GM I: Note) Clearly, the gestures Nietzsche makes towards the physiological mode of investigation are part of his larger concern to offer a naturalistic account of contemporary European morality and of values in general, one which would ideally draw upon the perspectives of a wide range of scientific disciplines. His appeals to physiology are therefore part and parcel of his concern to tell the truth about the history of morality.

Thus we see that in GM I Nietzsche exhibits a concern to tell the truth about the past in a number of ways. Firstly, he offers etymological evidence to support his claim that an alternative morality, one characterized by a noble conception of good and bad, predominated in Europe prior to the advent of slave morality. Secondly, he offers naturalistic explanations for the origins of both noble and slave morality. Both moralities are products of real material conditions of inequality and are determined in their geneses by the psychological, and in particular the affective, states that characterize individuals who occupy different positions within political, social, and economic hierarchies. Noble morality is conditioned primarily by the pathos of distance that the powerful feel vis-à-vis the slaves and commoners who they rule. Slave morality is conditioned primarily by the resentment that the slaves and commoners feel towards those who rule them. Both kinds of morality are expressions of the basic human instinct of will to power. Nietzsche's concern to tell the truth about the past is shown thirdly by his willingness to offer textual evidence to support his claim that resentment and will to power are the main psychological drivers behind the creation of slave morality. In this regard he quotes Thomas Aquinas and Tertullian and offers up the entirety of the Book of Revelation as evidence that what the advocates of slave morality want is to be more powerful than those who oppress them and to exact revenge upon those who occupy positions of power in this world. Fourthly, Nietzsche shows a concern to tell the truth about the past in GM I by offering an historical account of how contemporary European morality came into being. He does not, like the English psychologists, take this morality as an ahistorical given. Rather, he posits that it is something that came into existence at a certain point in time as a consequence of certain natural causes and conditions. In his view, contemporary

European morality has no divine or metaphysical sanction and no claim to objective validity.²³⁶ It is a thoroughly human creation that is explicable in terms of basic human tendencies and feelings. As such, it is an entirely natural phenomenon, the understanding of which requires no recourse to other-worldly or “back-worldly” explanations. Slave values are of this world. Their coming into being, their persistence, and their passing away are determined by causes that are of this world. Nietzsche’s problematizing of contemporary European morality as an historical phenomenon is an essential part of his naturalistic approach to explaining moral phenomena in general, and this was the case for him ever since his decisive break with Schopenhauerian metaphysics in HA.

Despite his criticisms of certain aspects of their methods, Nietzsche praises the English psychologists for having “trained themselves to sacrifice all desirability to truth, to *every* truth, even plain, harsh, ugly, unpleasant, unchristian, immoral truth ... For there are such truths”. (GM I: 1) Nietzsche’s inquiries into the “genesis of morality” (GM I: 1) also seek such truths. His brand of naturalism, which makes significant use of historical, psychological, etymological, textual, and physiological claims and evidence, is his way of arriving at such truths.

When evaluated in terms of the cognitive criteria of simplicity, consistency, empirical adequacy, explanatory power, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, and plausibility the narrative of GM I fares quite well. It exhibits simplicity and consistency insofar as it understands all values in naturalistic terms: both noble values and slave values are human creations that arise out of particular material, especially psychological, conditions. That all values are expressions of the basic instinct of will to power contributes significantly to the simplicity of the narrative. The account may be

²³⁶ This is of course true of noble morality as well.

called empirically adequate insofar as it presents realistic depictions of common human emotions and psychological states. Nietzsche's representations of how it feels to occupy positions of both superiority and inferiority ring true. On the basis of his descriptions of the perspectives of the nobles and slaves, the reader can easily understand how they came to adopt their respective manners of valuation. The etymological and textual evidence that Nietzsche adduces to support his claims further contributes to the reader's sense that Nietzsche's account adequately represents the actual manner in which noble values and slave values came into the world.²³⁷ That the basic principles underlying the account could be used to explain the origins of other manners of valuation speaks in favour of the considerable explanatory power of the framework for understanding values that Nietzsche employs. Overall, the narrative gives the appearance of offering a coherent and comprehensive account of the psychologies that played a role in the transition in European morality from a predominant noble morality to a predominant slave morality. Compared to the narrative of GM II, the narrative of GM I can certainly be said to offer a more plausible account of the phenomena that it undertakes to explain. It does not suffer from the lack of consistency, coherence, and explanatory power that complicated my attempt in the previous chapter to interpret GM II as a unified narrative.

However, there are at least two respects in which the narrative of GM I remains incomplete.²³⁸ Firstly, the role that the priest plays in the revaluation of noble values is not made entirely clear. In the context of the first treatise, the priestly revaluation of

²³⁷ It must be admitted that the textual evidence that Nietzsche adduces from the Christian tradition is highly partial and selective. A more thorough examination of the Christian textual tradition might have resulted in a more complicated and nuanced account of the motivations underlying that religion's moral perspective. Such an examination might have brought to light evidence that would not have served Nietzsche's critical task as well as the texts by St. Thomas and Tertullian.

²³⁸ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address these issues of incompleteness in detail. I will therefore limit myself to drawing the reader's attention to them.

noble values seems to be little more than a specific instance of the more broadly occurring phenomenon of the slave revaluation of noble values. The priests' reaction to powerlessness is there a particular case of resentment and exemplifies how all the powerless react to the state of subordination that they suffer. However, although the priests constitute a particular subset of the powerless, it is clear from Nietzsche's discussion of the priest in GM III: 11-21 that they come to play a special role in the revaluation of noble morality. There Nietzsche casts them in the role of alleviators of the suffering that the powerless experience. Chief among the means they devise for alleviating this suffering is the positing of a meaning for the pain that afflicts the powerless as a result of bad conscience. The priest asserts a religious interpretation of the pain of bad conscience: it is punishment for sin, a manifestation of one's guilt for having acted contrary to God's will. (GM III: 20) Once the pain of bad conscience is given meaning in this way it is alleviated and becomes more bearable, according to the principle that it is not suffering itself that man finds abhorrent, but rather meaningless and senseless suffering. (See GM III: 28 & GM II: 7) So although the first treatise of GM is incomplete insofar as it does not elaborate upon the unique role that the priests play in the slave revaluation, the third treatise makes up for this lack. This is a good example of how the three treatises of GM are mutually reinforcing and complementary.

A second way in which the narrative of GM I is incomplete is that Nietzsche does not adequately explain why the nobles came to accept the slave revaluation of their values. Given that the revaluation had the effect of disempowering the nobles to a significant degree, this aspect of the narrative calls for further elaboration. With respect to this problem, Nietzsche provides the briefest of hints in GM III: 15. He suggests that

the priest begins by encouraging the development of bad conscience within the noble. The priest “sow[s] sorrow, conflict, [and] self-contradiction” within him, thereby sickening and taming the well-constituted “beast of prey”. In this way he “wounds” the noble. The priest then proceeds to act as physician: “he [...] stills the pain that the wound causes [and] *poisons the wound at the same time*”. This could suggest that the priest alleviates the pain of bad conscience that the noble experiences in the usual way, i.e., by convincing the noble to adopt the religious interpretation of that pain. This would have the effect of “poisoning the wound” insofar as the religious interpretation of the pain of bad conscience associates that pain with the inherent and irremediable sinfulness of man. As Nietzsche says in the second treatise, once bad conscience has been interpreted religiously and thereby moralized, it “spreads out, and grows like a polyp in every breadth and depth until finally, with the impossibility of discharging the debt [to God], the impossibility of discharging penance is also conceived of, the idea that [the debt to God] cannot be paid off (*“eternal punishment”*)” (GM II: 21); the “man of bad conscience has taken over the religious presupposition in order to drive his self-torture to its most gruesome severity and sharpness. Guilt before *God*: this thought becomes an instrument of torture for him”. (GM II: 22) If, as GM III: 15 suggests, the noble were to feel bad conscience and accept the priest’s interpretation of it, then the noble would have presumably taken on the slave manner of valuation insofar as that manner of valuation is intimately connected with the religious interpretation of bad conscience that the priest encourages. It is unfortunate that Nietzsche does not flesh out this hint in more detail. In particular, Nietzsche offers no explanation for why the nobles would have been

susceptible to feeling bad conscience in the first place. For an explanation of how this could have occurred I refer the reader to Migotti.²³⁹

In addition to these matters of incompleteness, it could also be argued that there are limitations with respect to what can be proven by the etymological evidence that Nietzsche adduces. As we have seen, this evidence is meant to support the claim that a noble manner of valuation existed and was dominant prior to the advent of the slave manner of valuation, as well as the related claim that the morality of compassion is not an essential feature of human nature, but a way of thinking and feeling that has developed and come to prominence over time. However, even though the etymological evidence suggests that an alternative conception of value existed and was dominant in ancient times, it should be kept in mind that many of the textual sources on which such etymologies would be based are the products of aristocratic culture. These texts are expressions of individuals and social classes that had sufficient wealth, and therefore sufficient leisure time, to be able to undertake literary pursuits. Through these pursuits they were able to leave a record of their worldviews, communicating to us the manner in which they bestowed value on things. Other conceptions of value, other ways of bestowing value, could very well have existed amongst those classes that did not have the advantage of keeping written records of their thoughts and feelings. Consequently, the historical record is bound to give us a biased perspective on the nature of values in ancient times.

²³⁹ See Migotti, 745-60. Migotti offers a thorough, nuanced, and convincing conjecture for “how the slave revolt could have begun to “poison the consciences” of the masters”. (746) His solution draws upon resources within GM, gains insight from the section of TI entitled “The Problem of Socrates”, and makes use of evidence from Homer’s *Iliad* and Plato’s *Symposium*.

However, Nietzsche's point is not that the noble manner of valuation was the only manner of valuation in ancient times. Rather, he is asserting that this manner of valuation was once dominant, that it had pre-eminence over other manners of valuation, and that there came a time when it lost its pre-eminence. The textual evidence that Nietzsche offers from the Christian tradition supports these assertions. In the Christian era it is no longer just noble values that are preserved in writing. The written record begins to show evidence that a new manner of valuation had become predominant. Such evidence supports Nietzsche's claim that a revaluation of noble values occurred and that it gained enough currency to surpass the noble manner of valuation in terms of its cultural influence. This is a tenable historical thesis, even if Nietzsche has only provided a small sampling of evidence to demonstrate its truth.

A deeper and more intractable problem with regard to the truth of Nietzsche's claims in GM has to do with the difficulty of adducing scientific support and justification for his key psychological hypotheses. As Janaway points out, "no scientific support or justification is given – or readily imaginable – for the central explanatory hypotheses that Nietzsche gives for the origins of our moral beliefs and attitudes".²⁴⁰ One example of such an hypothesis in GM I is Nietzsche's claim that slave morality's concept "good" came into existence on the basis of the resentment felt by the subjugated classes towards the ruling nobles. Janaway notes that while "[t]his hypothesis [naturalistically] explains moral phenomena in terms of their causes, [...] it is not clear how it is *justified* or *supported* by any kind of science, nor indeed what such a justification or support might be".²⁴¹ Leiter also makes note of this problem, stating that "[s]peculative, historical moral

²⁴⁰ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 36-7.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

psychology of the kind Nietzsche is practicing here is not, it is fair to say, a developed field. What would count as empirical evidence here is not always clear”.²⁴²

Given the uncertain truth-value of Nietzsche’s claims regarding the psychological origins of noble morality and slave morality in GM I, it is to his credit that he is not of the opinion that he has definitively proven these claims. This is suggested by the Note that he appends to the first treatise. There he expresses his desire that “some philosophical faculty” would administer essay contests centred on the topic of “*moral-historical studies*”. He suggests a possible question for such an essay contest: “What clues does the study of language, in particular etymological research, provide for the history of the development of moral concepts?” His hope is that GM will provide a “forceful impetus” toward such an endeavour. This Note indicates that Nietzsche conceives his GM to be a contribution toward an historical understanding of moral concepts rather than a definitive account of the development of such concepts. He has, as it were, suggested a way forward with respect to this problem. Clearly he hoped that others would follow his lead and bring to fruition the scholarly task of finding more historical evidence to show how conceptions of value have altered over time. In light of this, it becomes clear why Nietzsche says in GM II: 6 that his assertions regarding the origins of guilt and conscience are merely “conjecture”. We can say the same concerning his claims that noble morality emerged out of a pathos of distance and slave morality through a resentment-inspired revaluation of noble morality. These claims are best taken as suggestions and hypotheses, not as definitive assertions meant to express the last word on the matter.

²⁴² Leiter, *Nietzsche On Morality*, 229.

What is certain, however, is that Nietzsche considered his task to be more philosophical than scholarly. That is, he was more concerned with critiquing and asserting values than he was with discovering and proving the historical connections between different manners of valuation. Obviously he is to some extent concerned with the latter and makes claims concerning such connections in GM. However, he explicitly states that any such knowledge is of concern to him only insofar as it provides clues concerning the value of the various manners of valuation. (GM Pref: 5-6) Nietzsche is surely not an unbiased observer of the history of European morality. He makes this clear on the title page and in the preface to GM, where the book is designated and described as a “polemic” against contemporary European morality. Nietzsche is of the view that this morality is of relatively low value and ought to be overcome for the sake of allowing a “*stronger* species of human being” (GM II: 12) to prosper. His philosophical task is to institute a manner of valuation that overcomes the slave manner of valuation and promotes the flourishing of healthier, more powerful, more joyful human beings – human beings characterized by a good conscience concerning their will to power. His presentation of the history of the development of slave morality is meant to serve this philosophical task. Lacking definitive knowledge concerning the historical development of values, possessing only preliminary hypotheses and conjectures with respect these matters, Nietzsche is content to proceed with his philosophical task of critiquing and asserting values. Polemics will play a central role in bringing this philosophical work to fruition.

5.2 *The Role of Affects in Knowing a Morality*

As a polemic against contemporary European morality, GM exhibits a highly affective style of discourse. Nietzsche engages his subject matter with an exceptional degree of passion and feeling, thereby producing a text that has great potential to arouse his readers' emotions. Janaway argues, and I agree with him, that the arousal of the reader's affects is important not only with respect to Nietzsche's polemical intentions, but also with respect to how he gets at the truth of contemporary European morality. According to Janaway, knowing a morality requires feeling affects because any morality is fundamentally affective in nature. A morality is comprised of "many and various affective attitudes", "inclinations and aversions", which "may be in some degree masked by the accretions of rationalizing interpretation".²⁴³ Thus, in order to know a morality, including one's own, one must be able to reflect upon the affects or habits of feeling that constitute it. Janaway thinks that reflection upon these affects requires that one feel them as much as possible without the interference of rationalizing interpretations. Nietzsche's affective mode of discourse is intended to do just this. Through this mode of discourse he arouses the affects that are at the basis of his readers' moral attitudes. He uncovers the "multifarious affective life beneath [their] moral judgements"²⁴⁴ so that they can have a richer and more direct knowledge of the morality they adhere to and thus be in a better position to evaluate it and call it into question.

In addition to constituting moralities in their present form, affects are also fundamentally involved with moralities at their origins. This is exemplified in Nietzsche's account of how both noble morality and slave morality came into the world:

²⁴³ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 96.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

noble morality originated in a pathos of distance, while slave morality originated in ressentiment. On Janaway's reading, feeling the affects that presently constitute a morality not only enhances one's knowledge of the morality as it currently exists, but also enhances one's knowledge of its origin insofar as the kinds of affects that presently constitute it also played an essential role in its genesis. In other words, feeling the affects that constitute a morality is a condition for understanding the causal history that led to its emergence.²⁴⁵ Affective engagement, both on Nietzsche's and the reader's part, is therefore an important part of how Nietzsche does "real history" in GM I.²⁴⁶ Documenting "the real *history of morality*" (GM Pref: 7) requires "a deep examination of [one's] personal affective states";²⁴⁷ "failure of affective engagement, failure to personalize one's enquiry into the origin of values, leads to failure to unearth the truth about them".²⁴⁸ Attaining knowledge of values by way of feeling affects is a matter of degree. The more one feels the affects that are associated with a morality, the better one's understanding of that morality will be.²⁴⁹ Nietzsche's affect-rich style of discourse is therefore well suited to revealing the natures and origins of the manners of valuation that his readers inhabit.

5.3 *Conflicting Affects*

Janaway does well to recognize that Nietzsche arouses various and often conflicting affects with respect to both the nobles and the advocates of slave morality. With respect to the nobles, the manner in which Nietzsche portrays them has, on the one hand, the

²⁴⁵ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 48.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 44.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 43.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 39.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 49.

potential to arouse in the reader “apprehension” and “indignation” for their “thuggish behaviour”.²⁵⁰ “Readers will be indignant about the nobles as Nietzsche describes them,” says Janaway. “They will react with fear and disquiet, and moreover a disquiet that, on behalf of the imagined victims [of the nobles’ aggression], gives rise to a desire to judge the nobles’ behaviour wrong”.²⁵¹ In short, readers are encouraged to feel a kind of moral outrage at the nobles. They will be prone to react in this way because slave values constitute a significant part of their moral inheritance. By prompting these affects in his readers, Nietzsche makes them aware that they are inheritors of the slave manner of valuation.²⁵²

On the other hand, Nietzsche’s way of portraying the nobles has the potential to arouse, not indignation, but “an affective inclination in favour of the nobles”.²⁵³ Readers are liable to feel admiration for “the psychic health of the self-legislating aristocrat”.²⁵⁴ They will likely experience “an excitement and attraction for heroism, prowess, and the exercise of power with aristocratic disdain”.²⁵⁵ Readers are open to feeling this way because in addition to having inherited slavish manners of valuation, they have also inherited some portion of the noble manner of valuation. As a consequence of this mixed moral inheritance, readers of GM are inclined to exhibit a mixed affective response to the nobles. They at once “fear and admire, condemn and wish to emulate”.²⁵⁶

Nietzsche also invites a mixed emotional reaction with respect to the advocates of slave morality. On the one hand, readers are encouraged to “feel contempt at [their]

²⁵⁰ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 92.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 100.

²⁵² Ibid., 100-1.

²⁵³ Ibid., 105.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 92.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 105.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

weakness and hypocrisy”.²⁵⁷ On the other hand, they might be inclined to admire the powerless for having successfully enacted a revaluation of values, one that is of world-historical significance and that benefitted them greatly by disempowering the nobles.²⁵⁸

By eliciting these conflicting emotional reactions in the reader, reactions which are both for and against noble morality and slave morality, the reader is urged to become aware that he has inherited affective tendencies from both the noble manner of valuation and the slave manner of valuation.²⁵⁹ Nietzsche recognizes the existence of such a mixed moral inheritance when he states in BG that “in all higher and more complex cultures, there are [...] apparent attempts to mediate between [noble and slave] moralities, and even more often a confusion of the two and a mutual misunderstanding, indeed sometimes even their violent juxtaposition – even in the same person, within one single breast”. (260) So it is the case that even though slave morality has held sway for a long time, noble morality has survived and continues to have an influence on how value judgements are made within contemporary European morality. The ways in which Nietzsche arouses the affects of his readers helps them come to an awareness of the mixed nature of their moral inheritance. By arousing a broad range of emotions associated with both noble morality and slave morality,

Nietzsche encourages [readers] to recognize [their] own ambivalent inclinations and aversions – [their] mixed feelings for and against compassion, aggression, humility, prowess, equality, nobility – and to reconstruct the history of attitudes to ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in imaginative engagement with the feelings of both the oppressed slave and the self-defining master.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 101.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 209.

It is clear that Janaway is correct in claiming that Nietzsche arouses contrasting affects with regard to both the noble and the advocate of slave morality. Neither of these figures is presented as wholly attractive or wholly repulsive. But Janaway misses the mark when he says that each “provoke[s] in the reader a *similar* mixture [emphasis added] of disquiet and admiration”.²⁶¹ While I agree that the reader of GM is likely to have mixed feelings for both the noble and the slave, I would argue that the mixture of feelings he has for each will in all probability be rather *dissimilar*. That is to say, in each case the balance of feeling is likely to be quite different. And this for the simple reason, which Janaway does not recognize, that Nietzsche presents the nobles in an overall positive light and the slaves in an overall negative light.

Nietzsche presents to his readers highly coloured interpretations of the nobles and the advocates of slave morality. The contrast between the two almost invariably expresses approval of the former while putting the latter in an unfavourable light. Evidently, Nietzsche’s purpose is not only to make his readers aware of their mixed moral inheritance, but to turn their emotions against slave morality by making this morality and its adherents seem eminently deplorable, ugly, even disgusting, and in any case quite unworthy of emulation. The way in which Nietzsche accomplishes this goal can be understood in terms of the concepts of critical and monumental history that were explicated in Chapter 1’s discussion of HL. Nietzsche offers in GM I a critical depiction of the advocates of slave morality complemented by a monumental depiction of the nobles. He juxtaposes these figures so as to edify the nobles and denigrate the advocates of slave morality. The contrasting images of these two types serve to turn the reader

²⁶¹ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 93.

against slave morality, prompting a revaluation of slave values, while at the same time making the noble manner of valuation an attractive alternative.

5.4 A Critical Portrait of the Advocate of Slave Morality

As we saw in Chapter 1, critical history is history that appropriates the past with the aim of breaking away from or destroying some aspect of it. It accomplishes this by making a part of the past appear worthy of destruction. An unfavourable image of the hated thing is created so as to motivate a negative attitude towards it. This image prepares the way for the negation and overcoming of the hated thing. If critical history's appropriation of the past is successful, it makes room for new ways of thinking, feeling, and doing. What is sought is "a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature, so that our first nature withers away". (HL 76)

Nietzsche's depiction of the advocates of slave morality in GM I can certainly be called critical. His characterization of their mode of value-creation is one of the key aspects of this critical depiction. The advocate of slave morality exhibits what Nietzsche calls a "reactive" mode of value-creation. By this he means that slave values originate in a negative reaction to something other, to something that is outside of and opposed to the value-creating self. The advocate of slave morality evaluates this other negatively, says "no" to it, and calls it "evil", "'the evil enemy,'" "*the evil one*". (GM I: 10) This is the initial creative deed of slave morality, the basic gesture of its manner of valuation. As Nietzsche puts it, "in order to come into being, slave-morality always needs an opposite and external world; it needs, psychologically speaking, external stimuli in order to be able to act at all, – its action is, from the ground up, reaction." (GM I: 10) From the start

Nietzsche presents this circumstance in a negative light. The other-oriented beginning of slave morality is a fault, a defect, a consequence of the state of deficiency and need that characterizes the advocates of slave morality. In Nietzsche's view, the way in which the advocates of slave morality create values shows that they lack the virtue and power of self-movement in the specific sense that the impetus for their creation of values must come from without.

Slave morality's concept of "good" is born out of the same feeling of deficiency that gave rise to the concept "evil". The powerless do not fundamentally feel themselves to be good. They fundamentally feel themselves to be weak, and the only way this weakness can be positively conceived and affirmed is by first degrading, through the concept "evil", that which is strong. In other words, the weak determine their own positive worth only through a comparison of themselves with something they have devalued through a resentment-infused act of imagination. They need to create a false and distorted image of the powerful – as "godless", "wretched", "accursed", "damned", "evil" (GM I: 7) – in order to feel good about themselves. This reactive lashing out of the weak against the strong brings slave morality's conceptions of "good" and "evil" into existence.

Nietzsche also makes reactivity play a role in how the advocates of slave morality experience happiness. In true reactive form, the weak "have to construct their happiness artificially by looking at their enemies, to talk themselves into it, to *lie themselves into it* (as all human beings of *ressentiment* tend to do)". (GM I: 10) The happiness of the oppressed and powerless is an emotional state which arises as a consequence of a more basic state of deficiency and discomfort. (GM I: 10) The common man is a diseased sort

of creature, poisoned by the frustration of his will to power, and therefore in desperate need of some kind of relief. His happiness serves him as a pacifier, a “narcotic” and “anesthetic”, a state of “calm” and “peace”, through which he finds relief from the “poisonous and hostile feelings” that are “fester” within him. (GM I: 10) Happiness as relief from pain is negatively characterized and devalued by Nietzsche. It is an expression of the pathetic weakness that characterizes the advocates of slave morality.

Nietzsche is keen to emphasize the manner in which weakness breeds dishonesty among the advocates of slave morality. In this regard he denies them the virtues of sincerity, naiveté, honesty, and frankness. (GM I: 10) Such a person “loves hiding places, secret passages and backdoors” (GM I: 10), like a creature so weak it is afraid to show itself for fear of being taken, overpowered, and destroyed. Nietzsche’s description of the “the human being of *ressentiment*” in GM I: 10 calls to mind a mouse or any other small animal that scurries and hides at the approach of one larger than itself. The powerless are like such animals. Their advantage does not lie in bravely exposing themselves to danger, but in lingering in “secret passages”, in peeping out (looking “obliquely”), in keeping “silent”, in “waiting”, in scheming behind the backs of the powerful so as to slyly overpower them. (GM I: 10) They debase themselves “for the moment” because it is to their advantage. For them, prudence is “a primary condition of existence”. (GM I: 10) They must hold themselves back from immediate instinctive action, hold in memory the wrongs they have suffered, calculate their retribution, wait for the right moment to execute it, in the meantime be the dissembler, not let their true feelings show, but put on the mask of humility and obsequiousness, until their vengeful machinations can be put into motion. Nietzsche’s characterization of the common man paints him as vicious and

dishonourable. He is one who cannot be trusted because his weakness requires that he be prudent, and his prudence requires that he lie.

In GM I: 13 Nietzsche explicitly employs images of animal weakness to unfavourably characterize the advocates of slave morality. There he mocks human beings of resentment by caricaturing them in the form of weak “little lambs” who bemoan the predations of “the great birds of prey”. He further degrades the powerless by comparing them to insects that play dead so as to escape the attention of predators. As with such insects, the self-preservation of weak human beings requires that they behave passively when threatened by a superior force. The weak display the “prudence of the lowest order, which even insects have (presumably playing dead when in great danger in order not to do “too much”)”. (GM I: 13) By comparing the powerless to lambs and insects, Nietzsche repulses the reader from slave morality and its adherents.

The themes of dishonesty and deception are elaborated to great effect in GM I: 14, one of Nietzsche’s most unflattering and effective portrayals of the advocates of slave morality. Here he dramatizes the ideal-creating work of this type as a spectacle beheld by one “Mr. Wanton-Curiosity and Daredevil”. Nietzsche plays the role of the impresario who offers the willing a peek at this subterranean freak show.

The portrayal of the powerless in this passage is dominated by the themes of self-deception and mendacity. These “cellar animals” misconceive the meaning of their own weakness. They live deluded lives. Like dwellers in Plato’s cave they live in a world of “falsely shimmering light” and illusion where they cannot grasp the true nature of their existences. They believe that their powerlessness is really the mark of a higher strength, refusing to grasp that their weakness is just that – weakness – and that there is no other

world, no Kingdom of God, where this weakness can be translated into strength. Nietzsche even goes so far as to portray the powerless as liars. Among the “nook and cranny counterfeiters” who inhabit the cave there is a “cautious malicious quiet whispering and muttering-together”. (GM I: 14) In this place where “they *fabricate ideals* on earth [...] [w]eakness is lied into a *merit*”. (GM I: 14)²⁶² Here “[t]hese cellar animals full of revenge and hate”, “these artists of black magic who produce white, milk, and innocence out of every black”, achieve “their boldest, finest, most ingenious, most mendacious artistic stroke”. (GM I: 14)

Nietzsche frequently implies or states explicitly in GM I that the advocates of slave morality are lying, i.e., that they are consciously and intentionally trying to deceive others with respect to the nature of earthly existence and the motives behind their manner of valuation. One gets the impression from the text that there is and has been this active intent to deceive, that a sort of conspiracy has been afoot to undermine the powerful through the deliberate spreading of falsehoods. Nietzsche claims, for example, that the powerless have been enacting a “far-seeing, subterranean, slow-working and pre-calculating revenge” through their revaluation of noble values. (GM I: 8) However, that the advocates of slave morality are lying is not an assertion that Nietzsche actually argues for in any way. The accusation is alternately insinuated or stated outright, but not backed up with evidence. The grounds of this accusation therefore remain obscure.

Even if the powerless are not intentionally trying to deceive anyone, the idea that they are mistaken in their interpretation of earthly existence, and therefore unconsciously or unintentionally deceiving others and themselves with respect to their motivations as advocates of slave morality, is damning enough. That they are not being consciously

²⁶² And “every lie tends to hallow itself”. (GM I: 13)

deceptive is also a more tenable thesis, given the difficulty of sustaining such a lie over the course of centuries. However, if Nietzsche can persuade his readers that the advocates of slave morality are not merely mistaken, but that they are actually dishonest, he can make it seem that they are consciously hypocritical insofar as they contravene one of the central tenets of their morality – viz., do not lie – in the very act of advocating that morality. The insinuations and claims of intentional deceit are therefore best understood as amplifications and exaggerations of a more basic and tenable claim, viz., that the advocates of slave morality have a false conception of earthly existence and their own motives, and are unaware that they are mistaken. By exaggerating the claim that they are mistaken into the claim that they are lying, Nietzsche surreptitiously defames and calls into question the character of those who advocate slave morality.

It is often noted by commentators, including Janaway, that despite Nietzsche's disparaging portrayal of slave morality and its advocates, he does have positive things to say about them.²⁶³ For example, Nietzsche claims that through the priestly form of existence "man first became *an interesting animal*, that only here did the human soul acquire *depth* in a higher sense and become *evil* – and these are, after all, the two basic forms of the previous superiority of man over other creatures!" (GM I: 6) Since the priestly revaluation of noble values is an instance of the larger phenomenon of slave revaluation, we can count this passage as an acknowledgement on Nietzsche's part that not all the consequences of the slave revolt in morality are of negative value. Further evidence of this comes in the next section, where Nietzsche states that "[h]uman history would be much too stupid an affair without the spirit that has entered into it through the

²⁶³ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 101. See also Philip J. Kain, "Nietzschean Genealogy and Hegelian History in *The Genealogy Of Morals*," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (March 1996): 130.

powerless”. (GM I: 7) This implies that the slaves are in some sense more intelligent than the nobles whose values have been largely supplanted by the slave revaluation. One certainly gets the impression that the nobles are rather unreflective in comparison with the slaves. They rely on “regulating *unconscious* instincts [and] even a certain imprudence”, whereas the powerless take greater care in action and make greater use of forethought: “A race of such human beings of *ressentiment* in the end necessarily becomes *more prudent* than any noble race”. (GM I: 10) Taking these comments into consideration, it is evident that Nietzsche does show some respect and admiration for the powerless who instigate the slave revolt in morals. No doubt, these comments have the potential to arouse in the reader a positive disposition towards slave morality and its advocates.

Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that these moments of praise for the powerless are isolated and infrequent. They do not in any way cancel the overall disdainful attitude that Nietzsche adopts, and that he encourages his readers to adopt, towards the advocates of slave morality. Migotti is right to say that with respect to Nietzsche’s attitude toward slave morality “[w]e must [...] distinguish between being scornful of slave morality *as a whole*, which Nietzsche is, and being *wholly scornful* of slave morality, which he is not.”²⁶⁴ On the whole and in general, Nietzsche presents slave morality as having ignominious origins. It originates in weakness, hatred, envy, resentfulness, vengefulness, unwanted suffering, and mendacity. Its adherents are portrayed as a deceived, foolish, degenerate, and inferior form of humanity. By offering this image of the morality that he wants to overcome, Nietzsche is trying to persuade his readers that it deserves to be overcome. If Nietzsche’s critical appropriation of the history

²⁶⁴ Migotti, 762.

of this morality is successful, readers of GM will abandon it, thus leaving them open to adopting alternative ways of valuing.

5.5 A Monumental Portrait of the Noble

In Chapter 1 we saw that monumental history is history that recounts the lives of the great men of the past. Nietzsche sees value in this kind of history because compelling representations of the lives of great men can inspire the nascent great men of the present to realize their own potential. Monumental history teaches that “the greatness that once existed was in any event once *possible* and may thus be possible again”. (HL 69) It complements critical history by providing impetus for the affirmative act of creation that must follow the critical act of destruction if the complete overcoming of a pernicious past or tradition is to be realized.

In GM I Nietzsche appropriates monumentally the history of the nobles whose manner of valuation held sway prior to the advent of slave morality. In contrast to the overall tone of his presentation of slave morality, Nietzsche speaks of the nobles and their manner of valuation as something worthy and estimable. An important characteristic of the nobles as Nietzsche presents them is their “active” mode of value-creation. The active mode of value-creation is rooted in the self-confidence, self-satisfaction, self-assurance, and self-adoration of the value-creating individual. Unlike the advocate of slave morality, the noble determines his worth on the basis of a fundamental feeling of worth. His manner of valuation emerges from an immediate and primary affirmation of his own positive value, from an awareness of and belief in his own strength and power. As Nietzsche says, “all noble morality grows out of a triumphant yes-saying to oneself”.

(GM I: 10) Due to the active nature of the noble's mode of value-creation, the fundamental gesture of his manner of valuation is to posit himself as good. Only secondarily and as an afterthought does he create the concept "bad" to designate that which he "holds in contempt", "the sphere [...] of the common man". (GM I: 10)

Nietzsche speaks of the noble manner of valuation and the active mode of value-creation that imbues it in eminently positive terms. The noble manner of valuation is a "hot [...] outpouring of highest rank-ordering, rank-distinguishing value judgements". (GM I: 2) Its "positive basic concept [is] saturated through and through with life and passion: "we noble ones, we good ones, we beautiful ones, we happy ones!" (GM I: 10) It "seeks out its opposite only in order to say "yes" to itself still more gratefully and more jubilantly". (GM I: 10) Unlike the powerless, whose manner of creating values is characterized by "that low degree of warmth presupposed by every calculating prudence, every assessment of utility" (GM I: 2), the nobles are full of passion, vigour, and intensity. Their manner of valuation "acts and grows spontaneously". (GM I: 10)²⁶⁵ Whereas the weak create values out of a feeling of deficiency and discomfort, the ground of the ancient nobles' manner of valuation was that they "simply *felt* themselves to be "happy"". (GM I: 10) The simple presence of this feeling, a symptom of the fullness of their power, was their starting point. Their fullness of power made them "*necessarily* active". (GM I: 10) Activity and happiness were for them inseparable.²⁶⁶

Nietzsche also speaks approvingly of the noble's attitude toward his inferiors.

Unlike the advocates of slave morality, the noble did not hate that which he devalued and

²⁶⁵ "[N]oble morality is essentially bound up with an exuberant *transcendence* of the standpoint of utility". (Migotti, 747)

²⁶⁶ Nietzsche adduces the Greek expression *eu prattein* – meaning "to do well, to fare well, or to do good" (GM I: 10, footnote) – as evidence of the inseparability of activity and happiness within the noble manner of valuation.

ranked lower. He was at once too good spirited and too indifferent towards those who were below him to be capable of conceiving them as evil. As Nietzsche tells us, the noble's contempt for the common man involved "too much carelessness [...], too much taking-lightly, too much looking-away and impatience [...], even too much of a feeling of cheer [...]" for it to be capable of transforming its object into a real caricature and monster". (GM I: 10) He did not take his inferiors seriously enough to be brought to such extremes of feeling with respect to them. Instead, the noble took a soft approach to that which he devalued. Nietzsche adduces evidence from ancient Greek to demonstrate this point. In that language, words which designate the "lower people" – such as *deilos*, *deilaios*, *poneros*, and *mochtheros* – are tinged with "almost benevolent nuances" of "pity, considerateness, [and] leniency". (GM I: 10) In these words "unhappy" and "pitiful" are the predominant notions and tones. (GM I: 10) Nietzsche concedes that, like the advocates of slave morality, the nobles created a false image of those they devalued. However, there is an important difference between the two cases. Whereas the common man's image of the noble grew out of "suppressed hate" and "revenge", the noble's image of the common man grew out of his indifference toward the lower orders of society. (GM I: 10) The nobles lived at a distance from the common people, were "*not* sufficiently acquainted" with them, did not really want to know them, and therefore lacked a "real knowledge" of them. (GM I: 10) Nietzsche claims that because the noble's image of the common man originated in a simple lack of familiarity, it was *less* false than the common man's image of the nobles. All this speaks well of the nobles and their manner of valuation. It counts in the nobles' favour that they were not given to extremes

of feeling with respect to that which they held in contempt. They were confident enough for this, confident enough to not utterly hate that to which they assigned negative value.

Their confidence also bestowed upon them exceptional courage and fearlessness. When confronted by an enemy or faced with any danger, the nobles showed a lack of hesitation, a “gallant making-straight-for-it” kind of attitude. (GM I: 10) In this they displayed a degree imprudence and lack of calculation, but for the noble these qualities counted as virtues. They relied more on “*unconscious* instincts” (GM I: 10) than conscious reflection for guidance. Their instincts were well attuned and served them to great advantage. A calculating prudence “[was] not nearly as essential” for them. (GM I: 10)

The instinctual, unreflective nature of their activity also made the nobles’ expressions of sentiment and desire remarkably uninhibited and direct. The nobles were open, sincere, and naïve in a positive sense, exhibiting an “impassioned suddenness of anger, love, reverence, gratitude, [and] revenge”. (GM I: 10) If the noble did feel resentment it was expressed and expelled immediately. It did not linger with him, and therefore could not poison him in body and soul. In any case, he was far less prone to feeling resentment than those of a weaker constitution. (GM I: 10)

The uninhibited manner in which the noble expressed his emotions also endowed him with a robust capacity to forget, a capacity that is for Nietzsche highly conducive to health. The noble quickly forgot “insults and base deeds committed against him” and did not “for any length of time [...] take his enemies, his accidents, his *misdeeds* seriously”. (GM I: 10) To have been in this way unburdened by the power of memory is a sign that the noble possessed “an excess of formative, reconstructive, healing power”. (GM I: 10)

This “plastic power” (HL 62) that the strong and noble type possessed – the power to process and incorporate new experiences, to recover quickly from injuries and misdeeds, and on the basis of all this become stronger – made possible another of his virtues: reverence and love for his enemies. The noble was healthy enough and felt good enough about himself that the actions of his enemy did not strike him deeply, did not corrupt his nature and his happiness with hatred and loathing. His confidence and high regard for himself led him to seek out honourable enemies, ones that he could not look down upon since they were at his own level and rank, individuals who were in his eyes worth as much as he was: “he demands his enemy for himself, as his distinction; he can stand no other enemy than one in whom there is nothing to hold in contempt and *a very great deal* to honour!” (GM I: 10) According to the ethic of the ancient nobles, only one who possessed a high degree of strength and self-confidence was capable of holding his enemies in the highest regard. To have had great and honourable enemies was a sign that one was great and honourable oneself.

Despite Nietzsche’s abundant use of laudatory language in his characterization of the ancient nobles, it is admittedly possible that some of the things he says about them have the potential to arouse in the reader a negative disposition towards them. This is particularly the case when Nietzsche discusses the war-making behaviour of the nobles. For example, he describes them as “beasts of prey” and “monsters” who commit “murder, arson, rape, [and] torture” in good conscience and with a feeling of pride. (GM I: 11) They revel in “destruction” and “cruelty”. (GM I: 11) They arouse “mistrust” and inspire “horror” in those they conquer and subdue. (GM I: 11) They are “hard, cold, cruel, without feeling or conscience, crushing everything and covering it with blood”.

(GM I: 11) Their effect is “gruesome”. (GM I: 11) Described in these terms, it would not be surprising if the nobles of GM I aroused serious feelings of aversion in readers whose manners of valuation are predominantly slavish.

However, it is worth recognizing that Nietzsche balances and even outweighs his gruesome portrayal of the nobles’ actions as conquering warriors with a heroic portrayal of the same behaviour. In one of his more impassioned depictions of the heroism of the ancient nobles, Nietzsche speaks of the

“boldness” of the noble races – mad, absurd, sudden in its expression; the unpredictable, in their enterprises even the improbable – Pericles singles out for distinction the *rhathymia* of the Athenians – their indifference and contempt toward all security, body, life, comfort; their appalling lightheartedness and depth of desire in all destruction, in all the delights of victory and cruelty[.] (GM I: 11)

While this description of how the nobles behaved when making war beyond the confines of their communities mentions their propensity for cruelty and destruction, it at the same time offers an impressive image of their ability to remain courageously committed to their projects, to prevail over obstacles, to achieve their goals, to have an effect in the world, and to feel good, even cheerful and joyful, while doing so.

The way in which Nietzsche sometimes mixes the gruesome and the heroic in his descriptions of the nobles is further exemplified in his statement that, beyond the confines of the community, the nobles “step *back* into the innocence of the beast-of-prey conscience, as jubilant monsters”. (GM I: 11) The nobles are here described as beasts of prey and monsters, but Nietzsche sweetens their image and makes them appealing to the reader by emphasizing their innocence and jubilation. One gets the impression that in making war the nobles are simply being what they are, unconsciously, like children at play. By depicting them as not quite in control and not quite responsible for their actions

Nietzsche makes it difficult for the reader to blame the nobles for what they do. The nobles are simply unacquainted with the manner of valuation according to which their actions would be condemned as evil. They can be blamed for their predatory behaviour no more than a lion or a bear can be blamed for being the predator that it is. In this way Nietzsche manages to paint the evil one of slave morality in positive and heroic terms despite the offensiveness of much of his behaviour.

Overall, Nietzsche imagines the noble as the true paradigm of human health and vigour. His values originate in strength, honesty, love, self-satisfaction, self-confidence, truthfulness, and joyful suffering. The monumental image of him that Nietzsche paints is one that many would like to emulate. It is an image that would appeal particularly to those who are, like the ancient nobles, endowed by nature with an excess of power and who are consequently apt to feel inhibited by slave morality. What makes the nobles most worthy of the monumental treatment that Nietzsche gives them is the mode of creativity that was fundamental to their manner of valuation. Theirs was an active mode of value-creation that received its creative impetus from an inner self-assurance. By adopting the noble manner of valuation Nietzsche's readers would realize the possibility of such an active mode of creativity. In a world dominated by a reactive mode of value-creation, Nietzsche's monumental presentation of the nobles serves to fortify and encourage those individuals whose form of life would benefit from the noble manner of valuation.

5.6 Janaway on the Lambs and the Birds of Prey

The preceding explications of Nietzsche's monumental depiction of the ancient noble and critical depiction of the slave moralist offer convincing evidence that Janaway

misinterprets GM I when he presents it as offering characterizations of these two types which are similarly balanced between positive and negative aspects. Contrary to Janaway, Nietzsche is clearly biased in favour of the nobles and prejudiced against the advocates of slave morality. Janaway's account of how the text of GM I: 13 arouses the affects of the reader is a particularly clear example of how he gets Nietzsche wrong on this point.

According to Janaway, the text of GM I: 13 allows the reader an opportunity to identify with both the advocate of slave morality, presented through the figure of a hunted lamb, and the noble, presented through the figure of a bird of prey who preys on lambs.²⁶⁷ The reaction of the reader, says Janaway, "may be to sympathize with both affective standpoints in quick succession, revealing how readily we understand the morality of *ressentiment* from within and how absurd we can also find it".²⁶⁸ Janaway's interpretation makes it seem as if Nietzsche presents a balanced account of the predator-prey relationship, one that invites the reader to feel equally the affects in play on both sides.

However, the text clearly urges the reader to sympathize only with the birds of prey. From the beginning, Nietzsche's evocation of the perspective of the lambs is coloured with mockery and scorn. He makes them sound like viciously innocent and pathetic whiners when they complain about the violent predations of the birds of prey: "these birds of prey are evil," say the lambs, "and whoever is as little as possible a bird of prey but rather its opposite, a lamb, – isn't he good?" (GM I: 13) The birds of prey, on the other hand, sound confident and superior as they tease the lambs with playful disdain.

²⁶⁷ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 209.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 111-2.

Nietzsche has them proclaim sarcastically: “we do not feel any anger towards them, these good lambs, as a matter of fact, we love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender lamb”. (GM I: 13) With this utterance the reader is invited to adopt the bird of prey’s mocking attitude toward the lambs.

Part of what makes the perspective of the lambs worthy of mockery is that it implicates what Nietzsche considers to be a false idea: that there is behind all human actions a neutral subject that can choose to express itself either through weakness or through strength. (GM I: 13) On the basis of this idea, the lambs convince themselves that the birds of prey are free to withhold their strength and that all those who are like lambs have freely chosen to act weakly. Nietzsche argues that they have not chosen this – weak is simply what they are and cannot help but be. The bird of prey’s perspective is preferable insofar as it is unhampered by the fantasy of neutral subjectivity. The lambs’ weakness drives them to believe this false idea. Nietzsche makes them sound feeble, foolish, and deluded for endorsing it.

Nietzsche might seem to allow the lambs some leeway when he says that their anger at the birds of prey “does not strike us as odd” and that “there is nothing to criticize” when they call the birds of prey evil and themselves good. (GM I: 13) But he is clearly speaking ironically, for he in fact goes on to criticize the perspective of the lambs by denying the existence of neutral subjectivity. If his criticism is valid, or even if his readers only accept it as such, surely the lambs’ perspective must then seem odd. Indeed, the lambs’ perspective cannot be anything but odd from the value-perspective Nietzsche adopts and that he urges his readers to adopt along with him. The only perspective from

which the lambs' manner of valuation is not odd is from the perspective of slave morality, and Nietzsche clearly presents that perspective as misguided and erroneous.

Thus it is clear that in GM I: 13 Nietzsche does not urge his readers to identify with the lambs. Rather, he urges them to distance themselves from the lambs and identify with the birds of prey. There is not a balanced evocation of the feelings present on each side, but a clear bias in favour of one side of the predator-prey relationship. Janaway fails to see that, far from inviting the reader to sympathize equally with the noble and the advocate of slave morality, GM I: 13 presents the contrast between them in such a way as to persuade the reader to take sides with the noble against the slave.

5.7 Arousing Disgust

While it is unfortunate that Janaway does not acknowledge the biased manner in which Nietzsche contrasts the noble and the advocate of slave morality, he does well to recognize that the arousal of affects in the reader contributes significantly to Nietzsche's project of revaluating slave values.²⁶⁹ However, with respect to his account of how Nietzsche motivates the revaluation of slave values through the arousal of disgust, I once again disagree with Janaway. While Janaway is right to say that Nietzsche arouses disgust towards the advocates of slave morality, he does not present a convincing account of how Nietzsche goes about arousing it.

According to Janaway, one of Nietzsche's main strategies for undermining the reader's affective attachment to slave morality is to identify will to power as the main psychological driver behind its creation. Nietzsche begins by arousing discomfort with

²⁶⁹ See for example Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 48, 91, 99, & 105.

the nobles' "brutal discharge of power towards the weak".²⁷⁰ "[T]he reader is prompted to feel anxiety at the untrammelled exercise of power by the nobles, and to experience the urge to identify the exercise of this power as wrong".²⁷¹ Nietzsche then reveals that the advocates of slave morality want to discharge their power in a similar fashion: they want to gain dominance over the nobles through a revaluation of their values. As inheritors of the slave manner of valuation, the readers of GM are predisposed to feeling negatively towards any exercise of power over others. But Janaway thinks that they are apt to find the exercise of power on the part of the advocates of slave morality even more objectionable than the nobles' exercise of power because, unlike the nobles, the advocates of slave morality conceal the true origin of their values. Both manners of valuation originate in will to power, but the weak mendaciously deny this origin.²⁷² They claim that their values are born out of unconditional love, have metaphysical justification in God, and are the only true values. They speak as if "failure to exercise power in this world has positive value" and imagine another world where their failure to exercise power will be rewarded.²⁷³ According to Janaway, by revealing the dishonest way in which the powerless enact their will to power, Nietzsche transforms the reader's discomfort with the nobles' exercise of power into greater discomfort, even disgust, with the exercise of power on the part of the advocates of slave morality. The disgust that Nietzsche provokes has "a specific and complex object: *that a system of values which exists to fulfill (in imagination) the drive towards power should falsely pass itself off as in*

²⁷⁰ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 92.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 105.

²⁷² Ibid., 101-2.

²⁷³ Ibid., 104.

opposition to the drive towards power”.²⁷⁴ Such a powerfully negative emotion can operate to weaken the reader’s attachment to slave values. As Janaway tells us, “Nietzsche perhaps hoped that evoking this disgust might be enough to break the reader’s allegiance to judging things good or evil, preparing the way one day for new combinations of affects for and against that he would regard as healthier.”²⁷⁵

While I agree with Janaway that Nietzsche’s portrayal of the advocates of slave morality as mendaciously power-hungry can help to weaken the reader’s allegiance to slave values by leading them to “feel differently”²⁷⁶ about those values, I do not think he presents a convincing argument that this is specifically what leads the reader to feel disgust. Such hypocrisy on the part of the advocates of slave morality will certainly be distasteful to many readers. If they become convinced that slave moralists are dishonest about the true origin of their values they will likely react negatively and in a spirit of condemnation. But disgust does not seem to be the appropriate emotion to feel in conjunction with such a belief. Something like indignation or outrage would be a more appropriate and more likely affective complement to the idea that the advocates of slave morality are mendacious hypocrites.

A further weakness of Janaway’s account of how Nietzsche arouses disgust for the advocates of slave morality is that it relies on the reader feeling a prior discomfort with the nobles’ exercise of will to power. According to Janaway, Nietzsche translates the reader’s discomfort with the nobles’ exercise of power into disgust with the slave moralists’ exercise of power. However, Nietzsche’s overall monumental and positive portrayal of the nobles makes their way of exercising power appear largely admirable and

²⁷⁴ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 105-6.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 106.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 105.

worthy of affirmation. Therefore, the idea that Nietzsche wants to translate the reader's supposed discomfort with the nobles' exercise of power into disgust with the slave moralists' exercise of power is tenuous at best. I think readers are not as inclined as Janaway thinks they are to find the nobles and the slave moralists objectionable on this count.

Overall, Janaway's claim that readers will find the advocates of slave morality disgusting on account of their dishonesty concerning their will to dominate is not well supported. While I agree with him that Nietzsche motivates disgust for the advocates of slave morality, I think he does this in ways that have relatively little to do with the slave moralists' fraudulent expression of will to power. Nor does the arousal of disgust depend on readers feeling a prior discomfort with the nobles' exercise of power. On the contrary, and as I will now proceed to demonstrate, it is by vividly portraying the advocates of slave morality as degenerate and deformed human beings who utterly fail to meet the standard of awesomeness and magnificence set by the strong and well-formed nobles that Nietzsche degrades them to the point of being disgusting.

As we saw in my explication of Nietzsche's monumental depiction of the ancient nobles, the noble is for Nietzsche the true image of human health and virtue. He is portrayed as fundamentally happy, confident, affirmative, passionate, exuberant, generous, cheerful, magnanimous, honest, courageous, assertive, untiring, virtuously forgetful, and virtuously intuitive. An important aspect of this monumental portrait of the noble involves emphasizing how his ability to exercise strength and power makes him worthy of fear. The nobles, Nietzsche tells us, inspire fear in those who are weak. As objectionable as this might be to the advocates of slave morality, it is not a bad thing

from Nietzsche's perspective. In his view, the nobles are to be revered and admired *because* they inspire fear. That they spark fear in others is a sign of their greatness. It is a sign that there is still something about mankind that is worthy of love, respect, affirmation, and hope. As Nietzsche tells us, "It may be entirely justifiable if one cannot escape one's fear of the blond beast at the base of all noble races and is on guard: but who would not a hundred times sooner fear if he might at the same time admire [...]" (GM I: 11) For Nietzsche, the ability to inspire fear is a positive attribute, something that makes the noble profoundly impressive. The human being who is worthy of fear is "something perfect, completely formed, happy, powerful, triumphant". (GM I: 12) He is "a human being who justifies man *himself*; a human being who is a stroke of luck, completing and redeeming man, and for whose sake one may hold fast to *belief in man*!" (GM I: 12)

The advocate of slave morality exhibits none of the virtues of the ancient noble. As we saw in my explication of Nietzsche's critical depiction of him, the slave moralist is the true image of human vice and sickness. He is deficient, defective, self-loathing, timid, needy, dependent, insincere, dishonest, deluded, scheming, cowardly, and viciously prudent. He inspires not fear but disgust, as Nietzsche makes clear when he speaks of being "unable to escape the disgusting sight of the deformed, reduced, atrophied, [and] poisoned" kind of human being. (GM I: 11) This is what Nietzsche thinks slave morality does to human beings. It takes man as beast of prey, as something worthy of fear, and it debilitates and tames him. The taming of man through the instilling of slave values in him is thought to be the "*meaning of all culture*", its ultimate purpose and end. (GM I: 11) It is supposed to represent the betterment and progression of man. Nietzsche disagrees.

These bearers of the oppressing and the retaliation-craving instincts [“all those instincts of reaction and *ressentiment*”], the descendants of all European and non-European slavery, of all pre-Aryan population in particular – they represent the *regression* of humankind! These “tools of culture” are a disgrace to humanity, and rather something that raises a suspicion, a counter-argument against “culture” in general! (GM I: 11)

Slave morality represents not progress, but “the will to lowering, to debasement, to leveling, to the downward and evening-ward of man!” (GM I: 16) Far from making him better, it has resulted in “the reduction and equalization of the European human”. (GM I: 12) Consequently, there is “nothing that wishes to become greater, we sense that things are still going downhill, downhill – into something thinner, more good-natured, more prudent, more comfortable, more mediocre, more apathetic, more Chinese, more Christian”. (GM I: 12) Nietzsche feels an “aversion” to the “hopelessly mediocre and uninspiring” kind of human being that slave morality cultivates. (GM I: 11) He laments that there is “nothing left to fear in man” (GM I: 11), that “with the fear of man we have also forfeited the love of him, the reverence toward him, the hope for him, indeed the will to him”. (GM I: 12) Nihilism is the consequence. “The sight of man now makes tired – what is nihilism today if it is not *that*? ... We are tired of *man*”. (GM I: 12)

The degeneration, deformation, and incapacitation that man suffers under the influence of slave values is graphically conveyed through the image of man as a mass of teeming worms: “the worm “man” is in the foreground and teeming,” says Nietzsche. (GM I: 11). This idea of a horde of writhing worms is a particularly striking and effective image, one that is liable to arouse disgust in readers. Worms are disgusting to a high degree, in part due to their association with the decomposition and consumption of the human body after death. This suits Nietzsche’s purposes well, given that he links slave morality to the disintegration and decay of man. Imagining human beings as a mass of

crawling worms vividly conjures the idea of weakness and collapse. It creates in the reader a visceral sense of aversion to whatever might be like those worms or whatever might make human beings into something wormlike.

Nietzsche further suggests the dissipated and sickly nature of the advocates of slave morality by associating them with noxious odours. Mr. Wanton-Curiosity and Daredevil is one who bears witness to the bad smell given off by the weak. He complains of the “bad air” in the “workplace where they *fabricate ideals*” and is forced to “close his nose” while relaying what he sees there. Earlier in the first treatise, and speaking directly in his own voice, Nietzsche rails against “the profusion of the deformed, sickly, tired, worn-out of which Europe today is beginning to stink”. (GM I: 11) And his repugnance is in no way concealed when he exclaims in aggravation: “That something deformed comes near me; that I should have to smell the entrails of a deformed soul!” (GM I: 12) These entrails are the source of the “Bad air” that Nietzsche finds “utterly unbearable” and that causes him to “suffocate and languish”. (GM I: 12) Like the image of a mass of slithering worms, the connection that Nietzsche makes between slave moralists and noxious odours suggests a state of rot and putrefaction that is analogous to the state of disintegration that he thinks man has entered into as a result of the ascendancy of slave morality. His use of stinking entrails as an image of the interiority of one who has been poisoned and deformed by slave values is also particularly effective at arousing disgust in the reader. Stinking entrails denote mutilation and death. It is a superlatively ugly and viscerally disturbing image. These are the kinds of feelings and ideas that Nietzsche wants his readers to associate with the advocates of slave morality.

Janaway argues that readers of GM will be disgusted by the advocates of slave morality on account of their mendacious exercise of will to power. Against this view I suggest that while it is possible to imagine readers who would admire the slave moralists for their cunning pursuit of power through the creation and assertion of values, it is exceedingly difficult to imagine readers who would admire them for the degeneration and sickness that Nietzsche attributes to them. In Nietzsche's view, the advocates of slave morality represent a regression from the noble ideal. They are an inferior form of life that inspires not fear and respect, but disgust and aversion. Near the end of GM I Nietzsche graphically illustrates their regressive nature through a series of disgusting images. They are imagined as worms and entrails and associated with putrid odours. Nietzsche is evidently repulsed by what human beings have become as a result of the predominance of slave values and he wants his readers to be repulsed as well. To this end he depicts slave moralists in revolting terms. He wants his readers to conceive them as vicious in the extreme, vicious to the point of revulsion.

5.8 The Noble Perspective of GM I

Wulf Kellerwessel correctly observes that in GM "Nietzsche is interested in the explanation of the origin of occidental and Christian morality and moral concepts [...], and [that] his portrayal [of that origin] is so calculated that these become open to criticism, because they are of human and not divine origin".²⁷⁷ However, even if Nietzsche's naturalistic account of the movement from a predominant noble morality to a predominant slave morality in Europe were true in all of its psychological detail, it is not

²⁷⁷ Wulf Kellerwessel, "Nietzsches interpretatorische Sprachphilosophie im Kontext seiner Erkenntnistheorie – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der „Genealogie der Moral“. Rekonstruktion und Kritik," *Prima Philosophia* 17, no. 3 (2004): 335.

clear that this would in itself motivate the revaluation of slave values that Nietzsche wants to motivate in his readers. After all, slave morality is not unique among moralities for its lack of divine sanction. In Nietzsche's view, all moralities are of human rather than divine origin. Thus, in order to more assuredly accomplish his goal Nietzsche imbues his account of the emergence of slave morality with highly affective depictions of the nobles and the slave moralists. By means of these depictions he seeks to motivate a revaluation of slave morality from the perspective of noble morality.

While it is entirely possible that readers will at times experience an inclination to sympathize with the advocates of slave morality, it is clear that on the whole Nietzsche makes the nobles seem more appealing and more worthy of affirmation than the slave moralists. All things considered, Nietzsche arouses far more disapproval and condemnation for the slaves than he does for the nobles, and far more admiration and respect for the nobles than he does for the slaves. Indeed, it is clear that Nietzsche both feels in himself and wants to arouse in his readers a pathos of distance with respect to the advocates of slave morality. Just as the nobles were "recoloured" by their social inferiors through the revaluation of noble values (GM I: 11), so Nietzsche wants to recolour and reconceive the advocates of slave morality by evaluating their values from the noble perspective. GM I therefore has both a negative and a positive aim: to devalue slave values and to affirm noble values. Nietzsche is not only urging his readers to break allegiance with slave morality, but also compelling them to adopt the noble manner of valuation.

Janaway does not go so far as to say that Nietzsche compels his readers to adopt the noble perspective. In Janaway's view, Nietzsche wants to dislodge readers from the

slave manner of valuation in order to prepare them to embrace healthier manners of valuation. But he is not willing to say that Nietzsche recommends noble morality as an alternative to slave morality. Given that he thinks Nietzsche arouses severe discomfort with the nobles, discomfort that is supposed to at least equal whatever degree of admiration he arouses for them, the idea that Nietzsche wants readers to assume the noble perspective is hard for him to countenance. However, it is clear that Nietzsche pushes readers in precisely this direction. Through his critical depiction of the advocates of slave morality he inspires condemnation so as to shatter the reader's allegiance to the slave manner of valuation. Through his monumental depiction of the nobles he inspires admiration so as to draw the reader towards the noble manner of valuation. Nietzsche clearly paints noble values in a better light and in so doing urges the reader to adopt the noble perspective on the slave moralists. The noble is portrayed as the paragon of perfection, honour, and beauty, while the slave moralist is made to appear vicious, ugly, and loathsome. Relentlessly thrusting these images upon the reader, the text operates to inspire a forceful desire for the instantiation of a manner of valuation that is not rooted in a hatred for all things full of life and power. This alternative manner of valuation is noble morality. The noble pathos of distance is therefore the leading affective perspective of the first treatise, while the affective perspective of slave morality is in so many ways mocked and degraded. As perceptive as Janaway's reading of GM is, his account of how the text of GM I works to arouse the affects of the reader fails to recognize that in both subtle and not so subtle ways Nietzsche invites the reader to condemn slave morality from the perspective of noble morality.

5.9 The Fiction of the Neutral Subject

As already noted above, Nietzsche's debunking of the concept of neutral subjectivity in GM I: 13 provides part of the basis upon which he mocks the advocates of slave morality in that section. The way in which he elaborates his critique of the idea of neutral subjectivity merits further attention insofar as it furnishes an example of how Nietzsche uses a technique of rhetoric to persuade his readers to adopt a favourable attitude toward the nobles and a disparaging one toward the slave moralists, a technique which bears resemblance to the manner in which he juxtaposes the noble and the man of bad conscience in GM II.

In focussing his critical gaze upon the concept of neutral subjectivity, Nietzsche isolates what he takes to be a core belief and "article of faith" of slave morality, viz., that "strength [...] [need] *not* express itself as strength", that the strong and powerful are free to withhold their strength and thereby behave as if they are weak. (GM I: 13) Nietzsche claims that this belief is false: those who are strong must express their strength and those who are weak can do no better than behave weakly. It is "nonsensical" to ask that strength express itself as weakness or that "weakness [...] express itself as strength". (GM I: 13) Nonetheless, this is precisely what the ideals of slave morality, the life conditions and values it posits, demand.

The slave moralists' belief that human beings are free to either express or withhold strength finds support in the idea of the "neutral "subject" with free choice". (GM I: 13) The advocates of slave morality conceive the neutral subject as an "indifferent substratum" within the human individual (GM I: 13), one which gives rise to various effects in the form of actions performed by the individual and which endows the

individual with the power to freely choose among various possible courses of action. In the words of Janaway, the neutral subject represents a radically free and “pure” will, “unconstrained by causal factors” and “detached from all contingencies that could push it one way or the other”.²⁷⁸ Because the neutral subject is distinct from the effects it causes, the human individual is, according to the advocates of slave morality, more than what its actions express.

The theoretical separation of a part of the human individual from its actions, and the idea that the individual has the power of choice by virtue of this separate part, provides support for the slave moralists’ idea that human beings are free to either express or withhold their strength. Once one’s ‘true self’ is made distinct from one’s actions by means of the concept of the subject it becomes more believable that one can freely choose to be either domineering or meek in one’s comportment towards others. Conceiving individuals and their actions in this way allows the advocates of slave morality to hold the powerful responsible and accountable for their aggressive behaviour. It also provides justification for their claim that they have freely chosen to do no violence or injury to others, to be “patient”, “humble”, passive, and undemanding in their bearing towards the world. (GM I: 13)

Nietzsche thinks that the idea of the neutral subject that subtends these assertions is false. It arises, he says, out of “the seduction of language (and the basic errors of reason petrified therein) which understands and misunderstands all effecting as conditioned by an effecting something, by a “subject””. (GM I: 13) What Nietzsche means here is that those who believe in the existence of an indifferent substratum called the “subject” are led to this belief by the “grammatical habit” (BG 17) of using separate terms to designate

²⁷⁸ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 112-3.

a thing and its actions. In many languages, including German and English, grammar dictates that for each predicate there must be a subject. In other words, for every action-concept there must be some designated being that performs and causes the action. When this grammatical separation between a thing and its actions is hypostatized such that an individual's actions are conceived as effects of a neutral substratum, the result is a false conception of the nature of an individual's activity.

Despite its falsity, the idea of the neutral subject is attractive to many. The weak and oppressed are especially in need of this idea because through it they can affirm themselves and their form of life. By believing in the existence of the neutral subject “the majority of mortals [...] [can achieve] that sublime self-deception of interpreting weakness itself as freedom”. (GM I: 13) They can conceive their weakness as a free act of renunciation, a “voluntary achievement, something willed, something chosen, a *deed*, a *merit*”. (GM I: 13) Belief in this “lie” then becomes a sustaining life-condition for the weak and powerless. They accept it “out of an instinct of self-preservation [and] self-affirmation”. (GM I: 13) Through the concept of the subject they discover a way to defend and uphold their subordination and powerlessness.

Nietzsche, however, refuses them this comfort. He denies the reality of the neutral subject upon which their belief in free choice rests. In reality, asserts Nietzsche, an individual is a “quantum of power [...] a quantum of drive, will, effect [and] nothing other than this very driving, willing, effecting”. (GM I: 13) In other words, an individual is nothing other than what he does or effects. “[T]here is no “being” behind the doing, effecting, becoming; [...] the doing is everything”. (GN I: 13) The doer as distinct from the doing is a “fabricated” illusion, a doubling of that which actually exists, viz., the mere

happening, expression, and activity of power. If one thinks in accord with this illusion then “the same happening is posited first as cause and then once again as its effect”. (GM I: 13)

Nietzsche illustrates what he means by way of an alluring analogy. He says that people speak of lightning in precisely this false and doubling way. “Common people” think that lightning flashes, as if lightning were something other than the flash. But these are not two separate entities. The lightning is not a subject which effects something else called a flash. They are one and the same. The one activity, the one happening, is named twice if we say “lightning flashes”.

This analogy is indeed seductive. The radiant display of power that is lightning resonates with Nietzsche’s characterization of the nobles as quick and confident men of action who courageously make straight for their target without hesitation. They are what they are in their doings. They boldly and unhesitatingly display what they are through their deeds. It is therefore fitting that in GM II Nietzsche explicitly compares the nobles to lightning: when they conquer populations “they are there like lightning is there: too terrible, too sudden, too convincing, too “different” even to be so much as hated”. (GM II: 17)

The common misunderstanding of lightning mirrors the commoners’ misunderstanding of the nobles and of themselves. The nobles are nothing other than what they proudly display. The weak are also precisely what they show themselves to be, at least what they show themselves to be from the perspective of the powerful: they seem weak and they are weak. The weakness of the weak one is “his *essence*, his effecting, his whole unique, unavoidable, undetachable reality”. (GM I: 13) Nonetheless, they manage

to hide this weakness from themselves by means of a flawed conception of what it is to act as an individual.

However, it is interesting to note that the analogy drawn by Nietzsche between the nature of an individual and the nature of lightning does not serve his purpose as neatly as he might like. For it is not really the case that “lightning” is equivalent to its “flash”. The flash is merely the *visual* manifestation of lightning. It is one effect of the phenomenon we call “lightning”. There are other effects as well, other ways of experiencing and describing this phenomenon. Thunder, for example, is the audible effect of lightning and is not necessarily perceived simultaneously with the flash. Heat would be the effect of lightning for anyone struck deaf and blind by it. There might even be effects of lightning that could be tasted or smelled. (What might it taste like to be struck by lightning?) One could also offer an account of lightning from the perspective of sub-atomic phenomena, describing it as an effect of the behaviour of electrons. Each of these ways of describing lightning is not a case of doubling the phenomenon. On the contrary, these are all real or potential manifestations of a single complex happening. Lightning is more complex than Nietzsche gives it credit for. It is more than a clap of thunder, more than an exchange of charged particles, more than a simple flash.

Just as there is more to lightning than the flash, there is also more to an individual than his deeds, even on Nietzsche’s own account. Let us take the case of the noble. In GM I: 13 Nietzsche makes it appear as if the noble is nothing other than what he does, that the will to power that he expresses itself in ways that are out of his control and that he therefore has no choice concerning what actions he performs. These assertions are put into question and even undermined by the inevitable conclusion, reached on the basis of

my analysis of GM II in the previous chapter, that the noble is a sovereign individual. As a sovereign individual the noble is capable of holding himself at a distance from what his will to power most immediately compels him to do. Thus, he has at least some degree of control over his actions. His inner distances and complexities allow him to choose among various means of manifesting and satisfying his will to power. His rich inner world allows him to imagine possibilities for action which he does not necessarily pursue, but which may yet be pursued for the sake of expressing his power differently. In addition to imagination he has the power of memory. Through remembrance he can bring considerations to bear upon present and future actions which allow him to override what a momentary passion compels him to do. These inner capacities, while making the noble more than what he effects through action, do not suffice to make him an indifferent or neutral subject, for these capacities, far from being disinterested or indifferent, are functions of passions, desires, instincts and affects, all of which are perspectival and partial in nature. However, the upshot of this complex inner play of forces is nonetheless the power to hold oneself back from a momentary urge and to choose among various options for the actualization of one's power. Therefore, while the neutral subject may very well be an error of reason, the noble must be recognized as having some ability to choose his actions. The richness of his inner world must be understood as making the noble as "doer" to a great extent distinct from the noble as "deed". And of course, the same must be acknowledged of the advocates of slave morality, for they too are sovereign individuals.

Despite the importance of recognizing a definite distinction between doer and deed in both the noble and the advocate of slave morality, it may still be the case that the

strong can do nothing but express strength, while the weak can do nothing but express weakness. These assertions may stand even if it is the case that an individual is able to control how his will to power manifests itself and has the power of choice by virtue of being a sovereign individual. The complex play of inner forces, while allowing there to be a distinction between doer and deed, need not result in the strong being able to behave weakly or the weak being able to behave strongly. Their actions might still express their strong or weak natures, but do so by means of the convoluted inner process that constitutes the distinction between doer and deed.

Janaway's interpretation of GM I: 13 supports this view. On his reading, Nietzsche's denial that there is any such thing as a neutral subject does not entail that a particular agent in a particular circumstance is necessitated to perform just one specific action. Rather, a range of actions are possible for the agent and this range of actions is circumscribed by his character. The notions of weakness and strength that Nietzsche invokes in GM I: 13 refer to the constraints of character. Thus, that the strong must behave strongly and the weak weakly does not mean that they are without the power of choice. For each there is a range of possible actions that they can perform, each of which is consistent with their respective characters. What they are not free to do is act out of character.²⁷⁹

Nonetheless, it still remains problematic that the way in which Nietzsche states his rebuttal to the idea of neutral subjectivity and the way in which he presents the contrast between the slave moralists' view of individual action and his own view of individual action makes it seem as if there is in his view no latitude for choice. He makes

²⁷⁹ Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 114. However, according to Nietzsche's own analysis the nobles can act out of character insofar as they are susceptible to feeling bad conscience and can be seduced by the slave manner of valuation.

the power to choose a function of neutral subjectivity, so that when he denies the reality of neutral subjectivity he seems to deny the possibility of choice altogether. What Nietzsche neglects to acknowledge in GM I: 13 is that the power to choose could be grounded in something other than the neutral subject. It might be grounded for instance in the kind of interiority that characterizes the sovereign individual. By not acknowledging this he makes it appear as if, in his view, human beings have no ability to choose whatsoever.

The dissonance between Nietzsche's positive characterization of individual action in GM I: 13 and his characterization of the sovereign individual in GM II is vexing. In GM I: 13 he claims that the doer is exactly equivalent to his deeds, thereby making it appear as if individuals have no interiority and that choice is an illusion. This contradicts his claim in GM II that socialization engenders consciousness in human beings such that both the nobles and those they subjugate become capable of reflection, calculation and choice, although not by virtue of any neutral subjectivity. How can we understand Nietzsche's positive account of individual action in GM I: 13 in light of his genealogy of the emergence of personal sovereignty in the second treatise?

To begin with, we can understand Nietzsche's positive claims regarding the nature of individual action in GM I: 13 as invoking the fiction of the pure origin that I introduced at the end of Chapter 4. There I argued that in GM II Nietzsche portrays the noble conquerors as embodying the instinctive, involuntary, unconscious, and unreflective mode of life that, according to the narrative of the second treatise, was characteristic of man before he entered into society with others. Nietzsche creates this simplified and unhistorical image of the noble so as to heighten the contrast between the

noble and the man of bad conscience. This has the effect of intensifying the devaluation of the man of bad conscience by setting up a stark contrast between his repressed inwardness and the noble's unhindered outward expression of will to power. It also allows Nietzsche to offer a clear alternative to the mode of life embodied by the man of bad conscience. Nietzsche's image of the noble gives the reader who wishes to adopt a different attitude toward his natural will to power a clear target and model.

Through his positive account of individual action in GM I: 13 and its illustration through the analogy with lightning Nietzsche pushes the idea of the nobles as instinctive, involuntary, unconscious, and unreflective agents to the extreme, to the point where their interiority is reduced to zero and they become nothing but exteriority – pure outward activity with no remainder of consciousness. In doing so, Nietzsche makes them as different as they can possibly be from the prudent, cold, and calculating advocates of slave morality whose interior worlds are burdened by an overdevelopment of reflective capacities and viciously complicated by inhibition and resentment. As in GM II, Nietzsche valorizes the noble way of being. To be like the noble is to be virtuous: it is to be like lightning or like a bird of prey. To be like a slave moralist is to be vicious: it is to be like an uncertain and hesitating little lamb. Like the human beings of bad conscience in GM II, the advocates of slave morality are a degeneration and regression from the pure origin that the nobles represent. To reclaim this pure origin would be to reclaim an ideal state of health, strength, and naturalness.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ While Nietzsche's positive account of individual action in GM I: 13 implies that both the nobles and the advocates of slave morality are pure exteriority and lack the power of choice, the account clearly resonates more forcefully with his characterization of the nobles throughout GM I & II as imprudent and unreflective individuals whose actions are guided by unconscious instinct. The analogy with lightning heightens this resonance. The nobles are like lightning insofar as they are bold and confident men of action who make straight for their targets and unhesitatingly display what they are through their deeds. The slave moralists are not compellingly portrayed by the analogy with lightning because throughout GM I they are depicted as

Nietzsche also implies that there is an essential link between the pure origin that the nobles represent and truth. The “truth” of the nobles’ unconscious, unreflective, and involuntary mode of action (a mode of action which they do not truly and unqualifiedly exhibit since they are sovereign individuals) is pitted against the “false” idea that actions arise on the basis of an indifferent substratum that makes conscious deliberation and choice possible. The advocates of slave morality are wrong to think that they or anyone else are really capable of choosing a course of action. Their actions, like the actions of the nobles, are also immediate expressions of their natures. They are therefore mistaken in thinking that they voluntarily choose to behave in a meek, humble, and passive manner, just as they are mistaken in thinking that the nobles choose to behave in ways that are domineering and aggressive. To reclaim the pure origin would be to align oneself with the truth of what it means to act as a human being.

Insofar as Nietzsche’s claims in GM I: 13 invoke and valorize the idea of a pure origin, we can understand those claims as appealing to the rhetorical force of that fiction. The pure origin represents what is virtuous and true. It is the ideal that has been obscured and corrupted by the revaluation of noble morality. As such, it is that which ought to be liberated and reclaimed from the falsehoods and unhealthy habits of feeling that are disseminated and encouraged by the advocates of slave morality. This liberation and reclamation would be accomplished by the overcoming of slave morality through the re-instantiation of the noble manner of valuation.

When Nietzsche’s critique of the idea of neutral subjectivity is seen in light of the fact that both the nobles and the advocates of slave morality are most coherently

timid and cowardly human beings who make use of dissimulation and subterfuge to achieve their goals. Therefore, despite what might be interpreted as appearances to the contrary, there is in GM I: 13 an implied contrast between the distinct modes of action that the nobles and the advocates of slave morality exhibit.

conceived as sovereign individuals possessing powers of deliberation and choice, it becomes evident that Nietzsche does not argue particularly well for his claim that there is no difference between the doer and his deed. It may be that the idea of neutral subjectivity is false. However, in his discussion of its falsity, Nietzsche makes unjustified and exaggerated claims about the lack of any distinction between doer and deed and makes it appear as if he is of the view that human beings entirely lack the capacity to choose. Such claims and implications are inconsistent with what he will later claim about the nature of the sovereign individual. Even if the advocates of slave morality are mistaken about the existence of the neutral subject, their view, as Nietzsche presents it, is not so different from what he himself thinks human beings have become as a result of socialization.

Ultimately, Nietzsche and the advocates of slave morality must agree that there is a distinction between the doer and his deed and that individuals have the ability to choose their actions. For Nietzsche, this distinction and this power are grounded in consciousness and the complex inter-relationships among the passions, drives, affects, and instincts that constitute the psyches of sovereign individuals. For the advocate of slave morality, this distinction and this power would be grounded in the indifferent or neutral subject. By obscuring and effectively denying these points of agreement in GM I: 13 Nietzsche exaggerates the difference between his own view of individual action, or what ought to be his view if he were to remain consistent with the implications of his narrative, and the view of individual action held by the advocates of slave morality. Through such a rhetorical ruse he provides himself with greater grounds for characterizing the advocates of slave morality as severely delusional, if not maliciously mendacious, when they give

voice to the theory of the neutral subject. Given Nietzsche's highly affective approach to contrasting the nobles and the advocates of slave morality throughout GM I, it is plausible that his exaggeration of the difference between his own view and the slave moralists' view is designed to more forcefully turn his readers' feelings against slave morality and towards noble morality – i.e., against the degeneration represented by the former and towards the pure origin symbolized by the latter.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored the extent to which the GM puts into practice Nietzsche's ideas in HL on how the past ought to be appropriated through the writing of history. I have shown that in significant ways GM does indeed exhibit the historiographical method that Nietzsche advocates in HL. It does this insofar as it appropriates the past unhistorically, makes use of the monumental and critical modes of history, and appropriates the past with the aim of encouraging the activity of an elite kind of human being. In other ways, the manner in which GM appropriates the past departs from what Nietzsche advocated in HL. Most importantly, Nietzsche's concern in GM to tell the truth about the past is more pronounced than it was in HL. The greater emphasis on knowing the past that GM exhibits is a function of the change that Nietzsche's epistemology underwent between the writing of HL and the writing of GM. Overall, interpreting GM in light of HL has the virtue of helping us come to a better understanding of how Nietzsche appropriates the past untruthfully in GM, while also shedding light on his motivations for appropriating the past in this manner. The image of the history of European morality that Nietzsche presents in GM serves his valuation of a particular, and in his view superior, form of human life.

We have seen that during the period when he wrote HL Nietzsche was of the view that knowledge and truth are impossible to attain. At that time Nietzsche conceived truth as a matter of knowing mind-independent things-in-themselves. In TL he asserts the view that knowing such objects is impossible because human cognition by its very nature obscures them. The nerve stimuli that are caused when things-in-themselves impinge upon the human body in no way resemble the things-in-themselves. Likewise, the

empirical world of perception that the nerve stimuli give rise to in no way resembles those nerve stimuli. Because the process of cognition involves transferences of information between incommensurable media of information the perceptual world that we are immediately aware of in no way resembles the world of things-in-themselves. Consequently, we are unable to grasp the latter by way of the former. Concepts also fail to give us knowledge of things-in-themselves because concepts are created on the basis of the perceptual world. They categorize objects of perception through the anthropomorphic selection of characteristics. Therefore, while it can be said that concepts give us a limited sort of knowledge of objects in the empirical world, they do not give us any knowledge of things-in-themselves because the empirical world on which they are based in no way resembles the world of things-in-themselves.

Nietzsche does not undertake an in-depth and rigorous discussion of historical epistemology in HL. However, it seems clear that in that essay historical knowledge is not a matter of knowing things-in-themselves. Rather, historical knowledge is there a species of conceptual knowledge that is concerned with knowing the empirical world of the past. From the vantage point of the present in which every historian undertakes the task of knowing the past, there is no immediate access to the empirical world of the past. Instead, historians have only a highly mediated acquaintance with the past. It is available to them largely in the form of written records of various kinds and all such information is conceptual in nature insofar as it is linguistic. As Nietzsche tells us in TL, all language conceptualizes the empirical world in some manner. Consequently, the basic material that historians work with in their attempts to know the past is conceptual and what they

produce on the basis of this conceptual material is likewise conceptual: they produce more texts about the past.

For Nietzsche, the ways in which concepts categorize objects in the empirical world is largely a matter of convention. In general, we use concepts in the ways we have been taught to use them and in ways that are socially acceptable. Such conventional usage is what passes for truth. But there are myriad other ways of conceptualizing the empirical world. The power of imagination is what enables human beings to create concepts. By means of this power we can also reconceptualize the empirical world. That is, we can categorize the things in it differently through a different selection of characteristics and through the use of innovative figures of speech. In this way, the so-called truths that the conventional use of concepts represents can be disrupted and replaced by new 'truths'. Neither the conventional 'truths' nor the deviant 'truths' that reconceptualization produces are true in the strict sense. That is, neither of them represents the world as it is in itself. However, both can be said to offer some knowledge of the empirical world, each in their own limited ways.

Because historical knowledge is by its very nature conceptual it can be said to grasp something of the truth of the empirical world as it was in the past. However, this knowledge is partial and limited because, like all conceptual knowledge, it is produced by way of selection and simplification. Of course, the empirical past is always open to being reimagined and reconceptualized. Through such reimagining and reconceptualization it is interpreted differently and given new meaning. The interpretations of the past that historians produce cannot be considered objective in the sense of having determined the true meaning of past events because every attempt to know the past involves the creation

of meaning through an imaginative and partial selection and ordering of the available evidence.

By the time Nietzsche wrote GM his views on truth and knowledge had undergone significant change. Whereas in TL he had put forth the view that having truth is matter of knowing a metaphysical world of things-in-themselves that cannot be grasped through human cognition, in his later philosophy truth is not a matter of knowing things-in-themselves. He instead denies the existence of things-in-themselves, effectively rendering them irrelevant within the context of his epistemology. The only world that then remains relevant within his epistemology is the immanent world of appearance, i.e., the empirical world, the world that either is or can in principle be available to human subjects of knowledge in sense experience. According to this view, truth and knowledge are possible to attain by way of adopting different perspectives on objects in the world of appearance. Acquiring knowledge is a matter of engaging perspectivally and affectively, and therefore in a mediated fashion, with objects and then evaluating what we grasp via these mediations in terms of criteria of epistemic evaluation such as consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, completeness, explanatory power, empirical adequacy, plausibility, and simplicity. By means of these criteria we can adjudicate the epistemic merits of conflicting claims. Even though objects can never be completely known in this way, they can be known to some extent and we can engage in the practice of justifying claims that are made about them.

Within the context of this epistemological theory, Nietzsche accords epistemic privilege to two kinds of claim: empiricist and naturalistic. Both kinds of claim are rooted in the world of appearance to the extent that they refrain from explaining observable

phenomena by appeal to a transcendent world of things-in-themselves. Instead, they make reference only to the world as it appears or can appear to us as human subjects of knowledge. Since there can be no direct empirical access to the past, Nietzsche's concern with telling the truth about the past in GM is manifest in his naturalistic approach to accounting for the emergence and development of various human capacities and moral phenomena. In Nietzsche's view, a proper causal explanation of the origins of human capacities and values will treat these as thoroughly historical phenomena and make appeal to various "natural facts and dispositions" that characterize human beings.²⁸¹

Nietzsche's naturalistic approach to appropriating the past is evident in GM II insofar as he offers naturalistic accounts of the emergence of the sovereign individual and the human being of bad conscience. According to the narrative of GM II, both these kinds of human being came into existence as a result of the inhibiting effect of socialization and the power of pain to alter the human psyche. The infliction of pain upon the bodies of some human beings by other human beings for the purpose of making the former amenable to life in society brought into existence these two human types. The various powers that characterize these kinds of human being – such as memory, promise-making, responsibility, calculation, reason, reflection, and self-surveillance – were not originally possessed by human beings, but came to them through changes that the species underwent in the course of its development. Human beings were in effect bred to have these powers and therefore bred to be sovereign individuals and human beings of bad conscience.

The naturalism of Nietzsche's narrative in GM II is due in large part to how it implicates human psychology and physiology. For example, the idea of will to power

²⁸¹ Leiter, *Nietzsche On Morality*, 8.

serves as a basic explanatory psychological principle: it was the turning inward of the originally unfettered outward expression of will to power that led to the creation of the powers of soul that characterize the sovereign individual and the human being of bad conscience. Nietzsche also posits that human beings gain an inherent satisfaction from causing pain to others and that this pain tends to foster the development of the power of memory. He uses these psychological claims to ground his claim that sovereign individuals and human beings of bad conscience came into existence as a result of violent processes of socialization. He also associates these psychological claims with physiological claims. The physical pain that ultimately brings sovereign individuals and human beings of bad conscience into existence alters the body and this has the effect of altering the mind. Nietzsche's appeals to psychology and physiology are indicative of his tendency to give epistemic priority to naturalistic and empirical claims.

Nietzsche's naturalistic approach to appropriating the past is evident in GM I insofar as he offers in that treatise a naturalistic account of the origins of both noble morality and slave morality. As with the narrative of GM II, the narrative of GM I implicates human psychology in a major way. It explains the origins of noble and slave moralities in terms of political, social, and economic hierarchies and the psychological, particularly affective, states that characterize those who occupy different positions within those hierarchies. As in GM II, the psychological principle of will to power plays an explanatory role: noble morality and slave morality are expressions of will to power on the part of those who create these manners of valuation. Physiological claims also play a role insofar as Nietzsche suggests physiological bases for the affective states that generate these moralities. Nietzsche also employs etymological and textual evidence to

back up his psychological claims and to support his idea that moralities are not ahistorical givens, but come into existence as a result of temporal processes, natural causes, and material conditions that are entirely of this world. According to the narrative of GM I, contemporary European morality is therefore an historical phenomenon that has no metaphysical sanction or objective validity.

Thus we see that both at the time Nietzsche wrote HL and at the time he wrote GM knowing the past was a matter of knowing the empirical world of the past. However, by the time Nietzsche writes GM he has dispensed with the thing-in-itself as a standard of truth and arrived at a more definite notion of what it means to know the empirical world of the past than he had when he wrote HL. In GM knowing the past is a matter of offering an account of it which is naturalistic in its approach and which meets the epistemic criteria that are relevant within his later epistemology.

That HL lacks a robust account of what it means to know the past is appropriate given that in HL Nietzsche is much more concerned to emphasize the role and importance of non-truth in the writing of history. In HL Nietzsche's highest value is the creative genius, one who transforms mankind and the world through his form-generating activity. He there conceives culture as the goal of mankind, and genius as the goal of culture. The life of genius is therefore the life that history ought to serve. Nietzsche claims that the occurrence and flourishing of genius is stifled by an overemphasis on knowing the past because an excessive concern with such knowledge makes one unfit for creative activity in the present. It causes one to become alienated from the passions and instincts of the authentic self that are the source of one's originality and creativity. HL

therefore deemphasizes the importance of the historical sense and instead emphasizes the importance of the unhistorical attitude towards appropriating the past.

The unhistorical attitude is the principle antidote to the sickness that results from an excessive concern with knowing the truth about the past. In the unhistorical attitude, instead of being preoccupied with things that are beyond and foreign to oneself, one returns to oneself and grounds one's existence in the instinctual and passionate tendencies that express one's authentic self. One's concern with knowing the past is thereby diminished as one draws about oneself a limited horizon of concern within which one gives structure and value to that which one appropriates. One allows within the bounded horizon of one's consciousness only that which will contribute positively to one's creative willing in the present. Consequently, a great many things about the past that could in principle be known are excluded from consciousness. By shifting focus away from knowing the past the unhistorical attitude counteracts the degeneration and weakness of will that is caused by the vicious employment of the historical sense. In this way the unhistorical attitude towards appropriating the past encourages the flourishing of creative genius.

The unhistorical attitude should be understood as a state of mind in which the power to re-conceptualize the past comes to the fore. It is an activation of the artistic drive that brings concepts into being and disrupts conventional ways of conceiving the past. In adopting the unhistorical attitude the usual habits and conventions of conception are forgotten. New manners and rules of selection are put into force. The past is thereby understood differently and unconventionally.

The monumental, critical, and antiquarian modes of relating to the past each involve the unhistorical attitude insofar as they each involve forgetting the past to some extent. Nietzsche emphasizes that in all three modes, truth should not be sought above all else. A certain measure of truth-seeking may be of use. But what Nietzsche is most concerned to explore in HL is the way in which forgetting and distorting the past can be of use when it is a question of putting the past in the service of great men. All three modes of relating to the past benefit from such a lack of concern with truth. Each ideally constructs an image of the past that is conducive to creating the proper conditions for great acts of creativity.

In GM the past is appropriated unhistorically so as to encourage the occurrence of individuals who will overcome slave morality and bad conscience by adopting the noble manner of valuation and by affirming their will to power in good conscience. These individuals are analogous to the geniuses that Nietzsche refers to in HL insofar as they belong to an elite group of creators. Nietzsche does not envision the overcoming of slave morality and bad conscience as something that can be accomplished by the mass of humanity. Rather, this overcoming can only be accomplished by the few who need it in order to attain their full potential.

The past is appropriated unhistorically in GM II insofar as the narrative of that treatise fails to meet certain of the epistemic criteria that are relevant within the context of Nietzsche's later epistemology. For example, the treatise posits that human beings have not always been social, but had to be made fit for life in society through violent processes of socialization. I have argued that not only is the idea of pre-social man highly implausible due to the deeply social nature of human beings, but that it is also

inconsistent and incoherent within the context of the narrative of GM II because the capacities that were supposedly inculcated through violent processes of socialization must be presupposed if there is to be any sort of human society in the first place.

The narrative of GM II further lacks consistency and coherence in the way that it contrasts the noble conquerors and the men of bad conscience. The noble conquerors are characterized in much the same way as pre-social man: they are unconscious, unreflective, and involuntary agents who express their will to power freely, outwardly, and in good conscience. The men of bad conscience are depicted as burdened by consciousness and by a vicious power of self-reflection and self-critique. Socialization and the punishments used to enforce the rules of the state have turned their will to power inward, making them inwardly tortured and conflicted. They are ashamed of their will to power and cannot express it in good conscience.

The stark contrast that Nietzsche draws between the noble conquerors and the men of bad conscience is not consistent with the narrative of GM II. According to that narrative, both the noble conquerors and the men of bad conscience must be sovereign individuals since both are products of societies governed by moralities of custom. As sovereign individuals, the noble conquerors cannot be as unconscious, unreflective, and involuntary as Nietzsche makes them out to be. Rather, they must possess the powers of soul that characterize such individuals, such as memory, promise-making, responsibility, calculation, reason, reflection, and self-surveillance. They must be conscious of themselves and have the ability to distance themselves from their momentary affects and desires. Because they are members of communities whose moralities of custom are enforced through punishments, the noble conqueror's will to power must also be turned

inward to some extent, just as the will to power of the man of bad conscience is turned inward. The difference is that while the man of bad conscience is ashamed of his will to power, the noble conqueror expresses his will to power in good conscience while still being capable of denying himself the immediate satisfaction of his will to power in favour of pursuing a more carefully considered strategy for such satisfaction.

By contrasting the noble conqueror and the man of bad conscience in a way that makes it seem as if they are not both sovereign individuals, Nietzsche departs from the implicit logic of the narrative of GM II. In this respect the narrative is inconsistent and incoherent. As such, it fails to satisfy the epistemic criteria that are relevant within Nietzsche's later epistemology. However, this untruthful and unhistorical aspect of the narrative can be understood as encouraging readers to adopt what Nietzsche would consider to be a healthier attitude toward their natural will to power. By eliding the fact that the noble conqueror shares sovereign individuality in common with the man of bad conscience Nietzsche sets up a sharp distinction between what human beings are (creatures who are ashamed of their will to power) and what he thinks they ought to be (creatures who affirm their will to power in good conscience). In this way he creates an idealized image of the noble conqueror, one which brings into stark relief that which he wants his readers to emulate and cultivate within themselves. By obscuring the fact that what he wants his readers to become actually overlaps significantly with what they are and ought not to be, Nietzsche can be taken as offering more effective impetus and motivation to his readers.

Because the noble conqueror of GM II is a manifestation of the pre-social type of human being, the attainment of the noble attitude towards will to power would effectively

involve a return to the pre-social state of existence. This state of existence is one that Nietzsche idealizes as a state of supreme health and naturalness, one which became corrupted by the entrance of human beings into society with one another. However, just as the idea of such a pure origin must be understood as fictitious, so must the idea of a return to this pure origin be understood as fictitious. A healthier attitude toward man's natural will to power may be possible, but the attainment of it will not be a matter of reclaiming that mythical state of unconsciousness, unreflectiveness, and involuntariness that noble conquerors and pre-social men supposedly inhabited. Realistically, overcoming bad conscience will not mean forsaking one's sovereign individuality. As Nietzsche occasionally acknowledges in GM II, one can retain the powers of soul that are characteristic of sovereign individuality while affirming one's will to power in good conscience. In other words, one can be a sovereign individual while not being ashamed of one's will to power. While Nietzsche offers his readers an ideal and model characterized by an unconscious, unreflective, and involuntary mode of being, the actual attainment of a healthier attitude towards will to power will be attended by the kind of consciousness, freedom, and reflective capacities that characterize the sovereign individual.

In GM I Nietzsche urges his readers to affirm their will to power in good conscience primarily through a monumental depiction of the ancient noble complemented by a critical depiction of the advocate of slave morality. Nietzsche's critical depiction of the advocate of slave morality is intended to turn the reader's feelings against this kind of human being and thereby weaken their allegiance to the slave manner of valuation. To this end the slave moralist is portrayed as vicious and disgusting. His form of life is pictured as something worthy of abandonment, something that ought to be rejected as

unworthy of emulation. The image that Nietzsche creates of the noble, on the other hand, is intended to make his form of life and his manner of valuation eminently attractive. To this end he is pictured as virtuous and heroic. If successful, Nietzsche's monumental portrait of the ancient noble would inspire the reader to adopt the noble manner of valuation that was predominant before slave morality gained cultural hegemony. It would show the reader that a manner of valuation that is opposed to the slave manner of valuation once existed and thereby suggest the possibility that such a manner of valuation could be instantiated once again. Adopting this manner of valuation would mean adopting the active manner of value creation that characterizes ancient noble morality. As such, it would involve forsaking the condemnation of man's will to power that slave morality hypocritically proclaims. It would involve affirming in good conscience one's own power to create and assert values rather than pretending or mistakenly believing that one's values are objectively valid by virtue of being sanctioned by God or some other metaphysical principle. It would involve cultivating the courage to create and assert values that are one's own while also believing in the importance of defending those values despite the fact that they have no objective validity but are fundamentally assertions of one's perspectival will to power.

The portraits of the nobles and the advocates of slave morality that Nietzsche presents in GM I are unhistorical insofar as Nietzsche is not as much concerned with substantiating the truth of who these people were as he is with creating images of them which motivate in readers a devaluation of the slave manner of valuation and an affirmation of the noble manner of valuation. Nietzsche does not adduce a great deal of evidence to support his characterizations of these two types. Only a small sampling of

etymological and textual evidence is offered. Although it is possible that his characterizations could be further substantiated, Nietzsche does not offer a thorough and systematic examination of the available evidence.

Through his unhistorical appropriation of the past and through his use of the monumental and critical modes of history in GM we see Nietzsche putting into practice some of his key ideas from HL. In this regard it is also significant that in GM Nietzsche envisions the overcoming of bad conscience and the affirmation of will to power that attends the adoption of the noble manner of valuation as something that will be accomplished only by an elite minority of human beings whose form of life can benefit from such an overcoming and affirmation. That Nietzsche's appropriation of the past in GM is intended to benefit such an elite group demonstrates yet another respect in which Nietzsche's writing of history in GM is informed by his earlier ideas on how history ought to be written. Nietzsche puts forth the view in HL that the writing of history should promote the flourishing of that rare and exceptional kind of human being, the creative genius. The exceptional few who can benefit from adopting the noble manner of valuation and from affirming their will to power in good conscience are analogous to the geniuses that Nietzsche refers to in HL.

Nietzsche suggests in a number of places in GM that the kind of human being who will overcome bad conscience and affirm his will to power through the adoption of the noble manner of valuation will be a rare and select kind of human being. At the end of GM II he discusses this redeeming kind of man. "[H]e really must come to us," says Nietzsche, "the *redeeming* human of the great love and contempt, the creative spirit whose compelling strength again and again drives him out of any apart or beyond". (GM

II: 24). What Nietzsche refers to here is the kind of human being who can overcome the ideals and habits of feeling that cause people to have a bad conscience concerning their natural will to power. This “human of the future” will embrace his “natural inclinations”. (GM II: 24) He will “wed to bad conscience the *unnatural inclinations*, all those aspirations to the beyond, to that which is contrary to the senses, contrary to the instincts, contrary to nature, contrary to the animal – in short the previous ideals which are all ideals hostile to life, ideals of those who libel the world”. (GM II: 24) These ideals are not in accord with reality as Nietzsche conceives it, with what he thinks the world and human nature really are. By affirming his will to power in good conscience the redeeming human that Nietzsche envisions will recover reality from the ill-repute that the world-denying ideals have put it in, “from the curse that the previous ideal placed upon it”. (GM II: 24)

The rarity of the redeeming kind of human is suggested in the way Nietzsche juxtaposes him with those who remain ensnared by bad conscience and committed to world-denying ideals. As a consequence of his disciplined rejection of their conception of reality, the redeemer will become isolated from the majority. He will have “all the world”, all the “*good* human beings”, against him. (GM II: 24) “What is there that insults more deeply, that separates off so fundamentally, as letting others notice something of the strictness and height with which one treats oneself? And on the other hand – how accommodating, how full of love the whole world shows itself toward us as soon as we do like all the world and “let ourselves go” like all the world!” (GM II: 24) The overcoming of bad conscience and the affirmation of will to power that the redeemer will

accomplish is an improbable occurrence in nineteenth century Europe. It is a task fit only for an heroic and great human being.

For this goal one would need a *different* kind of spirits than are probable in this of all ages: spirits strengthened by wars and victories, for whom conquering, adventure, danger, pain have even become a need; for this one would need acclimatization to sharp high air, to wintry journeys, to ice and mountain ranges in every sense; for this one would need a kind of sublime malice itself, an ultimate most self-assured mischievousness of knowledge, which belongs to great health; one would need, in brief and gravely enough, precisely this *great health!* (GM II: 24)

The human being of great health is “something perfect, completely formed, happy, powerful, triumphant, in which there is still something to fear! [...] a human being who justifies man *himself*; a human being who is a stroke of luck, completing and redeeming man, and for whose sake one may hold fast to *belief in man!*” (GM I: 12) The diseased kind of human, the human being of bad conscience and resentment, is the “normal” kind of human. (GM III: 14) Therefore, “one should honour the rare cases of powerfulness in soul and body, the *strokes of luck* among humans”. (GM III: 14) Nietzsche clearly values above all else the rare “stroke of luck” who embraces his will to power and thereby invigorates life above and beyond what the average type of human being makes of it.

At the end of GM I Nietzsche offers an example of one of these rare strokes of luck. The French Revolution, we are told, expressed the “instincts of popular *ressentiment*” and the ideals of slave morality. (GM I: 16) But out of it came an expression of “the classical ideal, of the noble manner of valuing all things” in the person of Napoleon Bonaparte. (GM I: 16) Through Napoleon were expressed the aristocratic ideals of ancient Rome, the Rome that had contended with, and lost to, the religion of the Jews. Napoleon, like the Romans before him, asserted the “*privilege of the few*” against a

morality and a society that wanted the “privilege of the majority” to rule. (GM I: 16)

Napoleon embodied “the *noble ideal in itself*” and through his existence suggested an alternative to the “lowering” and “debasement” of man that the advocates of slave morality were perpetrating. (GM I: 16)

Nietzsche’s elitism is clearly expressed in this passage. A singular figure, Napoleon, is pictured as giving expression to ideals that are suitable only for the few. For a time he effectively overcomes the domination of slave morality through the commanding and effective assertion of these aristocratic ideals. Napoleon lives and flourishes according to these ideals, and by living these ideals he accomplishes, both in himself and in the world around him, an overcoming of the slave morality that would otherwise inhibit his flourishing.

The appearance of the rare strokes of luck who affirm their will to power and overcome bad conscience coincides with what Nietzsche calls “progress”. In TI he cites Napoleon as an instance of progress: “*Progress, in my sense.* – I talk about a ‘return to nature’ too, although it is not really a going-back as much as a *coming-towards* – towards a high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness, the sort of nature that plays, that *can* play, with great tasks...To speak *allegorically*: Napoleon was a piece of ‘return to nature’, as I understand it”. (TI Skirmishes: 48) Napoleon returned to nature insofar as he, like all great redeeming human beings, overcame the conflicted relationship to will to power that characterizes bad conscience and the slave manner of valuation by giving expression to the noble manner of valuation and by affirming in good conscience his natural will to power. Such a return to nature is what Nietzsche means by progress. That progress is also something that is accomplished only by an elite minority is confirmed in

GM II: 12: “true *progressus* [...] always appears in the form of a will and a way to *greater power* and is always pushed through at the expense of numerous smaller powers. The magnitude of a “progress” is even *measured* by the mass of all that had to be sacrificed for it; humanity as mass sacrificed for the flourishing of a single *stronger* species of human being – that *would be* progress”. Nietzsche understands progress as something that is accomplished by the few at the expense of the many. The masses are merely instrumental in a process that eventuates in the development of a higher or stronger type of human being.²⁸²

Through his writing of history in GM Nietzsche seeks to encourage this kind of progress. Encouragement is required because the predominance of the slave manner of valuation threatens to remove the conditions that foster the occurrence of individuals who can enact the return to nature that such progress involves. The advocates of slave morality constitute the majority and they want their manner of valuation to be the only manner of valuation. They want to universalize the system of value that is conducive to their flourishing. For example, they assert that unselfish behaviour is an unconditional duty and a universal virtue. But in Nietzsche’s view, such behaviour on the part of one “created and destined to command” (BG 221) would not be virtuous at all. Rather, it would be the squandering of a virtue, viz., the virtue he would make of acting selfishly. For the “greater, rarer, privileged” type of person (BG 221) selfishness is a duty and a virtue, although from the perspective of the masses it would seem a symptom of immorality. For Nietzsche then, duties and virtues are not unconditional, but are

²⁸² Cf. BG 258 where Nietzsche claims that a “good and healthy aristocracy” must regard itself as the “*essence* and highest justification” of a community. Consequently, it will have “no misgivings in condoning the sacrifice of a vast number of people who must *for its sake* be oppressed and diminished into incomplete people, slaves, tools. Its fundamental belief must simply be that society can *not* exist for its own sake, but rather only as a foundation and scaffolding to enable a select kind of creature to ascend to its higher task and in general to its higher *existence*”.

conditioned by the agent. What counts as a virtue or a duty is determined by whose actions are in question: one person's virtue is another person's vice; one person's duty is another person's crime or "sin". There are multiple legitimate systems of value. To universalize any one system is unwise because this universalization would involve offending or disrupting a system of value that is valid in its own sphere.²⁸³

This explains why the overcoming of bad conscience and the affirmation of will to power that attends the adoption of the noble manner of valuation is of benefit only to an elite minority. In Nietzsche's view, what is of value to the few is different from what is of value to the many. That which promotes the survival of a "race" or of the "greatest number" of individuals is not that which promotes the development of a "stronger type". (GM I: Note)²⁸⁴ In order to determine the value of any particular manner of valuation it must therefore be asked "value relative to *what end?*" (GM I: Note) The end that Nietzsche has in view, the one he wishes to promote through his writing of history in GM, is the achievement of the "*highest power and splendour* of the human type". (GM Pref: 6) He appropriates the past not for the sake of "man *in general*" (GM Pref: 6), but for the sake of those few human beings who are capable of this highest power and splendour. While the slave manner of valuation is suited to the flourishing of the many, it is an impediment to the achievement of this end.²⁸⁵ The noble manner of valuation, on the other hand, is a condition of its realization. Nietzsche's strategy is to remove the impediments to the achievement of this end and encourage attitudes and habits of feeling that are conducive to its attainment. His writing of history in GM is therefore consistent

²⁸³ Cf. BG 272: "Signs of nobility: never to think of reducing our duties into duties for everyone; not to want to transfer or share our own responsibility; to count our privileges and their exercise among our *duties*."

²⁸⁴ "The welfare of the majority and the welfare of the few are opposing value viewpoints". (GM I: Note)

²⁸⁵ "[M]orality would be to blame if a *highest power and splendour* of the human type – in itself possible – were never attained". (GM Pref: 6)

with his assertion in HL that history ought to be written so as to aid the occurrence and flourishing of the highest kind of human being.

Bibliography

- Acampora, Christa Davis. "On Sovereignty and Overhumanity: Why it matters how we read Nietzsche's *Genealogy* II:2." *International Studies in Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (2004): 127-45.
- Aristotle. *The Works of Aristotle*. Edited by W. D. Ross. Vol. 11, *De Poetica*, translated by Ingram Bywater. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.
- Barnes, R.H. "Introduction". In *On the Prehistory of Marriage*, translated by R.H. Barnes and Ruth Barnes, 1-70. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.
- Bergmann, Frithjof. "Nietzsche's Critique of Morality." In *Reading Nietzsche*, edited by Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins, 29-45. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. Edited by Katherine Barber. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Clark, Maudemarie. *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Clark, Maudemarie, and Alan J. Swenson. "End notes". In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, translated by Maudemarie Clark and Allan J. Swenson, 119-67. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998.
- The Corpus of Roman Law*. Edited by Clyde Pharr. Vol. 2, *Ancient Roman Statutes*, translated by Allan Chester Johnson, Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, and Frank Card Bourne. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961.
- Cox, Christoph. *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Danto, Arthur. *Nietzsche as Philosopher*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1974.
- Fink, Eugen. *Nietzsches Philosophie*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1968.
- Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire." In *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite*, 145-72. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971.
- Geijssen, J. A. L. J. *Geschichte und Gerechtigkeit: Grundzüge einer Philosophie der Mitte im Frühwerk Nietzsches*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997.

- Gemes, Ken. "Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy and the Sovereign Individual." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* suppl. vol. 80 (2006): 321-38.
- Georg, Jutta. "Zum Verhältnis von Bewusstsein, Leib, und Wahrheit bei Nietzsche." *Nietzscheforschung* 18 (2011): 215-23.
- Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Barry B. Powell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Ideas*. "Friedrich Nietzsche." Produced by Richard Handler. Aired August 6, 2014, on CBC.
- Janaway, Christopher. *Beyond Selflessness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . "Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy and the Sovereign Individual." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* suppl. vol. 80 (2006): 339-57.
- Jensen, Anthony K. *Nietzsche's Philosophy of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965.
- Kain, Philip J. "Nietzschean Genealogy and Hegelian History in *The Genealogy Of Morals*." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (March 1996): 123-48.
- Kaufmann, Walter. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. 4th ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Kellerwessel, Wulf. "Nietzsches interpretatorische Sprachphilosophie im Kontext seiner Erkenntnistheorie – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der „Genealogie der Moral“." *Rekonstruktion und Kritik.* *Prima Philosophia* 17, no. 3 (2004): 331-54.
- Kofman, Sarah. *Nietzsche et la métaphore*. Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1983.
- Leiter, Brian. *Nietzsche On Morality*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- . "Perspectivism in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*." In *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, edited by Richard Schacht, 334-57. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Mahon, Michael. *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power, and the Subject*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1992.

- Migotti, Mark. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58, no. 4 (1998): 745-79.
- Nehamas, Alexander. "The Genealogy of Genealogy: Interpretation in Nietzsche's Second *Untimely Meditation* and in *On the Genealogy of Morals*." In *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, edited by Richard Schacht, 269-83. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Anti-Christ*. In *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols And Other Writings*, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman, 1-67. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- . *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*. In *Human, All Too Human*, translated by R.J. Hollingdale, 215-99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . *Beyond Good and Evil*. Edited and translated by Marion Faber. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- . *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Edited by Oscar Levy. Vol. 2, *Early Greek Philosophy*, translated by Maximilian A. Mügge. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964.
- . *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer*. In *Untimely Meditations*, edited by Daniel Breazeale, translated by R.J. Hollingdale, 1-55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *Daybreak*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- . *Ecce Homo*. In *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols And Other Writings*, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman, 69-151. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- . *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- . *Human, All Too Human*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. 49 vols. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1967-.
- . *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Translated by Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swenson. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998.

- . “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense.” In *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, translated by Ronald Speirs, 139-53. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- . *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*. In *Untimely Meditations*, edited by Daniel Breazeale, translated by R.J. Hollingdale, 57-123. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *Schopenhauer as Educator*. In *Untimely Meditations*, edited by Daniel Breazeale, translated by R.J. Hollingdale, 125-94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *Twilight of the Idols*. In *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols And Other Writings*, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman, 153-229. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- . *The Will to Power*. Edited by Walter Kaufmann, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books, 1968.
- Picht, Georg. “Nietzsche – das Denken und die Wahrheit der Geschichte.” *Merkur* 42, no.1 (January 1988): 15-27.
- Poellner, Peter. *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Post, Albert Hermann. “Ethnological Jurisprudence.” Translated by Thomas J. McCormack. *The Monist* 2, no. 1 (1891): 31-40.
- Radin, M. “Secare Partis: The Early Roman Law of Execution against a Debtor.” *The American Journal of Philology* 43, no. 1 (1922): 32-48.
- Ridley, Aaron. *Nietzsche’s Conscience: Six Character Studies from the Genealogy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Risse, Mathias. “The Second Treatise in *On the Genealogy of Morality*: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 9, no. 1 (2001): 55-81.
- Roos, Richard. “Der Schopenhauerische Mensch und die Historie in Nietzsches „Unzeitgemäßen Betrachtungen“.” *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 65 (1984): 31-43.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation*. Translated by E.F J. Payne. New York: Dover Publications, 1961.
- Schrift, Alan D. “Genealogy and the Transvaluation of Philology.” *International Studies in Philosophy* 20, no. 2 (1988): 85-95.

———. “Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric: Nietzsche’s Deconstruction of Epistemology.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (1985): 371-95.

Thatcher, David S. “Nietzsche, Bagehot and The Morality of Custom.” *Victorian Newsletter* 62 (1982): 7-13.

———. “Zur Genealogie der Moral: Some Textual Annotations.” *Nietzsche-Studien* 18 (1989): 587-99.

White, Hayden. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Yovel, Yirmiyahu. “Nietzsche, the Jews, and *Ressentiment*.” In *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, edited by Richard Schacht, 214-36. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.