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**In the Shadow of the Enlightenment:
Nietzsche's Project of Subjectivity**

by

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INTRODUCTION: THE LOOMING SHADOW

Three thinkers equal a spider.— In every philosophical sect three thinkers follow one after the other in the following way: the first produces out of himself the seed and sap, the second draws it out into threads and spins an artificial web, and the third lurks in this web for victims who get caught in it—and try to live off philosophy.¹

—Nietzsche

“What is Enlightenment?” This question asked by Immanuel Kant in the seventeenth century and then again by Michel Foucault in this century is arguably the defining intellectual question in our time. The Enlightenment, in fact, is still very much a part of our lives. Its ideas of liberty, rationality, and the autonomy of the individual run throughout our intellectual and cultural tradition of today. The Enlightenment, though, is also a movement that contains dangers. Some argue that it is a totalizing and totalitarian theory which, through its universal claims about human beings, their societies, and their politics silences unenlightened voices and discourses.² The Enlightenment, then, may well be a tradition which should be overcome. This, though, is not a movement that is easy to surpass. Many important works have addressed the possibilities of escaping the tradition of the Enlightenment.³ If any one person embodies this desire to overcome the Enlightenment, it is Friedrich Nietzsche. Before postmodernism and poststructuralism provided

¹ VMS 194; NSA II, p. 464 (10-15). All translations of Nietzsche's works are my own. For the citations, I first note the book from which the quote comes from (the initials correspond to the German titles of Nietzsche's works. Please see the “Citations” for a complete list of abbreviations) followed by the aphorism number. I then note the citation from the NSA source (this is a collected edition of Nietzsche's works in fifteen volumes in German). The Roman numerals represent the volume number, followed by the page number(s), and then in parentheses is the line numbers.

² Michel Foucault makes this kind of argument in his *Discipline and Punish*.

³ This is the argument Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno make in their *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 1944). They argue that the Enlightenment is such a pervasive force in the modern world that it makes its presence felt even in music and culture. As a result, they argue that the Enlightenment is too big, too powerful, and too all encompassing to be resisted or overcome.

their own critiques of the Enlightenment, Nietzsche partook in his own harsh and comprehensive critique. His attack on the Enlightenment runs throughout all his writings and over the course of his entire career. Nowhere is Nietzsche's attack on the ideals of the Enlightenment more prevalent than in both his political views and in his notion of "true" subjectivity. Nietzsche takes the ideals of the Enlightenment and through critiquing them develops them to a new level. In other words, Nietzsche's political thinking and notion of subjectivity contain elements of Enlightenment ideals, but only after they were put through a "Nietzschean filter."

A. The Traditional Enlightenment

This thesis will examine Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment and the extent to which the ideals of this tradition have shadowed Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity and ultimately his political thinking. I wish to make clear at the outset that when I talk about the "Enlightenment" I am referring to a specific strain of thought of a very broad movement. Specifically I will be developing a "Nietzschean Enlightenment," so I will be exploring those aspects of the traditional Enlightenment that Nietzsche critiqued most. One in particular theme that earned Nietzsche's most ardent critique is the Enlightenment's notion of the sovereignty and independence of individuals, or the traditional notion of subjectivity. As I will examine, Nietzsche saw this notion as both flawed and unfounded. Standing behind this theme, though, is perhaps the fundamental concept of the Enlightenment—rationality. Ernst Cassirer argues that reason represented the central, unifying point for eighteenth century Enlightenment in that that was all it longed for and achieved.⁴ The notion of rational autonomy that is implied by this belief in universal rea-

⁴ See Ernst Cassirer's *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr Verlag, 1932).

son profoundly influenced the shape of the “Enlightened subject” and was a primary area of critique by Nietzsche.

In the first part of this thesis I will discuss the ideals of the traditional Enlightenment that Nietzsche most ardently critiqued throughout his career. In chapter two I will examine the ideas of Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant and focus on these thinkers as the embodiment of the traditional Enlightenment. I will start with a discussion of René Descartes. With his elevation of reason as the fundamental faculty in human beings, Descartes provided the foundation for the Enlightenment’s faith in reason and ultimately developed a notion of subjectivity that ran throughout this tradition up to Nietzsche’s time. In turning to Rousseau I situate him as an example of the “political Enlightenment” in that he furthered Descartes’ project by placing the Cartesian subject within a political setting. As mentioned above, the concept of rational autonomy stems directly from the Enlightenment belief in universal reason. So “enlightened” human beings are rational creatures who exist independently of any metaphysical force, such as God. This is a notion Nietzsche picked up and developed in his doctrine of the death of God. But if human beings are sovereign, independent subjects who are meant to use their reason, then they must be opposed to those who would keep them locked in the dark world of tradition and superstition. As a result, an enlightened politics would be opposed to any force or idea that might in any way restrict the radical freedom implied by rational autonomy. This is where Rousseau enters. He represents the attempt to form a human community in which all individuals give up their rights to the whole, the General Will, yet retain their freedom. I will examine Nietzsche’s hostility to Rousseau’s politics and argue that this

hostility comes from Nietzsche's belief that the autonomous subject of Enlightenment politics is hopelessly inadequate.

Immanuel Kant, the third figure of the Enlightenment I will discuss, represents the culmination of Enlightenment thought. Just as Rousseau furthered Descartes' project, Kant takes this project even further. Kant takes the Cartesian subject and places it not just within a political setting, but also within a moral one. With his categorical imperative Kant believed that through reason alone individuals could fully actualize their rational natures as moral human beings.

In chapters three and four I will examine Nietzsche's critique of the traditional Enlightenment. I first discuss his critique of Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant, focusing on their ideals which contributed to the Enlightenment (chapter three), and then I turn to Nietzsche's critique of the nineteenth century (chapter four). According to Nietzsche the nineteenth century was an extension of the firmly entrenched ideals of the Enlightenment, especially in the political ideologies of his day including democracy and socialism. The common critique for Nietzsche in these two chapters is that of the Enlightenment's notion of subjectivity. Nietzsche saw this notion, originally formulated by Descartes, as running throughout both Rousseau and Kant and ultimately became the foundation of the political ideologies of his day. Nietzsche intended more than just critiquing this traditional notion of subjectivity—he desired to expose it as a deeply flawed account of the “human being,” thereby paving the way towards developing a “true” notion of subjectivity.

Throughout part I, another central ideal of the Enlightenment will be addressed; mainly the notion of progress. Enlightenment thinkers believed that human beings could use rational principles to solve problems of social interaction. This ultimately led to the

enlightened belief in progress—that the ideals of the Enlightenment would eventually culminate in a utopian society. Nietzsche, however, opposed this Enlightenment belief in progress as naïve. As I will illustrate, Nietzsche characterized the nature of the world as Becoming. The world is constantly in a chaotic state of flux, or change. Such a world-view, I will argue, eliminates any belief in progress as well as the belief in a final purpose and/or goal for humanity.

Through tracing the above-mentioned ideals of the Enlightenment through these three thinkers, the relevance of the passage quoted at the beginning of this introduction becomes clear. Nietzsche was most likely not specifically thinking about Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant as the three thinkers who “equal a spider,” but they most definitely fit this meaning. In this quote I take the “philosophical sect” to be the traditional Enlightenment and the aforementioned thinkers all contribute to the creation of its web, intent on “catching victims.” Descartes produced the “seed” of rationality and from it the traditional notion of subjectivity. Then Rousseau and Kant continued Descartes’ project by spinning an artificial web to include the political and moral domains. With this all-encompassing web firmly in place, they lured their victims into it, thereby trapping them within the Enlightenment. Nietzsche though does not want to simply destroy this web so much as he wants to expose it as the artificial construct that it is.

B. Nietzsche’s Enlightenment

As fervently as Nietzsche critiqued the ideals and figures of the Enlightenment he was engaged in a project similar to that tradition. Nietzsche was primarily concerned with the project of developing what he considered a “true” notion of subjectivity. In part II of this thesis I will situate Nietzsche’s philosophical project against the backdrop of the

very tradition he was critiquing. In the process I will examine which ideals of the Enlightenment shadowed Nietzsche's development of his own "Nietzschean Enlightenment." In the first two chapters in part II I examine Nietzsche's notion of the death of God. I first discuss how, with this doctrine, he intended to expose the flaws of the Enlightenment's project of morality (chapter five). Then I examine how he utilizes this doctrine to eliminate all metaphysical systems from the world (chapter six). Generally, through his notion of the death of God Nietzsche shatters the belief that there is a final goal or purpose for humanity as a whole, thereby eliminating the Enlightenment's faith in progress. Instead, God's death should be seen as a liberation from previous constraints, namely the constraints of religion and metaphysical systems. This, in turn, is an essential ideal of the Enlightenment that shadowed Nietzsche—of distancing the individual from all "external" sources of authority.⁵ Furthermore, this is an important move in Nietzsche developing his notion of subjectivity.

Through "freeing" the individual from all sources of authority,⁶ I turn to what I believe is the core of both the "Nietzschean Enlightenment" and his entire philosophical project—his notion of subjectivity (chapter seven). This chapter will include a discussion of his notions of self-overcoming and will to power. From these doctrines Nietzsche develops a radical notion of subjectivity whereby he challenges individuals to both become and engage themselves in the project of self-creation. By this he calls for individuals to create and live by values they create for themselves and not concern themselves about

⁵ As I illustrate, the Enlightenment was trying to distance the individual primarily from the authority of God and religion. They accomplished this through elevating reason and establishing it as the highest faculty of human beings. But as Nietzsche argues, thinkers like Descartes and Kant simply replace God with reason. As it turns out, reason imposes just as many restraints on individual freedom as did God.

⁶ Such "sources of authority" include universal moral theories and all such metaphysical systems.

others. In the last chapter in part II, I examine the kind of world Nietzsche sees his self-creators inhabiting (chapter eight). The traditional Enlightenment maintained that both the world and nature could be understood and ultimately mastered solely through human beings using their reason. This is what led to such political forms as socialism and democracy. For Nietzsche, though, no such mastery is possible. The world, marked by becoming, is in a continual state of flux. By exposing the world as such Nietzsche was not aiming to have people control and master this flux; he only wished to teach individuals to embrace and affirm the “true” character of the world.

I end part II with a question: In a world characterized as becoming whereby individuals are self-creators, what kind of political activity, if any, is possible? The Enlightenment’s particular worldview led to ideologies that championed individual freedom and autonomy. But Nietzsche saw this worldview “hiding” the true character of the world. So along with the flawed ideals of that tradition, its political ideologies are also unacceptable in his “true” *Weltanschauung*. This leads to part III and my final chapter on Nietzsche’s political thinking. Throughout this thesis I specifically use the term “political thinking” instead of “political philosophy” when referring to Nietzsche. This use is intentional. Nietzsche did not develop, nor did he wish to be interpreted as developing, a systematic political philosophy. In his book on Nietzsche, Tracy Strong makes this point: “No point has been made more often than that Nietzsche has no coherent doctrine of modern politics. By this is generally meant that he provides no political program, no comprehensive political analysis. Yet, for Nietzsche, this is as it should be.”⁷ Attempting such a project as extracting a political philosophy from Nietzsche is I

⁷ Tracy B. Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 202.

believe a very “un-Nietzschean” project. Such a project would be equivalent to trying to extract or construct a universal moral system from his writings. For Nietzsche it is the apex of human arrogance to think there could be one universal political or moral system that could be applied to all societies or individuals.⁸ So instead of a systematic political theory Nietzsche offers his readers some thoughts and ideas on how politics could be practiced by such self-creators. This is the topic of chapter nine. The core of Nietzsche’s political thought, I argue, centres on creating the conditions within a society to promote the future cultivation of self-creators. Furthermore, Nietzsche saw that a hierarchy was the only way to provide such conditions. Nietzsche’s hierarchical structure is no doubt the most problematic aspect of his political thinking. But, as I argue, through reinterpreting the traditional notion of “hierarchy” it can be shown that Nietzsche’s hierarchy is one based not simply on power, domination, and exploitation, but is one based on status. Nietzsche’s hierarchy is not set up as a vertical power structure. Instead it is one of encompassment whereby the “lower” aspects of society are encompassed within the “higher” aspects. Despite looking at Nietzsche’s notion of hierarchy in this light, I conclude that Nietzsche’s political thinking is both inadequate and flawed.

C. In the Shadow of the Enlightenment

In the course of his career, Nietzsche provided a detailed and sustained critique of the Enlightenment on many levels. He critiqued the early Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as the Enlightenment of his own nineteenth century. He critiqued the enlightened ideal of rationality and the rational, autonomous subject. He even attacked the politics of that subject and included an attack on the notion

⁸ An arrogance, no doubt, he attributed to the traditional Enlightenment.

of progress. As I will argue, Nietzsche's critique on the world of nineteenth century politics constitutes a refutation of the prevailing conception of the individual subject, as maintained by the ideals of the Enlightenment. That this tradition casts a shadow over Nietzsche's philosophy should not be taken as the Enlightenment influencing him. As Nietzsche discusses in *Zarathustra*, everyone comes from a particular tradition and this is something that no one can escape. But his point is that people need to acknowledge that tradition and come to terms with it. Only by doing this can one then overcome it.⁹ For example, Nietzsche acknowledges the Enlightenment's notion of subjectivity and through critiquing it exposes its flaws, thereby coming to terms with it. He then overcomes this tradition by developing his own notion of subjectivity.

By situating Nietzsche's thought against the Enlightenment and understanding the shadow it casts over him I believe his philosophical project becomes better defined. One can see that Nietzsche's "new" notion of subjectivity originates from both understanding and critiquing its Enlightenment roots. Furthermore I believe that this is the only way to understand Nietzsche's political thinking. Through exposing and critiquing the flawed ideals of the Enlightenment, Nietzsche sees that it is unavoidable that the nineteenth century political forms, as extensions of such ideals, must be exposed as well. Throughout his published and unpublished works, Nietzsche champions and is primarily concerned with the individual. But the rational individual who emerged out of the Enlightenment tradition, as Nietzsche understood it, was no more freer with rationality than he had been with following the dictates of the Judeo-Christian God. Consequently Nietzsche felt compelled to expose this dangerous illusion and resituate the individual back into nature

⁹ See Z I 1. I further examine this theme in chapter six, section C.

(i.e., not with another metaphysical system) and then challenge them with the task of self-creation, or “true” subjectivity. Once these “new” subjects emerge, then the task of re-thinking politics can be addressed. Nietzsche’s political thought attempts to remain faithful to his new self-creators. In this aspect I argue his critical philosophy and political thought are consistent. What is more, through re-examining the nature of hierarchies this does not make a caste-system any more attractive in today’s world, but it will shed some light as to why Nietzsche championed such a political order.

D. A Note on the Primary Texts

Two problems confront any interpreter of Nietzsche's thought. The first is that Nietzsche seems to contradict what he says throughout the course of his career. One way to handle this problem is to take an overview of all of his works instead of concentrating on only one of his writing periods.¹⁰ By doing so, one could then sort through all his writings and show which beliefs Nietzsche relinquished and which beliefs he consistently maintained during his career.

A second problem that individuals must face is which of Nietzsche's texts are important and should therefore be focused on. This problem has sparked many debates. Karl Schlechta, for example, who edited a collected edition of Nietzsche's works in German writes, “I omit the already published *Nachlass*, because to my knowledge no *new* central thought is to be found there.”¹¹ Schlechta finds in the *Nachlass*, which contains

¹⁰ Nietzsche's writings are typically divided into his early (1860-1878), middle (1879-1883), and later (1884-1888) writings. His early works include *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), the *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1876), and *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878). His middle works include *Morgenröte* (1881), *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882), and the first two parts of *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883). His later works comprise the majority of his writings including the third and fourth parts of *Zarathustra* (1885), *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886), *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887), *Götzen-Dämmerung* (1888), *Der Antichrist* (1888), and *Ecce homo* (1888).

¹¹ Karl Schlechta. *Werke in drei Bänden, Band III*. (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1954-56), p. 1433.

Nietzsche's very extensive literary remains, only new variations and different expressions of the themes he wrote about in his published works. In a word, Schlechta argues that there is nothing new to be found in Nietzsche's unpublished notes. Karl Jaspers represents the other extreme. Jaspers argues that neither Nietzsche's published nor unpublished works are important: "[I]t must be realized that none of Nietzsche's forms of communication has a privileged character . . . Nowhere is Nietzsche's work truly centralized: there is no *magnum opus*."¹²

Bernd Magnus tries to help this debate. He divides Nietzsche's principle commentators into two groups. The first he calls "lumpers." This includes Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Arthur Danto, and Richard Schacht. The "lumpers" do not find the *Nachlass* problematic and therefore do not see it as contradicting Nietzsche's published works. The other group, the "splitters," includes R. J. Hollingdale, Tracy Strong, and Magnus himself. These commentators "distinguish sharply between [Nietzsche's] published and unpublished writings."¹³ I consider myself a part of the former group. I see Nietzsche's unpublished notes and essays as contributing to the core ideas found in his published works. In this thesis I will take an overview of both Nietzsche's published and unpublished writings. I believe that this is the best way to approach Nietzsche's philosophical position

E. A Note on the Secondary Texts

Nietzsche has been branded many political labels including being apolitical, anti-

¹² Karl Jaspers. *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1947), p. 4.

¹³ Bernd Magnus. "Nietzsche's Philosophy in 1888: *The Will to Power* and the *Übermensch*." *The Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24(1), January 1986, pp. 79-98.

political, a proto-fascist, a champion of democracy, and even a socialist.¹⁴ What is more, there have been many works written defending Nietzsche against such interpretations. For example, Nietzsche's position as a proto-fascist reactionary is now generally taken as a poor reading of his works. Throughout his published and unpublished writings, Nietzsche frequently opposes such things as nationalistic ethnocentrism and race hatred. Walter Kaufmann has given the now classic critique of the presumed connection between Nietzsche and Nazi ideology, especially by documenting Nietzsche's aversion to anti-Semitism and his sustained criticism of things "German."¹⁵ But whereas Kaufmann's non- or antipolitical interpretation of Nietzsche does eliminate the fascist reading, it also seems one-sided and evasive. In a word, Kaufmann's Nietzsche becomes the champion of the purely private individual who seeks self-perfection away from the modern world, thereby eliminating the political realm.¹⁶ This is not to suggest, however, that there is no merit to Kaufmann's interpretation. In chapter seven below I further examine his reading of Nietzsche and discuss what aspects I find valuable.

I cite Kaufmann as an example to illustrate how many commentators deal with Nietzsche's political thought. Critics either ignore all political dimensions of Nietzsche, distort his politics by pulling quotes out of context, or selectively read him thereby eliminating all political references. I depart from the mainstream corpus of Nietzsche scholarship by situating Nietzsche against the tradition of the Enlightenment in order to examine

¹⁴ Richard Schacht takes the apolitical stance, Walter Kaufmann the antipolitical stance, Georg Lukács the proto-fascist stance, Lawrence Hatab the democratic stance, and Hugo Bund the socialist stance. Please see my "works cited" for complete bibliographical information.

¹⁵ See Kaufmann's *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, especially chapter ten.

¹⁶ In chapters seven and nine below I examine how Nietzsche's self-creators unavoidably create for others as well.

his political thought. I will not go through all of his writings pointing out “political passages” and how they form his political theory. By situating Nietzsche against the backdrop of the Enlightenment I hope to show that Nietzsche continued the project similar to the one he was critiquing. In the same manner I will not simply go through and argue against the various secondary works that support a particular Nietzschean political stance. Arguing against Nietzsche being a proto-fascist and the like, as mentioned above, has been sufficiently done in numerous works. In chapter four I will examine Nietzsche's critique of socialism and democracy, but I will do so as his extended critique of what he saw as the nineteenth century political Enlightenment.¹⁷

F. Heidegger's Confrontation

I set aside a section devoted to Heidegger's Nietzsche for two reasons. Firstly, Heidegger published a greater volume of material on Nietzsche than any other thinker.¹⁸ Secondly, I situate Nietzsche in a way similar to Heidegger. I position Nietzsche against the backdrop of the Enlightenment and argue that although he critiques this movement's many aspects, he ends up involving himself in a similar project—the project of subjectivity.¹⁹ Heidegger does not situate Nietzsche against the Enlightenment *per se*, but he does place him in the tradition of modernity. Where I differ from Heidegger is in my conclusion. Whereas I believe Nietzsche's critique and separation from the Enlightenment strengthened his overall philosophical project, Heidegger believed Nietzsche is caught up in and never escaped the nihilism he said modernity lapsed into.

¹⁷ I focus on these two ideologies because these are the two forms Nietzsche most ardently critiqued.

¹⁸ Heidegger devoted over 1,200 pages specifically to interpretations of Nietzsche.

¹⁹ I wish to emphasize that although Nietzsche continues the project of subjectivity of the Enlightenment he differs in the actual content of what his subjects should be (or in this case, what they should become).

In approaching Nietzsche's writings there has been much debate over which should be stressed more heavily, his published or unpublished works.²⁰ Heidegger, who in fact gives priority to Nietzsche's unpublished works, points out that there is but one correct way to read Nietzsche: Nietzsche is a metaphysician. Nietzsche, in other words, represents the completion of Western metaphysics, "the fulfillment of a kind of destiny fated for it since Plato's inauguration."²¹ Heidegger is clearly establishing Nietzsche as the end point of a metaphysical tradition which includes the Enlightenment, or modernity. And nowhere is Heidegger's attack on Nietzsche more focused than on Nietzsche's project of subjectivity. In chapter three (section A) below I examine Heidegger's confrontation with Nietzsche's critique of the Cartesian subject. In the end, Heidegger concludes that Nietzsche accepts the Cartesian assumptions about subjectivity and argues that Nietzsche simply completes Descartes' project of subjectivity.²²

For Heidegger, despite modernity's claims this tradition remains a metaphysical tradition culminating in Nietzsche. Modernity does not reject any doctrine of Being as it claims but in fact embodied, while 'forgetting,' Being. As a result of this tradition representing a forgetting of any authentic Being it was fated to culminate in the nihilism and meaninglessness of modern life.²³ But from Nietzsche's point of view, modernity has not forgotten anything. For Nietzsche this tradition has thankfully destroyed the

²⁰ For an excellent discussion of this debate see Alan Schrift's *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation* (New York: Routledge Publishers, 1990), especially chapter one.

²¹ Robert B. Pippin. "Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Metaphysics of Modernity," in *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought*. Edited by Keith Ansell-Pearson (New York: Routledge Publishers, 1991), p. 283.

²² For more on this, see Heidegger's *Nietzsche: Der Europäische Nihilismus*. I look at Heidegger's assessment of Nietzsche's critique of the Cartesian subject in chapter three, sec. A below.

²³ This is because for Heidegger, only genuine "thought" about Being will yield some sense of human "meaning" within the whole.

possibility of what Heidegger wanted—Being. There was no “forgetting of Being,” because for Nietzsche, there is no Being.

Heidegger was also interested in the modern metaphysics of subjectivity and sees that this developed from the post-Cartesian tradition involving a claim about, “what all beings are . . . they are what they are *thought, or represented, or taken (or even ‘willed’)* to be by an essentially self-defining, or ‘self-willing’ free subject.”²⁴ Heidegger then goes further and points out that this ‘self-willing’ of subjectivity also represents a forgetting of Being—a kind of denial of the origins of subjectivity in something beyond, or other than its own self-definition. What is more, this characterization of subjectivity, as the forgetting of Being, has marked the tradition of modernity and culminates in Nietzsche’s account of Being as will to power.²⁵ As a result Nietzsche failed to escape nihilism. The “truth of Nietzsche’s position can be seen in the meaningless . . . attempt to establish dominion over everything [that is] characteristic of modern technological man.”²⁶

Heidegger realizes Nietzsche intended his position to be a “countermovement” to metaphysics, but he argues this counter fails. For Heidegger, Nietzsche is guilty of an “inextricable entanglement in metaphysics,”²⁷ especially the metaphysics of subjectivity. In his essay, “*Nietzsches Wort: Gott ist tot*,” Heidegger examines how Nietzsche revealed the meaninglessness of this event but was unable to bring himself out of it.

²⁴ Pippin, p. 297.

²⁵ Examining this last claim, of “Nietzsche’s account of Being as will to power,” in any detail would go well beyond the scope of this dissertation.

²⁶ Pippin, p. 297.

²⁷ Martin Heidegger. “*Nietzsches Wort: ‘Gott ist tot,’*” in *Holzwege, Band V* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), p. 221.

“The opening he had created,” writes Ernst Behler, “was immediately blocked by the acceptance of the will to power . . . [This] prevented him from uncovering the truth of Being.”²⁸ So despite his revaluation of metaphysics, Nietzsche remained, to Heidegger, “in the unbroken path of that tradition.”²⁹ So not only does Heidegger see Nietzsche as the culmination of modernity, he also saw this as being extremely detrimental to his entire philosophical project. Heidegger saw Nietzsche as never being able to escape the modern/Cartesian project of subjectivity³⁰, and this resulted in Nietzsche never being able to escape from the nihilism he diagnosed.

It is in our respective conclusions where I differ with Heidegger. I believe Heidegger simply ignored the numerous passages in which Nietzsche vehemently attacked the modern notion of a stable and enduring subject.³¹ This is quite possibly a result of both Heidegger stressing the importance of Nietzsche’s unpublished writings and Heidegger trying to extract an idea from Nietzsche which just was not there (i.e., the notion of Being). As I examine in this dissertation Nietzsche himself was involved in a project similar to that of the Enlightenment—the project of subjectivity. But he separates himself from that tradition by approaching ‘subjectivity’ in a new and unique way.

Now I will turn to the ideals and figures of the Enlightenment that was the focus of Nietzsche’s critique.

²⁸ Ernst Behler. *Derrida-Nietzsche, Nietzsche-Derrida*. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1988), p. 28.

²⁹ Martin Heidegger. “Nietzsches Wort: ‘Gott ist tot,’” in *Holzwege, Band V* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), p. 223.

³⁰ Heidegger in fact saw Nietzsche as completing the Cartesian project.

³¹ See chapter four below for Nietzsche’s critique of the traditional, enlightened notion of subjectivity.

Part I:

Nietzsche and the Traditional Enlightenment

The veil-philosophers and world-obscurers, that is to say all metaphysicians of finer or coarser grain, are seized with eye-, ear-, and toothache when they begin to suspect that the proposition, "The whole of philosophy is henceforth forfeit to history" is quite true. On account of the *pain* they feel they must be forgiven for throwing stones and dirt at him who speaks thus: the proposition itself, however, can thereby become dirty and unsightly for a time, and its effectiveness be diminished.

—Nietzsche
Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche 10

CHAPTER TWO: THE IDEALS AND FIGURES OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In this chapter I will look at the ideals and the figures of the Enlightenment that Nietzsche directed his critique against most fervently. My aim for this chapter is to set the stage for Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment. I begin with a discussion of René Descartes because I believe him to be the figure who established the Enlightenment's faith in reason, the notions of progress and mastery over nature, and as developing the rational, autonomous individual subject which is the focus of many enlightened philosophers. I then turn to Rousseau as a representative of the political Enlightenment and then to Kant, who Nietzsche saw as constructing an enlightened morality based on rationality which ultimately lapses back into the Christian morality it claims to supersede.

The Enlightenment insisted that human beings were rational, autonomous individuals, and that they deserved and could attain political freedom. Nietzsche ironically critiqued the Enlightenment on these points, and these points ended up being the backdrop against which he developed his own notion of subjectivity and political views.

A. Descartes, Reason, and the Rational Subject

The importance of reason in the Enlightenment is one of, if not its most essential features. This importance provides the basis for many of the Enlightenment's other characteristics. Peter Schouls notes that when Descartes began his philosophical quest he saw that reason was in bondage and needed to be "liberated and validated."¹ What has kept reason in 'bondage' is primarily the medieval philosophers who relied heavily on revelation and God. But as we will see, Descartes had set a specific task for himself. He

¹ Peter A. Schouls. *Descartes and the Enlightenment*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 40.

wanted to completely liberate reason from all prejudices and establish it as the primary instrument for human beings.

Schouls, though, argues that it is free will which is primary in Descartes' thought. "We find," he argues, "[that] the most fundamental aspect of Descartes' position is his notion of freedom."² Schouls provides an interesting argument. As he maintains, reason is in bondage and needs to be liberated. But this can only happen through the use of Descartes' methodic doubt (which I discuss below). What is more, for Schouls, such doubt does not come into play unless a person wants it to come into play. As Schouls argues:

Once it is clear how basic a role free will plays for Descartes, we will have an indication of a strong measure of affinity between the Cartesian position and that of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers³

For this paper I will not be concerned about which notion Descartes thought was more important. What interests me here is precisely what Schouls is hinting at in the above quote: The Enlightenment's ideals of reason and autonomy can be traced back to Descartes' philosophy. Furthermore, with Descartes we will find his notions of subjectivity and reason closely intertwined and paving the way for the Enlightenment's notion of progress.

Descartes' faith in reason is explicitly prevalent throughout his works, but it is also implicitly present in his method. Descartes' method, in fact, turns out to be one of the enduring contributions he made to the Enlightenment. From his method, Descartes develops his notion of subjectivity and this 'Cartesian subject' becomes a staple in Enlightenment thought. In his *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, Descartes tells us that

² Schouls (1989), p. 40.

³ Ibid.

by “a method” I mean reliable rules which are easy to apply, and such that if one follows them exactly, one will never take what is false to be true or fruitlessly expend one’s mental efforts, but will gradually and constantly increase one’s knowledge till one arrives at a true understanding of everything within one’s capacity.⁴

Descartes is careful to point out that his method is not a technique that can be applied in such a way that the natural capacities of the human mind become obsolete. His method, on the contrary, consists of a set of rules for correctly utilizing the natural capacities and functions of the mind. As Descartes notes, “If our intellect were not already able to perform [the fundamental operations of intuition and deduction], it would not comprehend any of the rules of the method, however easy they might be.”⁵ In other words, if the mind uses its natural capacity, reason, without the distracting influence of other factors it will not make mistakes. Such ‘distracting factors’ are, for Descartes, prejudice, passion, and impatience.

The two fundamental operations of the mind, intuition and deduction, are “actions of the intellect by means of which we are able to arrive at a knowledge of things with no fear of being mistaken.”⁶ Intuition is a purely intellectual activity, a kind of “intellectual seeing,” which is so clear and distinct that it leaves no room for doubt. He describes deduction as “the inference of something as following necessarily from some other propositions which are known with certainty.”⁷ These two notions are for Descartes the

⁴ René Descartes. *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*. In *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. I*. Translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), IV, p. 16. (Herein after *RM*).

⁵ *RM* IV, p. 16.

⁶ *RM* III, p. 14.

⁷ *RM* III, p. 15.

way to attain certain knowledge, but they are not 'the method.' His method consists in rules for correctly applying these two functions. These rules are given in his *Discourse on Method*.

In the *Discourse* Descartes develops the rules by which the mind should follow. The first rule says "never to accept anything as true if I did not have evident knowledge of its truth: that is, carefully to avoid precipitate conclusions and preconceptions, and to include nothing more in my judgments than what presents itself to my mind so clearly and so distinctly that I had no occasion to doubt it."⁸ Important here is Descartes' emphasis on "clear and distinct" ideas. These ideas represent his attempt to exclude from consideration any sensory data, concept, or idea that could be illusory, uncertain, or irrational. This rule also involves the use of methodic doubt. In other words, we must systematically subject to doubt all the opinions we have in order so that we may discover what is indubitable. This was Descartes' necessary first step in his search for absolute certainty. "But since I now wished to devote myself solely to the search for truth," writes Descartes, "I thought it was necessary to . . . reject as if absolutely false everything in which I could imagine the least doubt, in order to see if I was left believing anything that was entirely indubitable."⁹ The doubt recommended and utilized by Descartes is universal in that it can be applied to everything that can be doubted, and is methodic in that it is not just used for the sake of doubting, but is a preliminary stage in the attainment

⁸ René Descartes. *Discourse on the Method*. In *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. I*. Translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) II, p. 120. (Herein after *DM*).

⁹ *DM* IV, p. 126-27.

of certainty. So Descartes' method was a set of rules meant to guide our reason, and its primary tool was doubt.

The importance of the *Discourse* is that it is essentially a manifesto for rationality in which reason can be universally applied and will from now on be the primary criterion of knowledge. As Descartes explains: "But what pleased me most about this method was that by following it I was sure in every case to use my reason, if not perfectly, at least as well as was in my power."¹⁰ The *Discourse*, in a word, established the dominance of reason in Europe.

Reason, for Descartes, is given priority over other possible sources of knowledge, such as sensory data, because there is no choice whether or not to accept reason as our primary source of knowledge. For Descartes, there is nothing more irresistible in human beings than reason because only reason can lead to absolute certainty. This insistence on the priority of reason had clear and important implications for both late seventeenth and eighteenth century intellectual life. As Peter Schouls observes, "Descartes' position tends towards making God irrelevant for philosophizing."¹¹ Here we see the importance of Descartes' project to this paper—he was creating reason as a substitute for religion. He was establishing a new first principle; something that he hoped would replace the role religion had played. As we will see below, Descartes' *cogito* liberates reason from all prejudices and restraints of piety. In a word, Cartesian reason is a secular reason.

Gerhard Krüger notes that:

[In Descartes] Self-consciousness constitutes itself in defiance of all omnipotence . . . Here begins in phil-

¹⁰ *DM II*, p. 121.

¹¹ Schouls (1989), p. 60.

osophy as such the rebellion against Christianity that we call Enlightenment.¹²

Here Krüger identifies the Enlightenment as being a philosophical movement standing primarily against Christianity. This 'rebellion against Christianity,' begun by Descartes, is reason's declaration of independence. By liberating itself from religion, reason rejected its most powerful prejudice. In another of his works, Schouls notes the importance of this move: "Reason is autonomous [in Descartes] in the sense that its own trustworthiness . . . is not established through the introduction of elements which, themselves, are not 'rational,' that, for example, it is not elements furnished by faith which allow one to trust reason."¹³ In a word, reason in Descartes' thought is entirely independent and autonomous. It is, in fact, the foundation upon which the structure of the Enlightenment is built. In the second part of this dissertation, I will show how Nietzsche furthered this Enlightenment notion of developing a philosophy independent of the religious-moral tradition.

To further separate his method from religious foundations, Descartes intended to promote a specific kind of knowledge—knowledge that was practical and which promoted the general welfare of human beings. In his *Discourse*, Descartes is seeking to develop the metaphysical underpinnings of a practical philosophy. By 'practical philosophy' I mean that Descartes was not limiting the use of reason to only those individuals who are specially trained to use reason. For Descartes, every individual was "equipped" with reason and was capable of utilizing it. Most important here is that Descartes repre-

¹² Gerhard Krüger. "Die Herkunft des philosophischen Selbstwusstseins," *Logos* 22 (1933), p. 246.

¹³ Peter A. Schouls. *The Imposition of Method: A Study of Descartes and Locke*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 41.

sents the beginning of the primacy of reason in enlightened thought. Furthermore, Descartes maintains that for those who follow his method, they will achieve a mastery over nature. This mastery over nature, and more specifically that this method could improve humanity's future, lies at the heart of the Enlightenment. Walter Soffer notes that Descartes "inaugurate[s] the Enlightenment notion of a science-society harmony dedicated to perpetual progress."¹⁴ With his ideas of reason and progress, Descartes develops the two essential notions of Enlightenment thought, which remains through to the nineteenth century.

There is one more important notion which Descartes established and contributed to the foundation of Enlightenment thought (and which Nietzsche critiqued fervently)—the Cartesian subject. Descartes is the founder of the rational, autonomous individual who becomes the subject for practically all Enlightenment discourse. What is more, the Cartesian subject has profound implications for the political thought of the Enlightenment.¹⁵ The birthplace of this new subject can be traced to the Cartesian *Cogito* in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Descartes argues:

But what should I think now, while supposing that a supremely powerful and "evil" deceiver completely devotes himself to deceiving me? . . . It comes down to this: Thought and thought alone cannot be taken away from me. I am, I exist. That much is certain . . . I am therefore not admitting that I am anything at all other than a thinking thing . . . I know that I am a real, existing thing, but what kind of thing? As I have said, a thing that thinks.¹⁶

¹⁴ Walter Soffer. *From Science to Subjectivity: An Interpretation of Descartes' Meditations*. (NY: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 7.

¹⁵ This will become more clear when I go over Rousseau in the next section.

¹⁶ René Descartes. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Translated by John Cottingham. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) I, p. 15-16. (Herein after *M*).

This is the crux of the Cartesian rational subject—I think, therefore, I am. Descartes stresses just how fundamental thought is to a human being: “. . . thought; this alone is inseparable from me. I am, I exist—that is certain.”¹⁷ Rational thought is, according to Descartes, what constitutes us as individuals. A thinking being is one “that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions.”¹⁸ These are the characteristics of rationality and of rational beings as Descartes defines them—they are what we are. Descartes begins with a method, rationality, and from it he establishes a new kind of individual and self: a rational, autonomous self that will come to be the standard of the Enlightenment. “The hallmark of Descartes’ self-instruction,” writes Soffer, “is rational autonomy. His goal is not to become part of an asymptotic progress towards truth, but rather to establish a definitive, ahistorical, unalterable new beginning—‘firm and lasting’ foundations.”¹⁹ Essentially Descartes accomplished this. He gave the Enlightenment its beginning by giving it a subject for its discourse—a subject who relies now on reason instead of on God. Descartes’ “gift” of rational autonomy was effectively used by subsequent thinkers of the Enlightenment.

From the above discussion one can see that it is Descartes’ method which is pivotal to Enlightenment thought. As Jack Vrooman argues, “Descartes’ *Discourse on Method* is the manifesto of the Cartesian Revolution.”²⁰ His method dominated the world of the Enlightenment because enlightened thinkers took this method to be reason’s self-portrait, and from it they expected human beings to be able to attain high achievements so

¹⁷ *M II*, p. 18.

¹⁸ *M II*, p. 19.

¹⁹ Soffer, p. 5.

²⁰ Jack Vrooman. *René Descartes: A Biography*. (NY: Putnam Publishers, 1970), p. 73.

long as they were led by their reason. As Schouls notes, "To follow this method is to proceed in a way in which the agent is compelled to follow reason . . . Only when compelled to follow a path of reason can one be master of his fate (i.e., the Cartesian subject)."²¹ Descartes' method also reflects his passionate desire for certainty. Through his method he was looking for a new and secular instrument to replace the medieval reliance on revelation and God. This instrument was reason—a natural power in human beings that gives them the power to know a reality that is fundamentally rational. Reason, furthermore, is equal in all human beings, and this aspect of reason creates ripples all the way into the nineteenth century.

Descartes, I argue above, paved the way for the Enlightenment by erecting the pillars of reason and subjectivity and thereby setting the tone for the Enlightenment. One can also see themes in Descartes that Nietzsche picked up on and further developed (especially the notion of distancing the individual from Christianity). Now I will turn to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. With Rousseau the political implications of the new Cartesian subject begin to become apparent.

B. Rousseau and the Political Enlightenment

It might seem odd to include Rousseau as a figure of the Enlightenment since he was so critical of many aspects of this movement. In his essay on Kant and Rousseau, Ernst Cassirer notes that the eighteenth century

was convinced that it would take only the complete development of man's understanding, only the cultivation of all his intellectual powers, to transform man spiritually and to produce a new and happier humanity.²²

²¹ Schouls (1989), p. 184.

²² Ernst Cassirer. "Kant und Rousseau," in *Rousseau-Kant-Goethe*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1944), p. 19. Herein referred to as "Cassirer (1944)."

No doubt Cassirer is here referring to the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason. But, as he continues, Rousseau "had broken with this faith."²³ Rousseau did not support such a strong notion of reason that Descartes developed. From the above discussion it is apparent that reason was a natural capacity that all human beings have—it is simply a matter of utilizing the rational powers of the mind. For Rousseau, though, "natural man" does not have the faculty of reason; it is in fact superfluous in the state of nature. The one element of Enlightenment thought that Rousseau does not criticize is the autonomous enlightened subject. The primary goal of his political philosophy, it turns out, is to develop a politics that will account for this individual and its freedom. The two concepts that define and form the core of Rousseau's political philosophy are the social contract and the general will. I will argue that these concepts represent two principles of radical freedom and that they rely upon and were developed from the Cartesian notion of subjectivity.²⁴

From section A above we see that Descartes begins his philosophical method with rationality and from it deduces the free, autonomous individual. But, as Cassirer points out, "Rousseau never learned to speak the language of 'clear and distinct ideas.'"²⁵ The Rousseauian individual is not just a rational, thinking thing. Rousseau bases his philosophy on the Cartesian notion of subjectivity and then to it adds the faculty of reason. Whereas Descartes utilized an extreme method of doubt as his starting point, Rousseau begins his quest with the notion of a state of nature. Rousseau re-introduces this notion of a state of nature for a specific reason—he was concerned with the problem of civiliza-

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Remember that I am using Rousseau to represent the political Enlightenment, and that ultimately I will show what Nietzsche criticizes about this tradition.

²⁵ Cassirer (1944), p. 59.

tion, and in trying to work through this problem he felt it was important to determine what was original and what was artificial in the nature of human beings. Rousseau, in other words, felt it was necessary to reflect on a state of nature, "which no longer exists, which perhaps never did exist, which probably never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to have exact notions in order accurately to judge of our present state."²⁶ Keith Ansell-Pearson points out that "Rousseau makes the point that the more the human race advances the more difficult it becomes to know the 'true nature' of man."²⁷ So the question is for Rousseau, what is the "true nature" of human beings?

Rousseau is quick to point out that in conceiving of human beings in the state of nature, philosophers have attributed to natural man qualities which could only have been acquired in a social state.²⁸ In the state of nature people possess only four qualities. They are concerned only with self-preservation, they have the sentiment of pity, they have a capacity for perfectibility, and they have the capacity for free agency. This is what Rousseau develops in the first part of his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. But the one trait that precedes even these four qualities is that, in the state of nature, human beings are characterized by a natural goodness. This "goodness" is an innocence that consists in simply not harming others. Interesting here, though, is Rousseau's view that even the faculty of reason is not present in human beings in the state of nature. As Ansell-Pearson points out, "Even human rationality has to be explained in terms of a

²⁶ Jean Jacques Rousseau. *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Among Men Inequality*. In *Rousseau: The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*. Edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 125. Herein after *DI*.

²⁷ Keith Ansell-Pearson. *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau: A Study of Nietzsche's Moral and Political Thought*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 55. Herein after Ansell-Pearson (1991).

²⁸ This is essentially Rousseau's main argument against Hobbes' state of nature.

process of socialization.”²⁹ Life in the state of nature is solitary, non-social, pre-political, and pre-reflective. What is more, for Rousseau, natural human beings are pre-moral and even subhuman. Such notions as obligation, rights, domination, and property only become meaningful in the context of a moral and social development of the human being.

In characterizing “natural man” as having a natural goodness, Rousseau is stressing that in the state of nature human beings are, in Nietzsche’s language, beyond good and evil. They are neither good nor bad, virtuous nor vicious, but their actions are completely innocent.³⁰ According to Leo Strauss, for Rousseau

man is by nature good because he is by nature that sub-human being which is capable of becoming either good or bad. There is no natural constitution of man to speak of: everything specifically human is acquired or ultimately depends on artifice or convention. Man is by nature almost infinitely perfectible.³¹

Human beings have the potential to develop a moral consciousness, and as it turns out for Rousseau, they need to develop morals to be completely human. So we can see that Rousseau strips everything away from “natural man”, including reason, and leaves them only with a natural goodness and the capacity to act as free, autonomous—Cartesian—subjects. Rousseau, it turns out, eliminates the notion of the “superiority of reason” that the Enlightenment holds as sacred, but he establishes his philosophy based on the enlightened, Cartesian notion of subjectivity. Important to this paper is what he “does” with this notion of subjectivity. Rousseau does not advocate returning to nature in order

²⁹ Ansell-Pearson (1991), p. 61.

³⁰ See Rousseau’s *DI*, especially Part I.

³¹ Leo Strauss. *Natural Right and History*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1953), p. 271.

to “reclaim” our lost nature.³² Instead Rousseau sets out to develop a political philosophy in which this enlightened, Cartesian subject can flourish. In the state of nature, the only thing that separates human beings from other animals is the capacity for autonomy. The ability to will or not will is considered by Rousseau as one of the first operations of the human soul. It is this notion of autonomy by which the human animal is able to learn from experience and modify its behaviour. In other words, autonomy is what leads the “human animal” to develop the rest of its faculties, including reason, and rise above its animal nature. So whereas Descartes stressed the primacy of reason, Rousseau stressed autonomy as the essential characteristic of human beings *qua* human.³³

This is the setting in which Rousseau introduces his notion of the social contract. He does not even consider it an option to “return to nature,” but he also realizes that individuals have “reached the point where the obstacles that interfere with their preservation in the state of nature prevail by their resistance over the forces which each individual can muster to maintain himself in that state.”³⁴ In a word, the individual can no longer exist on his or her own in the state of nature and must, out of necessity, join with others to form a community. But this creates a problem for Rousseau. How can a society be formed in such a way that individuals do not sacrifice or lose any of their (natural) autonomy? Rousseau writes:

“To find a form of association that will defend and protect the person and goods of each associate with the full common force, and by means of which each,

³² This, in essence, is Nietzsche’s main critique of Rousseau. I address Nietzsche’s mis-guided attack on Rousseau in the next chapter.

³³ As mentioned in Section A above, Peter Schouls believes freedom is primary in Descartes’ thought.

³⁴ Jean Jacques Rousseau. *Of the Social Contract*. In Rousseau: *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*. Edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) I, 6. Herein after SC.

uniting with all, nevertheless obey only himself and remain as free as before.” This is the fundamental problem to which the social contract provides the solution.³⁵

Through the social contract, therefore, human beings elevate themselves into moral beings, in which “morality” simply means “the way in which human action is conceived in terms of social interactions.”³⁶

The social contract, then, functions as a kind of unifying principle in Rousseau’s political philosophy by eliminating any division between the interests of the individual and those of the community. These interests now become identical. Most important here, and what I believe situates Rousseau in an “Enlightenment framework,” is that the autonomous individuals of the state of nature will not lose any of the “natural freedom” they enjoyed in that state. Furthermore, human beings will gain another form of autonomy—the freedom gained through being a member of a moral community.

Whereas the social contract is the “instrument” by which individuals contract out of the state of nature, Rousseau’s notion of the general will is what actually provides and secures the freedom of the social contract. “So long as several men united consider themselves a single body,” writes Rousseau, “they have but a single will, which is concerned with their common preservation, and the general welfare.”³⁷ What is more, it is only through the general will whereby individuals can be considered citizens and are free. The general will is what essentially unites the individual and community interests together. As Ansell-Pearson argues, “Rousseau seeks a solution in which the plurality of particular

³⁵ SC I, 6.

³⁶ Ansell-Pearson (1991), p. 69.

³⁷ SC IV, 1.

wills create a community in which there exists an identity between the individual and the universal in a general will.”³⁸ So in obeying the general will, the individuals of Rousseau’s social contract are really obeying themselves because the general will is really the collective “will” of everyone involved in the contract. The general will, in other words, preserves our natural autonomy and takes it to new heights. The social contract, it turns out, is necessary in order to account for the very formation of the general will which provides the foundation of a legitimate political authority that preserves the individual’s freedom while also looking out for the community’s interests. Evidently, autonomy is a central part of Rousseau’s political system. The form of the general will says it preserves social harmony and promotes the interests of the community, but its purpose is to preserve and secure freedom. The general will represents Rousseau’s attempt to reconcile freedom with the social order.³⁹ Rousseau, in other words, recognized the need for practical social and political institutions, yet he was unwilling to let this need compromise the freedom of the individual citizen in any way.⁴⁰ His commitment to the Enlightenment ideal of individual freedom prevented this possibility.

The question now presents itself: What political position finally emerges in Rousseau from this tension between the individual and community? Jacob Talmon argues that Rousseau’s position is best understood as “totalitarian democracy.” That is, as a politics in which liberty is realized “only in the pursuit and attainment of an absolute

³⁸ Ansell-Pearson (1991), pp. 80-81.

³⁹ James Miller makes a similar argument in his *Rousseau: Dreamer of Democracy*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

⁴⁰ Critics argue that this is in fact what happens on Rousseau’s model.

collective purpose.”⁴¹ But in this interpretation individual freedom serves only the interests of the community—freedom becomes unimportant as an end to itself. Talmon, I believe, has got Rousseau’s motivational scheme backwards. Rousseau does seek a just social collective, but only so that it may serve the needs of the individual citizen. As Maurizio Viroli argues, “[for Rousseau] political liberty is more important than peace, and a reasonable degree of civic discord has beneficial effects on the political body.”⁴² In this interpretation, which I support, the needs of the community are subordinated to those of the citizen. In fact, the needs of the community are best served when the freedom of the citizen is maintained.

The key to understanding Rousseau’s politics is to understand the status of the individual subject in his writings. As I have been arguing it is precisely this value, which is fundamentally an Enlightenment ideal, which distinguishes Rousseau’s political thought. Rapaczynski notes that “like Descartes, Rousseau makes the self a foundation of all that is human in man.”⁴³ I agree with this assessment. Rousseau accepts the enlightened self as the primary concept of political analysis, and his politics, as a result, with its insistence on the importance of individual freedom, grows out of this acceptance. Rousseau, in a word, develops the Cartesian autonomous subject into a political entity. Rousseau was not looking to return human beings back to the state of nature; he wanted to examine and provide the foundations of both a legitimate government and a legitimate political obligation. In fact it is with Rousseau that the politics of the Enlightenment

⁴¹ Jacob Leib Talmon. *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982), p. 2.

⁴² Maurizio Viroli. “Republic and Politics in Machiavelli and Rousseau.” *History of Political Thought* 10(3), Fall 1989, p. 411.

⁴³ Andrzej Rapaczynski. *Nature and Politics: Liberalism in the Philosophies of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 236.

comes into its own—a politics Nietzsche felt was deeply flawed precisely due to its assumption of the rational, autonomous individual. Before I turn to Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment I wish to first discuss Immanuel Kant's contribution to the Enlightenment. Kant, I will maintain, is a representative of enlightened morality. In his attempt to construct an enlightened morality based entirely on rationality, Kant ends up reconstructing the Christian morality the Enlightenment claims to supersede.

C. Kant and Enlightened Morality

The following discussion of Kant, like that of Descartes and Rousseau above, will be to situate his place in Enlightenment thought. This will not be an overview of his critical philosophy. Instead I will specifically focus on his moral philosophy and argue that, for one, he is the culmination of Enlightenment thinking, and two, he takes the Cartesian/Rousseauian notion of subjectivity and further develops its role.

Kant's philosophy is firmly situated in the tradition of the Enlightenment. He took the enlightened ideals of rationality and autonomy and basically developed a "new" notion of the human being that is still influential today.⁴⁴ Kant was, no doubt, greatly influenced by Rousseau. In his *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*, Kant writes that it was David Hume who "interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction."⁴⁵ Arguably it was Rousseau who woke him from his 'dogmatic moral slumber.' Similarities can be seen between Rousseau's general will and Kant's categorical imperative. In both think-

⁴⁴ Kant's influence, I believe, is seen most in the political realm, especially with the modern notion of liberal democracy. For an excellent example, see John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* and his *Political Liberalism*.

⁴⁵ *Prolegomena* IV, p. 260. All references to Kant's work conform to the standard *Akademie* edition (*Kants Werke*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968). The Roman numerals refer to the volume the work is found in and the numbers refer to the page(s). Herein after *P*.

ers, for example, morality is a matter of universalization. For Rousseau, only the proposed course of action is universalized in order to decide which rules a society needs to be established upon. In Kant, though, this notion of universalization is a necessary characteristic of the moral quality of an action. If a moral agent cannot universalize his or her maxim(s), then that maxim does not 'follow' the moral law (the categorical imperative).

On a deeper level Rousseau provided Kant with the key which would permit him to pursue a philosophy of human beings—a project that was important to Kant. Ernst Cassirer gives us a clue as to what this “key” is. For Kant,

what is truly permanent in human nature is not any condition *in which* it once existed and *from which* it has fallen; rather it is the goal *for which* and toward which it moves. Kant looks for constancy . . . in what [man] *should be*. And Kant credits Rousseau the ethical philosopher with having discerned the “real man” beneath all the distortions and concealments, beneath all the masks that man has created for himself and worn in the course of his history. That is, Kant esteems Rousseau for having recognized and honored man’s distinctive and unchanging end.⁴⁶

Kant’s departure from Rousseau, though, is that he believed that the essential “part” of a human being is his/her ethical nature. As examined above in Section B, for Rousseau society is what enables individuals to “be moral,” but it also has a corrupting affect. So Rousseau set out to establish a political philosophy in which the autonomy of individuals is not hindered. This is precisely why I situate Rousseau as an example of the “political Enlightenment”—he is concerned with the autonomy of individuals. Kant was influenced by this notion but he employs at the moral level the principle which Rousseau

⁴⁶ Cassirer (1944), p. 20.

utilized at the social/political level. In the *Social Contract* Rousseau discusses the superiority of individuals' position in the ideal civil state and points out that in this context the individual achieves "moral freedom, which alone makes man truly the master of himself; for the impulsion of mere appetite is slavery, and obedience to the law one has prescribed to oneself is freedom."⁴⁷ Kant singles out this unique quality of individuals, that of autonomy, as the key to the full understanding of the moral order. As Frederick Van De Pitte points out, "What was for Rousseau a principle of the political order is thus developed by Kant into a moral . . . doctrine which is essential to his Critical Philosophy."⁴⁸

Fundamental here are Kant's notions of reason and autonomy. These two ideas are intricately connected and developed. In the realm of morality, reason imposes a fundamental law of conduct upon individuals. This law, according to Kant, "may be called a fact of reason, since one cannot ferret it out from antecedent data of reason, such as the consciousness of freedom (for this is not antecedently given)."⁴⁹ This law, which is experienced as universal, is the categorical imperative and is the moral law because the relation of man's will to it is one of dependence under the name of duty. The categorical imperative "implies a constraint to an action, though this constraint is only that of reason and its objective laws."⁵⁰ So the will is constrained, but not compelled, and individuals are ultimately free to accept or reject the moral law. This is where Kant's notion of

⁴⁷ SC I, 8.

⁴⁸ Frederick P. Van De Pitte. *Kant as Philosophical Anthropologist*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 54.

⁴⁹ Kant. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* V, p. 30f. Herein after KPV.

⁵⁰ KPV V, p. 32.

autonomy comes in: “*Autonomy* of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of the duties conforming to them . . . The moral law expresses nothing else than the autonomy of the pure practical reason, i.e., freedom.”⁵¹ Kant’s method here is not to develop a proof that rational beings are free; instead the moral law, for Kant, compels us to assume freedom. We are compelled to assume it because freedom and the moral law, the categorical imperative, “are . . . inextricably bound together.”⁵² In a word, the moral law postulates freedom for individuals. As Richard White points out, “[A]s rational creatures we find ourselves commanded by a moral imperative, and in the decision to obey or disobey we first discover the possibility of our freedom.”⁵³

For Kant, the notion of moral duty is the key to connecting his ideas of reason and autonomy. Moral duty is typically experienced, according to Kant, both as a painful burden imposed upon individuals, and as a task that we are called to without threats or the promise of reward.⁵⁴ In his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Kant uses a metaphor to capture the human moral condition. Here he notes that when it comes time to make moral decisions the human will, “stands, as it were, at the crossroads.”⁵⁵ In making moral decisions we find that our reason, or rational side, tells us that we ought to act rationally; but our desires urge us to act in any way that will satisfy our needs. Individuals are, therefore, faced with a conflict between reason and desire, and the human will must decide which “road” to take. Kant acknowledges that our desires have a strong

⁵¹ *KPV* V, p. 33.

⁵² *KPV* V, pp. 93-94.

⁵³ Richard J. White. *Nietzsche and the Problem of Sovereignty*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 36. Herein after “White (1997).”

⁵⁴ See Kant’s *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.

⁵⁵ Kant. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* IV, p. 400. Herein after *GMS*.

influence on us, and as a result the demand of reason seems to be oppressive. But as difficult as it may be, individuals must fulfill the demands of reason if they are to act morally. So to act morally is to act rationally, and the notion of freedom enters because human beings could choose either “road.”

So from one perspective we are, to Kant, rational creatures who are affected by our natural desires, while from another perspective we are intelligible, rational beings whose autonomous will is expressed in acting out of moral duty. As Richard White points out, “The moral imperative arises in the gap between our two natures, and it expresses nothing other than the need to reclaim our higher self [our rational self]” from all the interruptions our desires present.⁵⁶ So for Kant, morality is not a restriction on our freedom, but it guarantees and is the very expression of freedom’s fulfillment.

But what exactly is “the moral imperative” that White is referring to above? According to Kant, the moral law must be expressed as a categorical imperative because it commands us unconditionally, with no concern for consequences. Important here is that the categorical imperative requires a will that is autonomous and capable of complete self-mastery. For if it were conditioned by desires, or any outside authority, it could never accept such an unconditional duty as its own. So not only does morality imply freedom, it guarantees the most complete freedom of autonomy in which the rational will commands itself by requiring us to follow the moral law. As Kant notes, “what else, then, can the freedom of the will be but autonomy, i.e., the property of the will to be a law to itself?”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ White (1997), p. 38.

⁵⁷ *GMS IV*, p. 447.

Now we can see the important role autonomy plays in Kant's system and how this is a further development of the enlightened/Cartesian notion of subjectivity. On the former point, Kant's notion of autonomy provides the only possible synthesis between what White calls "the negative freedom from nature"⁵⁸ and the complete unconditional necessity that is demanded by the moral law. In other words, for Kant, autonomous individuals act as both "sovereigns" and "subjects" only when they obey the very law that they create and proclaim to themselves. With respect to the will, this means that in autonomy, "The will is . . . not only subject to the law but subject in such a way that it must be regarded also as self-legislative and only for this reason as being subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author)."⁵⁹ What Kant means here is that the autonomous will does not submit to anything beyond itself—not to one's desires nor to any kind of religious authority. In autonomous action, it is the will that issues the commandment for its own existence. With his notion of autonomy as not being subject to anything external to itself, Kant not only situates himself in the tradition of the Enlightenment, but he can also be seen as the culmination of this tradition. By "culmination" I mean that Kant does not only further develop the Enlightenment notions of reason and autonomy, they become essential to his philosophical project. The categorical imperative, the notion most scholars agree is the core of Kant's moral theory, is really nothing more than an imperative of autonomy. It is the command that first calls the self into existence and then gives it the task of taking charge of itself. So autonomy can be seen as the underlying intention of morality itself—action for the sake of the moral law is

⁵⁸ White (1997), p. 39.

⁵⁹ *GMS* IV, p. 431.

really action that derives from willing one's own highest nature as a person (that being our rational nature).

C-1. Kant's Revitalization of Christianity

Above I argued that Kant is firmly entrenched in the tradition of the Enlightenment. Now I wish to examine how Kant has worked Christianity into his moral theory—a project that the Enlightenment, as a general movement and specifically embodied in Descartes' and Rousseau's theories, was trying to separate itself from.

Kant's moral theory, it can be seen, was nothing less than an attempt to appropriate Christian ethics into the Enlightenment through reason. This is what led Nietzsche to call Kant “a subterranean Christianity in his values.”⁶⁰ This secularization of Christian morality is the very epitome of an enlightened moral project—it seeks to justify Christian ethical behaviour without reference to any metaphysical force or being, such as God. Instead, Kant was aiming to base his morality on nothing but Descartes' reason. For example, Kant uses reason to justify the belief in both the immortal soul and God.⁶¹ However, the influence of Christian thought on Kant is specific; he takes reason as his starting point, but he ends with something that is recognizably Christian. Wayne Cristaudo notes:

[I]n discussing Kant's moral foundations it is important not to underestimate the pervasive presence that the Christian existential vision of the human condition plays in his thinking. This vision is most conspicuous in his idea that the highest good leads us to postulate the existence of the two pillars of Christianity—a

⁶⁰ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[3]; *NSA* XII, p. 340 (23-24).

⁶¹ see Kant's *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (especially Book II, chapters 4 and 5).

highest being who dispenses justice on the basis of merit and the immortality of the soul.⁶²

This is a good point. The categorical imperative itself, the primary ethical principle on which most of Kant's ethics is based, is in fact little more than a philosophical re-working of a Christian principle. "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of universal law giving"⁶³ is really not that different from the Christian golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." In a word, Kant deduces all the major precepts and prerequisites of Christian ethics, but he deduces them from reason alone. He weaves Christian morality into the world of the Enlightenment, stripping away its superstitions and mysticism and replacing these with a rational justification for faith.

As noted above, the twin pillars that Kant based his morality on are freedom and rationality. And as I have already discussed, these are both key terms of the Enlightenment. Kant believed that moral law comes directly from human reason. In his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Kant notes that "the pure thought of duty and of the moral law generally has by way of reason alone an influence on the human heart so much more powerful than all other incentives."⁶⁴ Here we see the return of Cartesian rationality, but this time in morality. Kant's rational morality provides laws that are universal and necessary valid for all rational beings. "A rational being," writes Kant, "belongs to the kingdom of ends as a member when he legislates in it universal laws

⁶² Cristaudo, p. 114.

⁶³ *KPV* V, p. 30.

⁶⁴ *GMS* IV, p. 401.

while also being himself subject to these laws.”⁶⁵ This passage could have been written by Rousseau—it maintains that the duty of all rational beings is to use their reason to produce just moral laws. Reason and reason alone determines the shape and substance of these laws: “Reason determines the will in a practical law directly, not through an intervening feeling of pleasure or displeasure, even if this pleasure is taken in the law itself.”⁶⁶

The form that rational morality takes is that of freedom: “An absolutely good will, whose principle must be a categorical imperative, will therefore be indeterminate as regards all objects and will contain merely the form of willing; and indeed that form is autonomy.”⁶⁷ The categorical imperative, as discussed above, is the only moral law that reason imposes on us and thereby grants us autonomy and free will. “What else can freedom of the will be but autonomy, i.e., the property that the will has of being a law to itself?”⁶⁸ This principle is crucial for Kant; his morality cannot function without it. For Kant, rationality and freedom are so closely related that they are practically synonymous: “The moral law expresses nothing else than the autonomy of pure, practical reason, i.e., freedom.”⁶⁹ Freedom has for Kant as great an ethical significance as that of rationality. Henry Allison notes that “Kant regards autonomy as the principle of morality not only in the sense of being a necessary condition of its possibility, but also in the sense of being one of the formulas of the categorical imperative and, therefore, as itself a first-order

⁶⁵ *GMS* IV, p. 434.

⁶⁶ *KPV* V, p. 25.

⁶⁷ *GMS* IV, p. 444.

⁶⁸ *GMS* IV, p. 446-47.

⁶⁹ *KPV* V, p. 4.

ethical principle.”⁷⁰ The categorical imperative by its very nature implies and requires freedom as well as rationality. If Kant cannot assume free moral agents, then a discussion of how they could will their maxims as universal becomes meaningless. As a result Kant’s ethics, though Christian in its form, rests on a very enlightened foundation which Kant constructs out of reason and autonomy.

Richard Velkley suggests that “Kant arrives at his understanding of reason through an effort to resolve a crisis in the modern period concerning the end, status, and meaning of reason.”⁷¹ This could very well be the case. Like Rousseau, Kant presents himself as someone who is already grappling with the difficulties inherent in Enlightenment rationalism—difficulties that will reach their boiling point with Nietzsche. Yet as with Rousseau, Kant is not willing to abandon either reason or the Enlightenment. Kant’s faith in the Enlightenment is so strong that when he attempts to hold onto those pre-Enlightenment concepts such as Christian ethics, which he feels must be preserved, he does so by translating their terms into those of the Enlightenment. “According to conventional interpretations and, more importantly, on the authority of principles explicitly stated in Kant’s second *Critique*,” writes Anthony Cascardi, “the obligations we construe as ethical may be regarded as the manifestations of a law which in turn reflects the rationality, freedom, and autonomy of the subject-self.”⁷² These are precisely the primary elements of the Enlightenment that I have been discussing. Kant’s project, therefore, is profoundly an enlightened project. It is the attempt to articulate the possibilities of an

⁷⁰ Henry E. Allison. *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 105.

⁷¹ Richard Velkley. *Freedom and the End of Reason: On the Moral Foundations of Kant’s Critical Philosophy*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 1.

⁷² Anthony Cascardi. “The Ethics of Enlightenment: Gaya and Kant.” *Philosophy and Literature* 15(2), October 1991, p. 194.

essentially Christian morality within an Enlightenment framework. Velkley argues that “Kant does not reject the emancipatory end of modern philosophy or the Enlightenment, but reformulates it.”⁷³ It may seem odd that the way Kant chose to do this was by attempting to resurrect Christian dogma and smuggle it in through the ‘back door’ of the Enlightenment, but the fact that he used the Enlightenment to restructure Christianity makes clear his commitment to the Enlightenment project. That Kant retained the Enlightenment’s allegiance to freedom and emancipation is also obvious. The fact that he insisted on the primacy of human autonomy as he formulated his categorical imperative makes this difficult to ignore.

* * * * *

In this chapter I have tried to examine a particular aspect of the Enlightenment that runs throughout the work of three major figures of this movement. This particular aspect is characterized by the principles of rationality and freedom, and it ties these thinkers together as members of a single, unified intellectual tradition which I have called “the Enlightenment.” My choice of using these three thinkers is not a spurious one. All three thinkers address and defend the Enlightenment principles of rationality and freedom in some form. Descartes, I argued, can be seen as the “father of the Enlightenment” in that he was the first to establish the dominance of reason and formulate the rational, autonomous individual that the other Enlightenment thinkers utilized. I then turned to Rousseau as a representative of the political Enlightenment and Kant as the representative of the moral Enlightenment. Both thinkers developed their respective philosophies on the foundation of the enlightened principles of rationality and freedom. Therefore it seems

⁷³ Velkley, p. 19.

reasonable to take these principles as the foundation for a provisional interpretation of the Enlightenment.

In the next chapter I will turn to Nietzsche's critique of this version of the Enlightenment for two reasons: Firstly, to show the backdrop against which Nietzsche developed his own political ideas. From this I will go on to argue that Nietzsche's own project was not that different from the Enlightenment tradition he so vehemently criticized. Secondly, to examine Nietzsche's own 'Enlightenment.' Nietzsche himself never made the distinction between, for example, "Rousseau's Enlightenment," or "Kant's Enlightenment." For Nietzsche, the Enlightenment was a unified whole that spanned back several hundred years and represented the greatest sickness of modern man. Now I will turn to Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment.

CHAPTER THREE: NIETZSCHE CONTRA THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In this chapter I will examine Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment. I will begin by discussing his critique of Cartesian rationality, which he maintained to be a representation of human existence that was both misleading and dangerous. I then turn to Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau and set out to explain Nietzsche's hostility to Rousseau's politics. I will argue that Nietzsche felt that the autonomous subject of enlightened political discourse, as embodied by Rousseau, was hopelessly inadequate and flawed. I end this chapter with Nietzsche's critique of Kant's enlightened morality. Nietzsche felt that Kant's rational version of Christian morality was a regression that only prolonged the kind of Christian malaise the Enlightenment was attempting to escape.

A. Descartes: Grandfather of the Revolution

Nietzsche's critique of Descartes begins with an attack on Cartesian metaphysics and rationality. In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* we find Nietzsche praising Descartes—albeit a very particular praise. Nietzsche finds value in the way Descartes separated himself from the religious tradition, “or what the Christians call ‘faith,’” in which God is established as the authority for the criterion of knowledge and truth. Against Christians, notes Nietzsche, “Perhaps Descartes should be excepted, as the father of rationalism (and hence the grandfather of the Revolution) who conceded authority to reason alone.” This “Revolution” is the modern era's, or Enlightenment's, ‘love affair’ with reason. “[B]ut reason,” continues Nietzsche, “is merely an instrument, and Descartes was superficial.”¹ So whereas he praises Descartes in breaking with the Christian tradition, Nietzsche ends up criticizing him due to his shallow use of reason.

¹ JGB 191; NSA V, p. 112-13 (34-01); p. 113 (01-04); and (04-05) respectively.

Elsewhere in his notebooks Nietzsche writes, “Logical certainty, transparency, as criterion of truth (‘All that is true which is perceived clearly and distinctly.’—Descartes): with that, the mechanical hypothesis concerning the world is desired and credible. But this is a crude confusion.”² In this note Nietzsche is attacking both the Cartesian mechanistic worldview and its epistemological underpinnings, Cartesian rationality. These are, as discussed in the previous chapter, the two pillars of Cartesian thought. To call these notions into question is to undermine Descartes’ entire metaphysical project. Nietzsche expands his critique on Cartesian rationality in his *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*:

“That the world is *not* the epitome of an eternal rationality can be conclusively proved by the fact that that *piece of the world* which we know—I mean our own human rationality—is not so very rational. And if *it* is not always perfectly wise and rational, then the rest of the world will not be so either.”³ Although Nietzsche does not explicitly mention Descartes here, the implications for Cartesian metaphysics are clear. If neither the world nor the human beings in it are rational, then the claims of Cartesian metaphysics and epistemology cannot hold.

Nietzsche also critiques Descartes’ method itself. This method, which is essential to Descartes entire project, is the method of universal doubt. In a note from 1885 Nietzsche writes, “*Starting point*. Irony against Descartes: there was at the beginning of things some deceit, out of which we came to think that universal doubt is helpful!”⁴ According to Nietzsche, this method is in fact not helpful at all but very dangerous. Nietzsche ar-

² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[91]; NSA XII, p. 386 (27-31).

³ WS 2; NSA II, p. 540 (08-12).

⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 39[13]; NSA XI, p. 624 (09-11).

gues: "We are not on guard against a trap like the will to universal doubt of the Cartesian sort, and it is precisely this Cartesian method that is the worst kind of trick, that thoroughly teases and keeps us fools."⁵ Rather than helping bring us closer to "true knowledge," the Cartesian method of universal doubt is actually an impediment to knowledge.

In discussing Descartes' use of doubt, David Farrell Krell poses an interesting question:

Nietzsche's critique casts doubt on everything it has learned, on all accepted valuations, all highly revered metaphysics, and even its own doubtings. One might ask whether and how Nietzsche . . . employs the method of doubt when criticizing Cartesian 'doubting.'⁶

Besides the obvious fact that their actual methods of doubting are different, this is a valid question. As I discussed in the preceding chapter, Descartes set out to doubt everything he has learned in his earlier years. He intended such doubting to lead to a new beginning, "a re-education in science and philosophy that would proceed from the foundations of knowledge and work its way upward by firm and stable steps."⁷ To partake in such a task, Descartes is determined to go directly to the foundation on which all such beliefs are built. Krell continues: "If he can locate this foundation and subject it to destruction by doubt, the entire edifice of learning will be cleared for redevelopment and reconstruction."⁸ In his *Meditations*, Descartes goes through various stages in which he doubts all his previous beliefs—his senses, mathematics, geometry, etc. . . . He does so in order to reach the proposition, "I think, therefore I am" as a necessary and indubitable truth. In a

⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 40[20]; NSA XI, p. 638 (03-07).

⁶ David Farrell Krell. *Infectious Nietzsche*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

word, Descartes establishes the “I am” as the one attribute that cannot be taken away, or doubted, from the doubter.

For Nietzsche, though, Descartes’ main error is that he failed to radicalize his method of doubt. To carry such doubt to the foundation of knowledge would lead one, according to Nietzsche, to question why in fact one prefers truth to self-deception. As Krell explains, “It would be to question why indeed one prefers to doubt rather than accept whatever deceptions learning proffers.”⁹ But Descartes, according to Nietzsche, never adequately addresses this question. Nietzsche here is suspect of Descartes’ self-confidence and enthusiasm over the ‘doubting project:’

The fundamental belief of metaphysicians is *the belief in the opposites of value*. It did not occur even to the most cautious of them to doubt there on the very threshold, where doubt was most necessary—even if it was their sworn oath “*de omnibus dubitandum*” [all is to be doubted].¹⁰

For Nietzsche, Cartesian doubt never penetrates the foundation of knowledge, which are metaphysics and morality, and instead comfortably dwells in those very foundations it should be doubting.

Against Descartes’ method, which claims to be able to recognize absolute values, Nietzsche posits his perspectivism. Statements of “absolute value” are non-existent in Nietzsche’s works. Alexander Nehamas describes Nietzsche’s perspectivism as his “famous insistence that every view is only one among many possible interpretations, his own views, particularly this very one, included.”¹¹ Nietzsche’s perspectivism is impor-

⁹ Krell, p. 8.

¹⁰ *JGB* 2; *NSA* V, p. 16 (19-23).

¹¹ Alexander Nehamas. *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), p.1.

tant here in that it stands in direct opposition to the Cartesian method. Descartes' goal, and the goal of many of the Enlightenment thinkers who followed him, was to locate the foundations of absolute, universal knowledge. For Nietzsche, any such goal is impossible—such knowledge is radically incoherent. This is an important objection Nietzsche makes against traditional Enlightenment thought. The kind of knowledge that thinkers like Descartes sought is not, for Nietzsche, a possible kind of human knowledge.

Perhaps Nietzsche's most ardent critique of Descartes concerns Cartesian subjectivity—this consequently proves to be fundamental to many of his subsequent critiques (i.e., as on Rousseau). Nietzsche begins with the foundation of subjectivity in Descartes, the Cartesian *cogito*. In his notebooks he writes, "We must be more careful than Descartes, who remains trapped in a word. *Cogito* is after all only a word."¹² Here Nietzsche critiques the Cartesian *cogito* by claiming it is simply a linguistic invention. Descartes attempted to establish Cartesian subjectivity by merely saying the words "I think therefore I am," but as Nietzsche argues, this simple statement in no way alters reality or creates a subject where there previously was not one. In a word, Nietzsche argues that Descartes has no right to claim the *cogito* as an absolute principle:

"There is thinking: therefore there is something that thinks": this is the upshot of all Descartes' argumentation. But that means positing as "true *a priori*" our belief in the concept of substance—that when there is thought there has to be something "that thinks" is simply a formulation of our grammatical custom that adds a doer to every deed. In short, this is not merely the substantiation of a fact but a logical-metaphysical postulate—Along the lines followed by Descartes one does *not come upon something absolutely certain* but only upon the fact of a very strong belief.¹³

¹² *Nachgelassene Fragments* 40[23]; NSA XI, p. 639 (19-20).

¹³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[158]; NSA XII, p. 549 (12-22).

This “very strong belief” is, of course, hardly sufficient to serve as the kind of justification for subjectivity that Descartes needs. By illustrating that this crucial building block of Cartesian subjectivity is little more than a “grammatical custom,” Nietzsche immediately undermines the foundation of the Cartesian subject and renders any claims made on the basis of this subjectivity problematic. As I will illustrate below, Nietzsche expands this critique of the rational, autonomous Cartesian subject when he furthers his criticism of the traditional Enlightenment into the areas of politics, with Rousseau, and morality, with Kant.

Martin Heidegger offers an interesting interpretation of Nietzsche’s critique of Cartesian subjectivity. Heidegger writes:

[N]o matter how sharply Nietzsche pits himself time and again against Descartes, whose philosophy grounds modern metaphysics, he turns against Descartes only because the latter still does not posit man as subiectum in a way that is complete and decisive enough. The representation of the subiectum as ego, the I, thus the “egoistic” interpretation of the subiectum, is still not subjectivistic enough of its essence in the doctrine of the Overman, the doctrine of man’s absolute pre-eminence among beings. In that doctrine, Descartes celebrates his supreme triumph.¹⁴

On this interpretation Nietzsche’s problem with Descartes is that the former does not offer a strong enough subjectivity. While on the surface Nietzsche seems to be offering a virulent critique of the Cartesian project to rational subjectivity, Heidegger sees him doing so in the name of what is essentially a radicalized Cartesianism. Heidegger continues: “Nietzsche’s doctrine, which makes everything that is, and as it is, in the ‘property

¹⁴ Martin Heidegger. *Nietzsche, Vierter Band: Nihilismus*. (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1961), p. 103.

and product of man,' merely carries out the final development of Descartes' doctrine, according to which truth is grounded on the self-certainty of the human subject."¹⁵

According to Heidegger here, Nietzsche attacks only the form of Cartesian subjectivity, but leaves intact the idea that some kind of independent subject is necessary:

Nietzsche mistakes the origin of the "concept of substance," because, in spite of all his criticism of Descartes, and without an adequate knowledge of the essence of a fundamental metaphysical position, he takes the fundamental position of modern metaphysics as absolutely certain and stakes everything on the priority of man as subject.¹⁶

Heidegger, in other words, claims that without realizing it, Nietzsche is accepting Cartesian assumptions about subjectivity.

Despite this, Heidegger himself is forced to admit that Nietzsche does make some fundamental changes to Cartesian subjectivity. The most important is that Nietzsche posits the body rather than the soul as the seat of subjectivity. As Heidegger writes, "For Nietzsche, what underlies is not the 'I' but the 'body.'"¹⁷ Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche's critique of Descartes is persuasive. But with the admission of the differences between Nietzsche and Descartes, Heidegger's position breaks down. Heidegger claims that "Nietzsche posits the body in place of the soul, and [that] consciousness alters nothing in the fundamental metaphysical position which is determined by Descartes."¹⁸ But, actually, this changes everything. As I discussed above, it is precisely the idea of the

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*, p. 86.

¹⁶ Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*, p. 130.

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*, p. 133. For Nietzsche there is no such dualism within the human being whereby one can point to 'the body' and to 'the soul.' As I discuss in Part II below, the human being is a unity.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*, p. 135. Nietzsche, though, does not make such a claim. To Nietzsche, there simply is no notion of a soul in the traditional sense of the word.

subject as conscious, rational, and thinking that Nietzsche most strongly criticizes. Nietzsche's critique of the *cogito* and of Cartesian rationalism is aimed against a particular brand of subjectivity, namely the kind which became institutionalized as the defective form of enlightened individualism. Heidegger is right, to a point, when he argues that Nietzsche retains and even insists upon a kind of subjectivity. As I will argue in Part II of this thesis, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* serves as a symbol for a new kind of subjectivity—one rooted not in the conscious rationality of Descartes, but in the health and the body of the subject itself. This emphasis on the body¹⁹ is precisely what distinguishes Nietzsche from Descartes and what motivates his critique of Cartesian subjectivity. I do not agree with Heidegger's assessment that Nietzsche's thought is a kind of metaphysics,²⁰ but my main objection to Heidegger's interpretation is that he sees Nietzsche's project as nothing more than a radicalized Cartesianism. As I will argue in Part II, Nietzsche critiques the Cartesian "metaphysical subjectivity" in the favour of a new kind of "earthly subjectivity."

As we have seen, Heidegger offers quite a radical interpretation of Nietzsche's critique of Descartes. For Heidegger, despite both Nietzsche's critique of Descartes and the obvious differences between their two positions, Nietzsche's project is in some profound sense linked to Descartes' project. In a word, Heidegger believes that Nietzsche is the heir of Descartes' project. I do not agree with Heidegger's assessment of Nietzsche here. At most what can be said, and what I argue for, is that Nietzsche in part continues Descartes' project of subjectivity. By this I mean that Nietzsche strives to develop his

¹⁹ By "body" in this context I am referring to Nietzsche's view of placing emphasis on the individual him/herself.

²⁰ In Part II of this thesis, I argue that one aspect of Nietzsche's project was the elimination of traditional metaphysics. This can be found in his proclamation, "God is dead."

own notion of subjectivity which he saw was flawed beginning with Descartes. In the end, Nietzsche formulates an effective critique of enlightened, Cartesian metaphysics (which includes a critique of Descartes' rationality and subjectivity), while retaining the possibility of a new kind of "earthly subjectivity."

I will now turn to Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau. For it was the Cartesian view of subjectivity that make possible an enlightened, Rousseauian politics, so it is a natural progression to turn next to this figure

B. Rousseau: The Seducer

The Cartesian subject developed by Descartes paved the way for a kind of Enlightenment politics that is based on this notion of subjectivity. One of the figures Nietzsche focuses his critique of an enlightened politics on is the figure of Rousseau. Rousseau's politics assumes that individual, Cartesian subjects who exist peacefully and harmoniously in the state of nature will eventually join together through a social contract. His political thought contains, at its core, the same conception of human subjectivity that Nietzsche attempts to reject in Descartes. Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau's politics, therefore, reads like an extension of his critique of Cartesian subjectivity, as outlined above.

Nietzsche does not directly critique specific terms from Rousseau's political thought, such as "general will" or "social contract." Rather he mounts a more characteristically Nietzschean critique of Rousseau's political thought, attacking his ideas at the level of fundamental foundations and first principles. Nietzsche is not attacking Rousseau in his beliefs, but critiques him for what he represents. Rousseau, to Nietzsche, stands as

a symbol of the kind of politics he most detests—liberal, parliamentary, democratic politics. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche writes:

[W]e are not by any means “liberal”; we do not work for “progress”; we do not need to plug up our ears against the sirens who in the market place sing of the future: their song about “equal rights,” “a free society,” “no more masters and no servants” has no allure for us. We simply do not consider it desirable that a realm of justice and concord should be established on earth (because it would certainly be the realm of the deepest leveling and *chinoiserie*); we are delighted with all who love, as we do, danger, war, and adventures, who refuse to compromise, to be captured, reconciled, and castrated; we count ourselves among conquerors; we think about the necessity for new orders, also for a new slavery—for every strengthening and enhancement of the type “man” also involves a new kind of enslavement.²¹

Nietzsche does not explicitly mention Rousseau in the above passage, but here he outlines and rejects every component of Enlightenment politics for which Rousseau symbolizes in Nietzsche’s writings. The Enlightenment ideas of liberalism, progress, equal rights, and freedom are all flatly rejected. Important here is that some of these ideas, especially the concepts of equal rights and freedom, are important components of Rousseau’s political thought and are extensions of his notion of the social contract. The other ideas in the above passage, like liberalism, are implied when Nietzsche established Rousseau as the forerunner of modern politics. In any case, it is clear that Nietzsche is offering a concept of politics which is at odds with Rousseau’s egalitarian political scheme. “Danger,” “war,” and “conquering” certainly have no place in Rousseau’s political system, except maybe as symbols of the unjust political structure that will be overcome when human beings finally remove their chains. And finally, the Nietzschean

²¹ *FW* 377; *NSA* III, p. 629 (06-22).

notion of slavery, extolled as an institution that can strengthen and ultimately enhance humanity, stands as the perfect antithesis of Rousseau's political project, which aims to render individuals free through the establishment of a new, just political order.²²

Nietzsche is not only critical of Rousseau's account of the evolutionary process by which the social contract developed, he also attacks the very concept of human nature which would make such an evolutionary development possible. The "gradual evolution model" favoured by Rousseau presupposes this Cartesian notion of subjectivity. I will argue that Nietzsche is formulating a critique of Rousseau's politics that ironically seems to be based on the very kind of individual subjectivity Nietzsche wants to reject. There are two ways to interpret this strategy. Firstly, it might simply be an attempt to use Rousseau's own categories against him, even though Nietzsche explicitly rejects those categories. Secondly, and more likely, it might be one of the ways which Nietzsche selectively challenges aspects of Enlightenment thought while retaining ideas that are in fact quite enlightened. As I will argue, Nietzsche retains a very strong commitment to a kind of subjectivity, though it is a very different kind from the Cartesian subjectivity he criticizes. In any case, it seems clear that Nietzsche is set in rejecting Rousseau's ideas of the general will and the "natural goodness" of human beings in the state of nature.

Nietzsche's most critical attack is on Rousseau's theory of the state of nature, on which his ideas of the social contract and "natural goodness" are based. His critique of Rousseau's theory of nature is also present when he begins to explicitly refer to Rousseau. For Rousseau, nature represents a kind of utopian ideal condition. It is the departure from this condition, as human beings begin to join together in social groups and thereby lose their independence, that is responsible for humanity's moral fall. This fall

²² I examine Nietzsche's notion of slavery in more detail in Part II below.

necessitates the development of political institutions which will help us regain some of what we have lost. Nietzsche, on the other hand, supports a theory of nature quite opposed to this. In a note from 1887 Nietzsche writes: "*Against Rousseau*.—The state of nature is terrible, man is a beast of prey; our civilization represents a tremendous triumph over this beast-of-prey nature: thus argued Voltaire."²³ Though we can argue that Nietzsche hardly agrees with the interpretation of civilization as a triumph over anything, it is clear that by employing Voltaire against Rousseau in this context, Nietzsche means to begin a critique of Rousseau's concept of nature.

Nietzsche finds Rousseau's idea of nature to be a naïve and unrealistic depiction of human being's natural state. He even goes so far as to associate Rousseau's understanding of nature with the kind of Christian ethics he despises: "Rousseau's concept of nature, as if 'nature' were freedom, goodness, innocence, fairness, justice, an *idyl*—still a *cult of Christian morality* at its foundation."²⁴ Rousseau's state of nature seems a little too much like the Garden of Eden to Nietzsche. Therefore by attacking this idea of nature, Nietzsche is also attacking the idea of a political society which grows out of that idea. Rousseau's entire political philosophy assumes that individual human beings in the state of nature are free and innocent, that moving into society corrupts them, and that political institutions should attempt to correct this. Nietzsche's position, though, is quite the opposite. For Nietzsche the natural state of humanity is brutal and savage, and the most noble societies (i.e., Greek society with their agonistic politics) reflect this. "Rousseau's question concerning civilization," notes Nietzsche, "Does man become *better*

²³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[125]; *NSA* XII, p. 409 (07-10).

²⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[170]; *NSA* XII, p. 558 (10-13).

through it?'—[is] an amusing question, since the reverse is obvious and is precisely that which speaks in *favour* of civilization."²⁵ The one point on which Nietzsche and Rousseau agree, then, is that civilization has a corrupting effect on human beings—yet they disagree as to the value of that effect. For Rousseau, corruption requires the creation of institutions to set society straight. For Nietzsche, however, it will take noble, or "higher," individuals to overcome such corruption and create the conditions for the future improvement of the human being.

Rousseau's tendency towards correcting and reforming the ills of society can easily be translated into a political doctrine, and it is against this type of reform that Nietzsche offers some of his strongest criticisms. This becomes the foundation for Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau as a revolutionary. In *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, Nietzsche writes:

There are political and social dreamers who with fiery eloquence invite a revolutionary overturning of all social orders in the belief that the proudest temple of fair humanity will then at once rise up as though of its own accord. In these perilous dreams there is still an echo of Rousseau's superstition, which believes in a miraculous primeval but as it were *buried* goodness of human nature and ascribes all the blame for this burying to the institutions of culture in the form of society, state, and education.²⁶

Here Nietzsche's critique develops into a full-fledged attack on Rousseau as a revolutionary "dreamer" [*Phantasten*]. The particular form of revolutionary thought and activity with which Nietzsche associated Rousseau was of course the French Revolution. But as

²⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[118]; NSA XII, p. 525 (15-18).

²⁶ *MAM* 463; NSA II, p. 299 (10-19).

Keith Ansell-Pearson points out, Nietzsche may have unfairly associated Rousseau with the Revolution and attributed to him a desire to return to the state of nature—a desire Rousseau never actually had.²⁷ Ansell-Pearson notes that the major aspect of Rousseau that Nietzsche critiques is the notion of the natural goodness of human beings. “It is clear,” Ansell-Pearson argues, “that Nietzsche is compelled to exaggerate and distort certain aspects of Rousseau’s moral and political thought in order to highlight . . . his challenge to the Christian-moral tradition and its secular successors.”²⁸ In one aspect Nietzsche claims that Rousseau yearns to return to the innocent state of nature—a claim Rousseau never seriously entertained. This view comes from Nietzsche creating an opposition in Rousseau between the natural goodness of human nature and the social institutions which corrupt it. This results, according to Nietzsche, in the delusion that once the corrupt social institutions are reformed and/or overthrown, then our hidden, repressed natural goodness will emerge and blossom innocent and free. Rousseau, though, was neither this simplistic nor utopian in his political-ethical views. But as I noted above, I am less interested in this chapter in constructing a “true” picture of Rousseau’s political thought and more interested in developing an understanding of how Nietzsche saw that thought. I believe that for Nietzsche, Rousseau represented an archetype of modern politics, the kind of politics that received its most dramatic expression in the French Revolution. Whether or not this is an accurate criticism of Rousseau, this is the way in which Nietzsche symbolically made use of him.

²⁷ see Ansell-Pearson’s *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), especially Chapter One.

²⁸ Ansell-Pearson (1991), p. 49.

Numerous passages from Nietzsche's works indicate that he linked Rousseau to French Revolutionary politics and therefore with the modern democratic state in general.²⁹ In his notebooks Nietzsche mentions that "the French Revolution [is] the continuation of Christianity. Rousseau is the seducer."³⁰ By labeling the Revolution as a mere continuation of what Nietzsche saw as a bankrupt ethical scheme, and by establishing Rousseau as the man responsible for this continuation, Nietzsche attacks both Revolutionary politics and their supposed author, Rousseau. In *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, Nietzsche explicitly names Rousseau as the origin of the Revolution: "It is not *Voltaire's* moderate nature, inclined as it was to ordering, purifying, and reconstructing, but *Rousseau's* passionate follies and half-lies that called forth the optimistic spirit of the Revolution against which I cry: '*Ecrasez l'infame!*'"³¹ I wish to point out the ironic way Nietzsche uses Voltaire's slogan, "crush the infamous thing!", against Rousseau. Nietzsche uses this slogan, which Voltaire originally directed against the Church, because he equates Rousseau's politics with the ethics of Christianity.³² In a typical Nietzschean move, we find Nietzsche defending the Enlightenment against the Revolution: "[Rousseau] then went on with perfidious enthusiasm to set the Enlightenment . . . on its fanatical head . . . the Enlightenment, which is fundamentally so alien to the Revolution and, left to itself, would have passed quietly along like a gleam in the

²⁹ see Nietzsche's *Nachgelassene Fragmente* from 1884-1885.

³⁰ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 25[178]; NS4 XI, p. 61 (09-10).

³¹ MAM 463; NS4 II, p. 299 (26-30). This translates to "Crush the infamous thing!"

³² I should also note how this critique of Rousseau constitutes a criticism of the enlightened ideas of progress and optimism.

clouds and for long been content to address itself only to the individual.”³³ Elsewhere Nietzsche argues that “it is this [Revolutionary] spirit that has for a long time banished *the spirit of the Enlightenment*.”³⁴ From these passages, it seems Nietzsche is yearning for a purer, less politically tainted form of the Enlightenment, and this may seem surprising until we recall that Nietzsche’s relationship with the Enlightenment is ambiguous. He cannot bring himself to attack the entire Enlightenment as such—for he has incorporated too many of its ideas. Instead, Nietzsche attacks specific manifestations of the traditional Enlightenment and his critique of the Revolution is precisely this kind of critique. In his later works, Nietzsche becomes quite clear in this particular critique: “I still hate Rousseau *in* the French Revolution: it is the world-historical expression of this duality of idealist and rabble.”³⁵ In a word, the Enlightenment Nietzsche wished to pursue was not the Enlightenment of the French Revolution and of Rousseau.

This association of the Revolution with its “rabble” brings us to another important aspect of Nietzsche’s critique; his attack on Rousseau’s egalitarianism. As I argued in the previous chapter, Rousseau advocates a very particular kind of social equality, one aimed at providing the maximum possible amount of individual freedom in a society. So if we wish to characterize Rousseau as an egalitarian, we must first qualify that term by noting that Rousseau’s egalitarian project is carried out in the name of freedom for a kind of enlightened, Cartesian subject. If we understand Rousseau’s egalitarianism in this sense, then it becomes clear why Nietzsche rejects Rousseau’s project: Rousseau’s proj-

³³ *WS* 221; *NSA* II, p. 654 (07-13).

³⁴ *MAM* 463; *NSA* II, p. 299 (30-31).

³⁵ *GD* X 48; *NSA* VI, p. 150 (17-19).

ect is based on the kind of subjectivity which Nietzsche has already rejected with Descartes. Ansell-Pearson recognizes this reluctance on Nietzsche's part to adopt any notion of freedom or individuality which depends on a Rousseauian politicization of Cartesian subjectivity.³⁶ It is possible to read Nietzsche as mounting an elitist critique of Rousseau's egalitarianism. But one must remember two important points that prevent us from viewing Nietzsche as an individualist in any conventional way. First, by rejecting Rousseau's egalitarianism, Nietzsche is also implicitly rejecting the individualistic motivation behind that egalitarian project. Second, as we have seen, Nietzsche rejects the Cartesian subjectivity that is the basis for all modern understandings of the individual.

Nietzsche's critique of egalitarianism is also what links his critiques of Rousseau, the French Revolution, and Christianity. According to Nietzsche, the very aspect of the French Revolution that embodies what Nietzsche calls a "Rousseauian *morality*" is "the doctrine of equality!"³⁷ What is more, the doctrine of equality is also the most Christian of teachings: "The poison of the doctrine 'equal rights for all'—it was Christianity that spread it most fundamentally."³⁸ So for Nietzsche, the doctrine of equality was promoted most fervently by Christianity, and in turn then helped to glorify and romanticize the Revolution:

That this doctrine of equality was surrounded by such gruesome and bloody events, that has given this "modern idea" par excellence a kind of glory and fiery aura so that the Revolution as a *spectacle* has seduced even the most noble spirits.³⁹

³⁶ see Ansell-Pearson's *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau*, p. 24.

³⁷ *GD IX 48; NSA VI*, p. 150 (21 and 23-24).

³⁸ *A 43; NSA VI*, p. 217 (30-32).

³⁹ *GD IX 48; NSA VI*, p. 150 (28-32).

So Rousseau's morality, for Nietzsche, is ultimately reducible to his doctrine of equality which is itself yet another manifestation of Christianity.

Some commentators have suggested that Nietzsche's rejection of Cartesian subjectivity should be understood as part of a larger project and not just specifically in the political context of an individualistic egalitarianism. One such interpretation has been to view Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau's politics in the larger context of a cultural critique of Rousseau. For example, Eric Blondel argues that "Nietzsche's opposition to Rousseau at first takes its origins . . . in the problem of culture."⁴⁰ For Blondel, the problem Nietzsche had with Rousseau was in part political, but this was only one aspect of a larger problem: "[T]he problem lies elsewhere: to me, at the level of the underground basis of the question of culture, and not on the surface level of . . . political philosophy."⁴¹ For Blondel, the question of particular political forms, or positions, is a secondary concern. He believes that Nietzsche was able to reject Rousseau's egalitarian politics simply by claiming Rousseau's position represents the decadence of modern culture. This position seems plausible. As I argued in the previous chapter, Rousseau's politics depends heavily on the Enlightenment ideal of the self. Therefore if Nietzsche rejects this idea, which he in fact does, then neither Rousseau's egalitarian individualism nor any kind of political philosophy which relies on this kind of subjectivity will be accepted by him. As well, any kind of culture based on this notion of subjectivity would naturally be open to a Nietzschean attack. In this case, Nietzsche discusses the modern culture of individuality as decadent. For Blondel, then, Rousseau is merely a symbol for the politi-

⁴⁰ Eric Blondel. "Nietzsche Contra Rousseau: Goethe Versus Catalina." *History of European Ideas* 11 (1989), p. 676.

⁴¹ Ibid.

cal, which is only on a surface level. Beneath this, Rousseau seems to signify the broader, deeper kind of cultural modernity that Nietzsche wished to attack. In this interpretation, Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau is only superficially political—beneath this it is fundamentally cultural.

A look at Nietzsche's writings supports a broader reading of Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau. I wish to argue, however, that his works do not support the kind of anti-political reading suggested by Blondel. Although Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau could be read to include culture, this should not cause us to underestimate the political significance of that critique. In his notebooks Nietzsche writes, "Rousseau is a symptom of self-contempt and heated vanity—both signs that the domineering will is lacking."⁴² He even goes so far to say that Rousseau was "beyond a doubt, *mentally disturbed*."⁴³ Clearly Rousseau represents some kind of cultural decadent for Nietzsche. In *Morgenröte* Nietzsche describes Rousseau as a "moral tarantula"⁴⁴ who 'bit' Kant. In this work Nietzsche seems to develop a moral/ethical critique of Rousseau (as well as Kant). Later in the same work he states, "[Y]ou have the choice of concluding with Rousseau that 'this pitiable civilization is to blame for our *bad* morality,' or against Rousseau that 'our *good* morality is to blame for this pitiableness of our civilization."⁴⁵ One has little trouble guessing which route Nietzsche would prefer to take. So clearly there is in Nietzsche's work a critique of Rousseau's ethics and of Rousseau himself as a cultural decadent.

However, this must not cause us to underestimate the importance of Nietzsche's critique

⁴² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[146]; NSA XII, p. 421 (14-16).

⁴³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[184]; NSA XII, p. 448 (15).

⁴⁴ *M Vorrede* 3; NSA III, p. 14 (14).

⁴⁵ *M* 163; NSA III, p. 146 (11-15).

of Rousseau as a political thinker. I have been arguing that Nietzsche criticizes Rousseau's political ideas and the concept of the state of nature on which these ideas are based, as well as Rousseau's individualistically motivated egalitarianism. These are, I believe, the essential components of Nietzsche's overall critique of Rousseau. I also believe that these political critiques are rooted in Nietzsche's hostility to the enlightened, Cartesian ideas about subjectivity in which Rousseau's politics are grounded. Nietzsche's fundamental rejection of Cartesian subjectivity makes it impossible for him to accept any political system based on these Cartesian concepts—such as Rousseau's politics, the French Revolution, and modern democracy clearly are. Through his discussion of the ways in which autonomous, Cartesian subjects voluntarily join together via social contracts and try to create just political societies which will adequately protect individual freedom, Rousseau embodies the Enlightenment politics of modernity, or the politics of Cartesian subjectivity. The rejection of this kind of politics forms the political component of Nietzsche's attack on the traditional Enlightenment.

Now I will turn to Nietzsche's critique of Kant. But before doing so I wish to use Kant as an example to show, briefly, how morality and politics can combine in Nietzsche's critique of enlightened modernity. As Alex McIntyre points out, "Growing out of Christianity, the modern spirit finds its voice in Rousseau's eulogy of the general will and absolute equality. However, the full implications of Rousseau are elaborated and purified in the philosophy of Kant."⁴⁶ In other words, Kant can be seen as continuing Rousseau's enlightened project, and this is most evident in Kant's moral philosophy. In

⁴⁶ Alex McIntyre. *The Sovereignty of Joy: Nietzsche's Vision of Grand Politics*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 116.

Der Antichrist Nietzsche asks:

Did not Kant find in the French Revolution the transition from the inorganic form of the state to the *organic*? Did he not ask himself whether there was any event which could be explained only in terms of a moral disposition of mankind, an event which would *demonstrate* once and for all the "tendency of mankind toward the good?" Kant's answer: "This is the Revolution."⁴⁷

For Nietzsche, then, Kant's ethics and Rousseau's politics (that is, the politics of the French Revolution) are inseparably tied together. Both represent fundamental aspects of enlightened modernity, which is exactly the focus of Nietzsche's critique. As Olivier Reboul notes, "Kant was, for Nietzsche, a plebeian, and a plebeian who manifested a Rousseauian egalitarianism."⁴⁸ It is this aspect of Kant, in addition to his secularized Christian morality, which Nietzsche attacks.

C. Kant: The Subterranean Christian

The Enlightenment contained many important impulses towards secularism, or distancing itself from the religious realm. Despite this, some of the most important thinkers of the Enlightenment retained key elements of Christianity. For example, Descartes' metaphysics ultimately relied on a belief in God, and many aspects of Rousseau's ethical thought were recognizably Christian. As I argue in Part II, Nietzsche was quite hostile to the Judeo-Christian tradition and strove to liberate human beings from its grasp. Instead of a morality founded on this tradition, Nietzsche writes about a morality based on the inner strength of human beings. Throughout Nietzsche's writings, one thinker stood out as the symbol of the decadent, "sickly" kind of ethics he despised—

⁴⁷ A 11; NSA VI, 178 (03-09).

⁴⁸ Olivier Reboul. *Nietzsche: Critique de Kant*. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), p. 14.

Immanuel Kant. Kant represents for Nietzsche the attempt to re-introduce and translate Christian ethics back into the secular, enlightened context.

Nietzsche approached his critique of Kant by first developing a more general criticism of morality. Nietzsche, here, had a specific plan; he was not asking human beings to abandon their moral beliefs in general, just the notion that ethics can be universalized and absolute. In other words, Nietzsche was providing a critique of the idea of universal morality, a morality which claimed to be justified in any context or situation. Nietzsche's notion of morality is one that is perspectival.⁴⁹ According to Nehamas, this view maintains that "there are no facts that are independent and that are therefore capable of providing the common object of . . . all interpretations." But, as Nehamas argues, Nietzsche does believe "that some interpretations are better than others and that we can even know sometimes that this is the case."⁵⁰ Nietzsche does believe that there are ways to distinguish and choose among moral positions, but he does not believe this can be done in terms of an appeal to universal truth.⁵¹ Furthermore, Nietzsche believes that his moral perspectivism is a strong position that could replace such universal moralities that were so prevalent in philosophy prior to him. "Let us not," urged Nietzsche, "be deceived either in the Kantian or in the Hegelian manner:—we no longer *believe* in morality, as they did, and consequently we have no need to found a philosophy with the aim of justifying morality."⁵² The "they" he refers to here are the

⁴⁹ This should not be confused with the view of moral relativism which essentially denies the validity of any moral position by rendering all moral positions equivalent.

⁵⁰ Nehamas, p. 3.

⁵¹ I will discuss Nietzsche's "criteria" for distinguishing between interpretations, especially moral interpretations, in Part II below.

⁵² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[195]; *NSA* XII, p. 163 (7-10).

philosophers who believed in a universalistic morality. To Nietzsche, this universalistic approach reveals a certain ignorance about the world: "To assert *existence* as a whole of things of which we know nothing whatever, precisely because there is an advantage in not being able to know anything about them, was a piece of naiveté of Kant, resulting from needs, mainly moral-metaphysical."⁵³ Here Nietzsche is using another of his favourite critical tactics. By showing a philosophical position to be the simple result of a psychological need, he argues that people believe in this position not because the world really is this way, but only because they have a disposition to believe it. Nietzsche writes, "*There are no moral actions whatsoever*: they are completely imaginary. Not only are they *indemonstrable* (which Kant, e.g., admitted, and Christianity as well)—they are *altogether impossible*."⁵⁴ If moral actions are imaginary and are psychological effects rather than a reflection of the way the world actually is, then universal morality itself becomes untenable.

The particular form of universalistic morality Nietzsche was opposed to, of course, was the Judeo-Christian form. For him, Kant represents how this type of universalistic morality had become institutionalized and secularized. In one notebook entry, Nietzsche characterized Kant as being "way off when it comes to great historical values (French Revolution); a moral fanatic à la Rousseau; a subterranean Christianity in his values; a dogmatist through and through."⁵⁵ Here we see that Nietzsche's critiques of ethical and political values merge in the figure of Kant. Furthermore we see that Kant

⁵³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[205]; NSA XII, p. 582 (1-5). Such a view is also the result of not viewing the world as becoming. I discuss this important point in Part III below.

⁵⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[57]; NSA XII, p. 485 (20-25).

⁵⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[3]; NSA XII, p. 340 (21-25).

represents for Nietzsche an elusive kind of Christianity—one smuggled in through the backdoor and which has disguised itself in order to make itself acceptable to rational, Enlightened thought. “In the case of Kant,” argues Nietzsche, “theological prejudice, his unconscious dogmatism, his moralistic perspective were dominant, directing, commanding.”⁵⁶ Again, Kant’s Christianity reads here like an unknown, subconscious drive. Kant, in Nietzsche’s view, may not have even realized what he was doing when he brought Christian ethics back into the Enlightenment; this is how far his Christian morality lay hidden beneath the cover of enlightened rationalism.

Everything that Kant built, Nietzsche believed, he built “under the seduction of morality.”⁵⁷ Kant’s entire ethical system, for Nietzsche, represents nothing more than a great deceit, a complex, well-developed trick which is all the more insidious due to it being designed by an intellect of Kant’s caliber: “The . . . Tartuffery of the old Kant as he lures us on the dialectical bypaths that lead to his ‘categorical imperative’—really lead astray and seduce— . . . [we] find it quite amusing to watch closely the subtle tricks of old moralists and preachers of morals.”⁵⁸ Nietzsche essentially proclaims himself to be one of the few thinkers capable of seeing through the “moral trickery” of Kant. In *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Nietzsche provides a summary of his feelings towards Kant: “Any distinction between a ‘true’ and an ‘apparent’ world—whether in the Christian manner or in the manner of Kant (in the end, an *underhanded* Christian)—is only a suggestion of decadence, a symptom of the *decline of life*.”⁵⁹ This is the strongest kind of criticism

⁵⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 7[4]; NSA XII, p. 264 (10-12).

⁵⁷ *M Vorrede* 3; NSA III, p. 13 (32).

⁵⁸ *JGB* 5; NSA V, p. 19 (14-19).

⁵⁹ *GD* IV 6; NSA VI, p. 79 (1-5).

Nietzsche can make. That which is opposed to life earns Nietzsche's strongest criticism, and in his mind, Kant's ethics fits that description.⁶⁰

As I discussed in the previous chapter, Kant justifies and grounds his universal Christian ethics in the concept of universal reason. It is through the category of absolute reason that Kant is able to maintain an essentially Christian ethical position without explicit reference to a Christian God. Nietzsche, therefore, bases part of his assault on Kant's ethics on a critique of Kant's universal reason. As Reboul observes, Nietzsche does not reject reason itself, but "rather the obligation to choose between passion and reason; Kant opts for reason against the passions, which he considers animalistic, egoistic, and dangerous."⁶¹ Nietzsche is not an irrationalist as the term is usually understood.⁶² Rather, as discussed above, he is a perspectivist—in any situation there are various interpretations, or perspectives. Part of his critique of Kant is that Kant limits or excludes many valuable perspectives. For Nietzsche reason is not dangerous in and of itself; it is the kind Kant advocates, which establishes itself as the only valid means for developing ethical principles, which is extremely dangerous. Walter Kaufmann notes that Nietzsche flirted with reason as a universal principle, but came to reject it decisively: "Had Nietzsche developed his own earlier dualistic tendencies, he might now have spoken of reason's control over the will to power . . . His repudiation of any such dualism through the mouth of his Zarathustra, however, rules out any such approximation of the classical

⁶⁰ This theme of life-denying/life-affirming becomes the foundation, I will argue, of Nietzsche's political thought. I examine this in Part III.

⁶¹ Reboul, p. 83.

⁶² I look at this theme more in chapter seven, especially section B.

and Kantian views.”⁶³ Dualism gave way in Nietzsche’s thought to perspectivism, which is embodied in his will to power.⁶⁴ What is more, universal, practical reason of the Kantian type thereby became associated in Nietzsche’s thought with “*moral fanaticism*.”⁶⁵

Nietzsche’s critique of Kantian rationality is also part of a larger critique of Kant’s transcendental metaphysics. Kant justifies his appeal to reason by making reason something that is transcendently ideal. Nietzsche, though, wished to render this move problematic. As Siegfried Kittman observes, “For Nietzsche there is only the world of experience. There is no intelligible character to things, no intelligible freedom, no intelligible world.”⁶⁶ Nietzsche is extremely skeptical of Kant’s idealism and of the Kantian claim that one can talk with certainty about the world of things-in-themselves. Nietzsche argued that the transcendental world was “invented, *in order* that a place remain[ed] for the ‘moral freedom’ (in Kant).”⁶⁷ With this interpretation, the transcendently ideal world can neither contain nor support any notion of absolute truth. This only becomes a convenient fiction produced by Kant solely to justify his moral viewpoint. Furthermore, Nietzsche believes that this deceit, this fraud, has been tremendously successful. “What is certain,” writes Nietzsche, “is that, since Kant, transcendentalists of every kind have once more won the day—they have been emancipated from the theologians: what joy!”⁶⁸

⁶³ Walter Kaufmann. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 214.

⁶⁴ I return to this point when I examine Nietzsche’s doctrine of the death of God in Part II.

⁶⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[178]; *NSA* XII, p. 442 (29).

⁶⁶ Siegfried Kittman. *Kant und Nietzsche: Darstellung und Vergleich ihrer Ethik und Moral*. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 1984), p. 213. Here Kittman is flirting with Nietzsche’s notion of the world as becoming. I discuss this specifically in chapter eight.

⁶⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[160]; *NSA* XII, p. 430 (8-9).

⁶⁸ *GM* III 25; *NSA* V, p. 405 (9-11).

Nietzsche is of course implying that the free ride the transcendentalists have enjoyed thus far is finally over; the fraud is finally revealed.

Given Nietzsche's critique of Kant's Christian ethics, his rationalism, and his metaphysics, it would perhaps seem obvious to suggest that Nietzsche also attacks Kant's ideas of subjectivity and freedom. After all, as we saw above, these ideas belong to the same Enlightenment tradition of subjectivity that Nietzsche attacked so vigorously in his critique of Descartes. Some commentators have suggested that Nietzsche retains a somewhat Kantian notion of subjectivity. Richard White, for example, claims that:

Following in the tradition of Kant, Nietzsche is inspired by the ideal of autonomy which expresses the highest achievement of the individual life; though in distinction to Kant, Nietzsche recognized that the basic tendency of modern life is directed towards the suppression of the individual, so that any attempt to illuminate the nature of autonomy must be profoundly difficult . . . Nietzsche's philosophy may be viewed as an attempt to provoke the autonomy of the individual, and . . . this is an attempt to recover the thought of individuality as such.⁶⁹

White is half right here. Nietzsche is indeed inspired by the ideal of autonomy, but it is definitely not an ideal that he took from Kant or any traditional Enlightenment source. Rather, I argue, Nietzsche is partaking in a similar (Enlightenment) project, but his transformed ideal of autonomy is significantly different from what had come before. Kant's ethics and metaphysics both depend implicitly on a notion of human subjectivity that is fundamentally Cartesian. The rational, autonomous subject introduced by Descartes is essentially the same subject that makes free ethical choices in Kant's philosophy. Since

⁶⁹ Richard White. "Nietzsche Contra Kant and the Problem of Autonomy." *International Studies in Philosophy* 22 (1990), p. 3. Herein after "White (1990)."

Nietzsche rejects this Cartesian principle of subjectivity, he therefore does not incorporate a Kantian ideal of autonomy into his thought.

White further urges that Kant and Nietzsche are similar “in emphasizing the priority of individual autonomy.” He goes on to suggest that “with both thinkers, the project of autonomy is not the recovery of an original but alienated self, but the ‘fulfillment’ of the individual as the production of his own higher nature.”⁷⁰ This may be true, but White is ignoring two points. Firstly, that Kant and Nietzsche have radically different ideas about what ‘individual autonomy’ means. Secondly, that the ‘production of a higher nature’ is something that will also have profoundly different meanings for these thinkers. For Kant, individual autonomy is to be understood in rational, enlightened, Cartesian terms; the ‘higher nature’ towards which individuals should aspire is that of rational, autonomous freedom and secularized Christian ethics. This is obviously not what Nietzsche has in mind. In a word, Kant’s notion of subjectivity is part of the traditional Enlightenment which Nietzsche explicitly and adamantly rejects.

Gerhardt Gamm is correct when he notes that Kant represents the culmination of the Enlightenment idea of subjectivity that originated with Descartes. He writes, “With Kant, the Cartesian idea of the subject is clarified in the extreme . . . The coming of subjectivity, which begins with Descartes, spreads itself in various ways through the rationalist and empirical traditions of enlightened reason.”⁷¹ The Kantian subject, in short, comes directly from the Cartesian subject and therefore cannot be a part of Nietzsche’s project. For Nietzsche to remain consistent he must critique the Kantian subject as

⁷⁰ White (1990), p. 6.

⁷¹ Gerhardt Gamm. *Wahrheit als Differenz: Studien zu einer anderen Theorie der Moderne*. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 1986), p. 25.

vigorously as he does the Cartesian one. As Gamm argues, "Nietzsche's genealogy unmasks the metaphysical truth of subjectivity as a moral strategy."⁷² Kantian subjectivity, in other words, has become the moral form of Cartesian subjectivity. Kantian ethical subjects are, for Nietzsche, as fictitious as Cartesian rational subjects.

The fundamental motivation behind Nietzsche's critique of Kantian subjectivity is essentially that these two thinkers have radically different interpretations of autonomy. Reboul points out that "the aristocratic man is autonomous: the term is from Nietzsche, but in an anti-Kantian sense. For Kant, man is autonomous because his reason poses itself as the law he must obey. For Nietzsche, the aristocratic man, and he alone, is free."⁷³ This points, I believe, to the differences between these thinkers' views of subjectivity and autonomy. Kant's autonomy is defined in terms of an ethical obedience to rational laws. Nietzsche's autonomy, on the other hand, is beyond good and evil and defined not in terms of moral laws, but in terms of character and nobility. Reboul concludes that "the autonomous will of Kant determines the universal, but remains restricted by the limits of reason. [Nietzsche's] creative will engenders the new . . . which transgresses reason itself."⁷⁴

Nietzsche is completely dissatisfied with the possibilities of Kant's autonomy. Instead he posits a new, more creative kind of autonomy that will not have to answer to reason. As a result, a Nietzschean kind of autonomy will be able to achieve things that Kant's restrictive autonomy never could.

⁷² Gamm, p. 9.

⁷³ Reboul, p. 88.

⁷⁴ Reboul, p. 106.

From this discussion it should hardly be surprising that Nietzsche rejects the Kantian notion of freedom, since he rejects Kant's transcendental metaphysics. As Nietzsche argues, "Kant considered the hypothesis of 'intelligible freedom' necessary in order to acquit the *ens perfectum* [perfect being] of responsibility for *this* world's being thus-and-thus—in short, to account for evil and ills: a scandalous bit of logic for a philosopher."⁷⁵ By rejecting Kant's 'intelligible freedom,' Nietzsche implicitly rejects his entire ethical position. In the *Genealogie* Nietzsche asserts that "the ripest fruit is the *sovereign individual*, like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for 'autonomous' and 'moral' are mutually exclusive)."⁷⁶ A careless reading of this passage could result in interpreting Nietzsche as supporting the Kantian-Cartesian-enlightened subject position. After all, phrases like "sovereign individual" smack of enlightened thought. But Nietzsche's parenthetical remarks are crucial here: By explicitly disassociating what he means by 'autonomous' from the Kantian-moral understanding of the term, Nietzsche is insisting that his concept of autonomy is fundamentally different. Nietzsche's project towards autonomy is not a Kantian moral project, nor is it any other form of the traditional Enlightenment project.

In the previous chapter I "set the stage" for Nietzsche's critique of Kant. The two essential points I wish to re-emphasize is that first, Kant's notion of autonomy is the basic command of life from which the whole of his ethics is derived. White refers to this point as "the foundational role of sovereignty in Kant's system."⁷⁷ In other words, Kantian

⁷⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[150]; NSA XII, p. 540 (31-34).

⁷⁶ GM II 2; NSA V, p. 293 (20-24).

⁷⁷ White (1997), p. 41.

autonomy is a necessary condition for morality, and it also represents the fulfillment of our freedom. Kant's notion of autonomy is not just the focal point of his moral theory, it is the focus of his entire critical philosophical project.

The second essential point I wish to reiterate is the role that reason plays in Kant's philosophy. As White points out, "All of Kant's discussion takes place within the context of an overarching 'metaphysics of reason,' in which reason is our 'truth' and the locus of our fulfillment."⁷⁸ The consequences of this point are important. Kant's notion of autonomy, it turns out, involves the destruction of each individual's particular nature. For Kant, human beings are most "human" when they marginalize whatever individual goals or qualities they have and follow the moral law as if they were, as White calls them, "impersonal agent[s] of reason."⁷⁹ Nietzsche too picks up on this paradox:

What? You admire the categorical imperative within you? This "firmness" of your so-called moral judgment? This "unconditional" feeling that "here everyone must judge as I do?" . . . For it is selfish to experience one's own judgment as a universal law; and this selfishness is blind, petty, and frugal because it betrays that you have not yet discovered yourself nor created for yourself an ideal of your very own.⁸⁰

One can almost feel the sarcasm coming from these words. Nietzsche here is pointing out that while Kant celebrates the notion of autonomy and makes it the focus of his entire philosophical project, he also betrays autonomy by equating it with being the simple fulfillment of our rational nature. So for Nietzsche, the categorical imperative ultimately destroys the idea of autonomy by including it under the "universal" and "necessary"

⁷⁸ White (1997), p. 42.

⁷⁹ White (1997), p. 42.

⁸⁰ *FW* 335; *NSA* III, p. 562 (21-24 and 26-32).

principles of reason. But as I argue in this paper, Nietzsche not only partakes in a project similar to that of the Enlightenment, I believe he was aware of this. Nietzsche was very concerned about the autonomy, or sovereignty, of the individual, and he realized that such Kantian solutions as the categorical imperative only result in the complete destruction of the individual. As he writes in *Der Antichrist*, "A virtue must be *our own* invention, *our* most necessary self-expression . . . any other kind of meaning is merely a danger . . . How could one fail to feel how Kant's categorical imperative endangered life itself?"⁸¹ Life became endangered because the categorical imperative threatened the very autonomy of the individual. For Kant, we are only moral, and therefore autonomous, agents insofar as we ignore such particulars as goals and consequences, and simply consider ourselves the embodiment of the universal law. But for Nietzsche, the categorical imperative only serves to suppress the autonomy of individuals through the mundane rule of the (moral) law.

* * * * *

In this chapter I have examined Nietzsche's critique of the traditional Enlightenment through the figures of Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant. Taken together Nietzsche's critiques on these figures constitute a broad, far-reaching critique on the very foundations of Enlightenment thought. Nietzsche's critique of Descartes undermines the foundations of modern rationality, and even more important, the concept of subjectivity upon which virtually all modern Enlightenment thought is based. Nietzsche's critique of the Cartesian subject makes it problematic to retain any enlightened categories of thought, at least in their traditional forms. This critique then forms the basis for a critique

⁸¹ A 11; *NSA* VI, p. 177 (07-09 and 22-23).

of enlightened political forms, specifically those Nietzsche associated with Rousseau and the French Revolution. The political and moral teaching that emerges in Rousseau is based on the notions of freedom and autonomy which is, according to Nietzsche, completely idealistic. This notion of moral autonomy, along with its political form, egalitarianism, emerges, to Nietzsche, through Christianity and becomes fully realized with Kant. For Nietzsche, Kant represents what McIntyre calls a “purification” of Rousseau’s notion of freedom.⁸² As a result, Nietzsche offers a critique of the moral form of this enlightened Cartesian subject by demonstrating the real problems that exist when we speak of this subject’s moral freedom, as Kant does. According to Nietzsche, Kant’s only option is to smuggle Christianity back into the Enlightenment and this move conclusively proves for Nietzsche the bankruptcy of traditional Enlightenment thought.

In the next chapter I will examine what ideas, if any, Nietzsche retains from the Enlightenment that he puts through a “Nietzschean filter” to develop his own Nietzschean Enlightenment.

⁸² See McIntyre’s *Sovereignty of Joy*, especially pp. 117-121.

CHAPTER FOUR: NIETZSCHE CONTRA THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In this chapter I will discuss the ideas which Nietzsche took from the traditional Enlightenment and through his own filter attempted to create a kind of "Nietzschean Enlightenment." I will argue that this Enlightenment, which includes Nietzsche's "new" notion of subjectivity, forms the backdrop against which he developed his political thinking. To further "set the stage" for Nietzsche's politics, I will also examine those contemporary political ideologies which Nietzsche rejects. As I will argue, such ideologies as socialism and liberal democracy are based on the Cartesian notion of subjectivity which Nietzsche so adamantly rejected.

From the previous two chapters we might read Nietzsche as offering a devastating, albeit straightforward, critique of the Enlightenment. But as I have argued, his critique is much more complex than this. For example, Nietzsche critiques the idea of Cartesian subjectivity, yet he retains a very strong notion of individuality which is at the base of his political thinking. This suggests that there may be ways in which Nietzsche's thought is more than a simple attack on the Enlightenment. As I will argue below, there are a number of ways in which Nietzsche seems to argue in favour of a certain kind of Enlightenment. In order to understand his critique fully, it will be necessary to examine the ways in which Nietzsche's thought, intentionally or unintentionally, retains elements of the Enlightenment. By doing so we can attempt to arrive at some kind of reconciliation between these traces of the Enlightenment in his works and the obvious hostility he bears towards enlightened thought in its traditional form.

Laurence Lampert notes that in some places "Nietzsche is no enemy of enlightenment," and that "he wants to deepen and broaden the European Enlightenment 'and force

it to take the next step . . . to enlighten the Enlightenment itself."¹ Again, I agree with Lampert's position, but would make a few modifications. I wish to argue that Nietzsche is an enemy of a particular brand of Enlightenment thought—namely the traditional Enlightenment as embodied in the works of Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant, as discussed above. Nietzsche is also opposed to the varieties of nineteenth century enlightened thought that build upon these foundations. But I believe Lampert is correct in that Nietzsche wished to create some kind of modified or transformed Enlightenment. Nietzsche critiques the traditional Enlightenment without hesitation, but he does so in the way that is, in many ways, enlightened. This interpretation, I think, offers a way of both fully comprehending Nietzsche's political thinking (which I discuss later) and as a way of understanding certain passages in Nietzsche's thought that might otherwise seem contradicting. In *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* he writes:

The Italian Renaissance contained within it all the positive forces to which we owe modern culture: liberation of thought, disrespect for authorities, victory of education over the arrogance of ancestry, enthusiasm for science . . . , and an aversion to appearance and mere effect.²

Many of those characteristics, specifically free thought, science, and political liberation, are clearly enlightened ideals. One might try to argue that this apparent enthusiasm for the certain Enlightenment ideas is simply a position Nietzsche held in his early career. But *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* is arguably a very mature book for Nietzsche; it contains many elements which remain consistent throughout his latter thought. But if we understand Nietzsche's opposition to the traditional Enlightenment of Descartes, Rous-

¹ Lampert (1993), p. 360. Lampert here is quoting Georg Picht (*Nietzsche*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988), p. 163.

² *MAM* 237; *NSA* II, p. 199 (02-06 and 08-09).

seau, and Kant in the context of his support for a modified, "Nietzschean" notion of the Enlightenment, the above passage becomes more understandable. Nietzsche can now be read as advancing a new kind of Enlightenment, which, up to now, has been unknown. This could explain why he cites the Italian Renaissance when describing enlightened ideals—this implies that there are intellectual traditions other than the seventeenth and eighteenth century Enlightenment which make available to us the kind of Enlightenment concepts Nietzsche wished to retain.

We are now confronted with the inevitable question, "What, then, are the ideas of the Enlightenment that Nietzsche wished to hold onto?"

A. Towards a Nietzschean Enlightenment

Patrick Madigan argues that one of the most important of the Enlightenment ideals Nietzsche wished to retain was the Enlightenment's commitment to freedom. "Firmly committed to the Enlightenment's drive towards . . . freedom, and yet sensing imminent disaster," writes Madigan, "Nietzsche responds by hurling himself into this strategy to use rigor to produce intensity, and commits himself to exploring this strategy's ultimate possibility."³ I agree with this assessment. Nietzsche wished to retain the Enlightenment's goal of freedom, yet he realizes that the method by which the Enlightenment seeks such freedom, based on the problematic Cartesian subject, is doomed to failure. So Nietzsche undertakes a radical new attempt to resurrect the possibilities of freedom that the traditional Enlightenment creates, but fails to realize. As I examine in Part II Nietzsche's brand of subjectivity, as symbolized by the *Übermensch*, is a unique, radical version of the traditional enlightened, Cartesian subject. Madigan goes on to

³ Patrick Madigan. *The Modern Project to Rigor: Descartes to Nietzsche*. (Maryland: University Press of America, 1986), p. 26.

further suggest that “as an Enlightenment thinker who is dismayed by the low level of culture in his own time, Nietzsche becomes a staunch champion of freedom and is determined to discover one incontestable method that will demonstrate real freedom. . . . That is the only possible way the Enlightenment project could end or truly come to rest.”⁴ Nietzsche was well aware of the real and extreme limits of traditional enlightened freedom as articulated by Descartes, Rousseau, Kant, and their nineteenth century heirs. Against this he offered a transformed “Nietzschean enlightened” freedom.

Whereas Nietzsche held onto and transformed the enlightened ideal of freedom into something distinctively “Nietzschean,” he held onto the enlightened notion of progress for a very different reason. Nietzsche, I believe, was against any form of “progress” which maintained that humanity was moving towards a specific purpose or goal. This point is extremely important to my interpretation. This enlightened ideal of progress has the built-in notion that the world should be a certain way and what is more, human beings can achieve this. I argue below that for Nietzsche any such notion of progress goes against the true character of the world—the world as becoming. Such a notion of progress leads people to believe that there is a correct way to live one’s life so as to lead to this “goal.” But for Nietzsche, there is no one way in which all people should live precisely because there is no one goal or purpose that can be achieved. Some commentators have argued that while Nietzsche rejects the traditional, enlightened idea of progress, he does retain his own version of a “true progress.” Lars-Henrik Schmidt argues that “Nietzsche is thus reactionary in a very specific sense. He resists the ruling form and norm for progress. Yet he does not want to stop the process; on the contrary,

⁴ Madigan, p. 150.

this . . . process is a prerequisite for a new type of difference, for a new type altogether.”⁵

Schmidt here is arguing that Nietzsche does retain a sense of progress, a true Nietzschean progress. I reject any new sense of a “Nietzschean progress” mainly on the grounds of language. “Progress” comes with a lot of baggage—it implies a “forward movement” towards some pre-set goal, and this movement is always seen as an improvement.⁶ But what Nietzsche wants to do is provide the environment for a true betterment of humanity. By smashing previous foundations, including the Judeo-Christian foundations and the ideas of the traditional Enlightenment, Nietzsche is essentially showing how these previous foundations actually held us back. But now the horizon is free to us again. For those “higher” individuals, the world is theirs again. This is the direction his political thinking takes: In Nietzsche’s thinking, politics should create the conditions which will make possible the emergence of “higher” individuals. Such “higher” individuals both realize the true character of the world (as becoming) and accept the consequences that come with it. This, I discuss in Part II, is what I call Nietzsche’s Enlightenment.

Nietzsche is quite clear in his views on progress. In *Der Antichrist* he writes:

Mankind does *not* represent a development toward something better or stronger or higher in the sense accepted today. “Progress” is merely a modern idea, that is, a false idea. The European of today is vastly inferior in value to the European of the Renaissance: further development is altogether *not* according to any necessity in the direction of elevation, enhancement, or strength.⁷

⁵ Lars-Henrik Schmidt. *Immediacy Lost: Construction of the Social in Rousseau and Nietzsche*. (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1988), p. 254.

⁶ Look at the current belief that new technology is a progress. People assume that we are better off with all this new technology that surrounds us. But how, I ask, is this an improvement? Does it really represent an improvement that someone is now able to send a fax from their car? As I argue, progress is an empty term.

⁷ A 4; NS4 VI, p. 171 (02-08).

Nietzsche could not be clearer here. The modern, enlightened notion of progress is a negative, inferior idea that actually holds human beings down to a common level. In a word, the Enlightenment creates a destructive, unreachable idea of progress that goes against Nietzsche's project of trying to "enhance" human beings. Once, I believe Nietzsche argues, individuals realize the life-denying idea of progress for what it truly is, only then can individuals begin to approach Nietzsche's Enlightenment. This, furthermore, has a significant effect on Nietzsche's political thinking.

By retaining the enlightened ideas of freedom and progress (positive in the former case, negative in the latter), Nietzsche's thought can be seen as a continuation of the Enlightenment. In his notebooks he wrote that he was "a few centuries ahead in Enlightenment, not only of Voltaire but even Galiani, who was far more profound—how far must I have got in the increase of darkness!"⁸ Nietzsche has not only revitalized the Enlightenment project, he has transformed it into something higher, and he was aware of this. By now I hope it is clear, at least in part, what Nietzsche's brand of Enlightenment is not: It is not the traditional Enlightenment of Cartesian subjects engaged in Rousseauian politics or Kantian ethics. Now I wish to briefly discuss Nietzsche's critique against the nineteenth century Enlightenment. This is important, specifically for this paper, because here we find a further Nietzschean critique of the political Enlightenment.

B. Nietzsche: The "Antipolitical" One?

Nietzsche's critique of enlightened politics may have begun with Rousseau, but it did not end there. Instead, that critique flowed into the nineteenth century. Nietzsche saw his own century as the age when enlightened politics was achieved. For him all the

⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 36[49]; NSA XI, p. 571 (07-09).

problems inherent in the traditional Enlightenment's concepts of freedom and subjectivity had become institutionalized in the political ideologies of the nineteenth century. His critiques on the various forms of nineteenth century politics may be seen as extensions of his attacks on the political ideals of the traditional Enlightenment. In particular, Nietzsche objected to any politics that relied on the Cartesian-Enlightenment notion of the rational, autonomous subject, and for Nietzsche every nineteenth century political form did to some extent.

For Nietzsche, modern politics was inevitably the child of the traditional Enlightenment. To be political in the modern world, therefore, was to perpetuate the Enlightenment tradition of which he was so critical. Yet he was also the proponent of "great politics"—a sometimes terrifying program designed to replace modern, enlightened political systems with something superior.⁹ And just as his critique of the traditional Enlightenment remained incomplete, so too does his critique on nineteenth century enlightened political forms. There is a specific reason for this: Although Nietzsche constructed a thorough and compelling critique of both nineteenth century political forms and of the rational, autonomous enlightened subject, which stood as a necessary precondition to those forms, he made this critique in the name of a new kind of political thinking which remained in the shadow of the Enlightenment.

Nietzsche opposed every political system and ideology available to the late nineteenth century European. He believed all of those systems were the intellectual offspring of the deeply flawed Enlightenment tradition. He began his attack with a general critique of the state in its modern form, and then went on to dissect all particular manifestations of

⁹ I examine Nietzsche's *grosse politik* in Part III.

nineteenth century statism, including liberalism, socialism, nationalism, and anarchism. Nietzsche, though, was not content to stop with critiques on these mentioned political forms. Rather, he developed these critiques as part of a much broader and more far-reaching attack on the autonomous, unified Enlightenment subject that made these political systems possible. I examine Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity" in my chapters on the death of God and will to power. Clearly Nietzsche's version was influenced by the Enlightenment but at the same time is completely different from it.

For Nietzsche, modern politics was one of the main symptoms of cultural decadence. Important to keep in mind is that Nietzsche is here talking about "modern politics" in general—not any particular ideology or form of the state. As he argues, "All our political theories and constitutions—and the 'German *Reich*' is by no means an exception—are consequences, necessary consequences, of decline."¹⁰ Immediately we are faced with a problem. If Nietzsche's view is that all modern politics are forms of decline, then it seems the only thing he could have to say about politics is the final statement that one should say nothing at all about politics. Because politics represents a symptom of decline that was consuming nineteenth century European society, it would seem that the obvious solution for Nietzsche would be to abandon politics completely and become "antipolitical."¹¹ This is the kind of reading Tracy Strong supports. Strong writes that, "There is simply for Nietzsche no coherent way to talk about politics of his day because—in genealogical perspective—the politics tend to be incoherent."¹² In this

¹⁰ *GD IX 37; NSA VI, p. 138 (24-26).*

¹¹ I address this "antipolitical" question of Nietzsche because it has been both a popular and influential reading of Nietzsche's political position.

¹² Strong, p. 202.

reading, Nietzsche was simply being prudent in adopting an antipolitical stance. According to Strong, if one had to choose between English liberalism, Bismarckian nationalism, or French republicanism, then one really had no choice at all. The only option was to remove oneself from the political world altogether.

Robert Eden and Leslie Thiele also examine Nietzsche's antipolitical position, but these commentators situate Nietzsche here in terms of a kind of individualism. "Nietzsche was an individualist who turned his back on the politics of modern states," writes Eden. "To make him political and treat him as a political theorist or activist, therefore, seems to do violence to his antipolitical individualism."¹³ Thiele, in a similar vein, believes that Nietzsche "attempted to sublimate politics, to internalize political struggle within a pluralistic self . . . Nietzsche believed that the role of the individual in politics should be subservient to the role of politics within the individual."¹⁴ Eden and Thiele are correct to suggest that because Nietzsche does maintain a notion of political subjectivity, it is impossible to dismiss him as simply being "antipolitical." But what Thiele and others sometimes fail to acknowledge is that the kind of subjectivity Nietzsche developed was radically different from both the rational autonomy of the Enlightenment and from the nineteenth century political autonomy that developed out of that tradition. As I argue below, any use of the words "autonomy" or "individuality" in the context of nineteenth century politics are words whose meanings have been carried over from the Enlightenment tradition that was discussed above.

¹³ Robert Eden. *Political Leadership and Nihilism: A Study of Weber and Nietzsche*. (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1983), p. xvii.

¹⁴ Leslie Paul Thiele. "Nietzsche's Politics." *Interpretation* 17 (Winter 1990), p. 276. Herein after "Thiele (1990a)."

Simone Goyard-Fabre offers one last way of dealing with and situating Nietzsche's "antipolitical" position. She argues that "there is no 'Nietzschean politics,' because 'great politics' will never provide a doctrine . . . because it is never thought of in terms of ideology."¹⁵ This is precisely the position I take regarding Nietzsche's political thinking. Nietzsche uses the phrase "great politics" in an ironic sense to describe a system which in fact does not and cannot produce any specific political goals or actions. Just like there is no systematic, Kantian-like moral philosophy developed by Nietzsche, so too is there no systematic political philosophy. Nietzsche felt it was both arrogant and ignorant to believe that someone could develop a moral-political philosophy which could then be universally followed by all people everywhere. This is precisely the absolute and universalistic philosophizing Nietzsche was so against. Goyard-Fabre is right to suggest Nietzsche's philosophy was antipolitical in the sense that it provided none of the traditional "trappings" of a practical political ideology. By "trappings" I mean that there is, for example, no description in Nietzsche's writings of how the state should be organized or of what the rights and obligations of the citizen should be.¹⁶ The reason for this is that any practical political system is based upon that notion of political autonomy that Nietzsche explicitly rejects. If Nietzsche were to develop a systematic political theory, he would then be lending credence to the autonomous Cartesian subject that we saw him critiquing above. His antipolitical position, I believe, should be understood as an

¹⁵ Simone Goyard-Fabre. *Nietzsche et la Question Politique*. (Paris: Sirey, 1977), p. 8.

¹⁶ This is why I specifically refer to Nietzsche's position as his political thinking, and not as his political philosophy. By "thinking" I mean that political matters were on his mind and that he was concerned with political issues. But he would never go so far as to develop a political philosophy which would tell all people everywhere how they ought to organize their society.

opposition to systematic political theories in their modern, enlightened form—not to the possibility of political thought in general.

C. Nietzsche and Nineteenth Century Politics

Nietzsche begins his attack on nineteenth century politics with a critique of the state. In some aspects this critique seems to take the form of a commentary on the Enlightenment. This is most apparent in his early writings, especially *Menschliches*, *Allzumenschliches*, which contains many passages which illustrate Nietzsche's commiseration to the impulses against tyranny that characterized the Enlightenment. Nietzsche, for example, writes, "The state is a prudent institution for the protection of individuals against one another." But then in a typical Nietzschean move we find that his praise of the state is limited. "If [that state] is completed and perfected too far it will in the end enfeeble the individual and, indeed, dissolve him—that is to say, thwart the original purpose of the state."¹⁷ It is pretty clear that Nietzsche here is primarily concerned with preserving and protecting the individual—a project that was one in the same with the thinkers of the traditional Enlightenment. This, in fact, is one of the key places where the Enlightenment casts a dark shadow over Nietzsche.

Nietzsche, though, soon lost this similarity to the Enlightenment, even though his interest in preserving the individual remained quite strong. Let us, for example, consider this passage in the *Genealogie*: "[T]hat will to self-tormenting, that repressed cruelty of the animal-man made inward and scared back into himself, the creature imprisoned in the 'state' so as to be tamed . . ."¹⁸ Here Nietzsche's critique is more all-encompassing and not just aimed against tyrannical states which have forgotten their duty to individuals.

¹⁷ *MAM* 235; *NSA* II, p. 197 (23-27).

¹⁸ *GM* II 22; *NSA* V, p. 331-32 (32-02).

Nietzsche is no longer using the language of the Enlightenment to attack states here but is clearly opposed to the way in which states “tame” and deaden an individual’s instincts.

In a word, he is denouncing the state as the institution that destroys autonomy.

Nietzsche believed that the modern state produced nothing more than the politics of the herd. Karl Jaspers notes that “so far as its origin and its abiding reality is concerned, the state in Nietzsche’s opinion is a destructive, assimilating power that enslaves the mass of humanity.”¹⁹ The result here is devastating. Through the masses the state is at the same time creating humanity as a mass, instead of promoting the radical new kind of autonomy Nietzsche favoured. Jaspers continues: “[Nietzsche] rejects the state as the ruin of man when it functions as a solidifying force in favour of mass and mediocrity and when it is no longer concerned about the unique and unmatched, but only about the replaceable ‘superfluous ones.’”²⁰ According to Nietzsche, then, the state acts structurally and functionally in favour of the masses and against the kind of “true” Nietzschean autonomy that was the motivating force behind his political thinking. The state’s betrayal of true autonomy was, for Nietzsche, sufficient enough cause to condemn it. So Nietzsche, in a word, rejected the state as the temple of enlightened, modern mass mediocrity.

D. Nietzsche Contra Liberalism and Socialism

In addition to his general critique of the state, Nietzsche offered detailed and sustained critiques of specific ideologies and forms of governments that existed in the nineteenth century. Foremost among these ideologies is liberalism. Nietzsche critiqued particular aspects of liberal democratic politics such as political parties, the electoral sys-

¹⁹ Karl Jaspers. *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1947), p. 259.

²⁰ Jaspers, p. 260.

tem, and against the very style of democratic society. Nietzsche railed against “the *levelers*—these falsely so-called ‘free spirits’—being eloquent and prolifically scribbling slaves of the democratic taste and its ‘modern ideas.’”²¹ Nietzsche also offers a critique of one of the most essential institutions of democratic society; what Jürgen Habermas calls the “public sphere.” Against this Nietzsche writes:

When, for example, [the philistine] refers to historical studies by means of which we assist our understanding of the political situation, what can he be referring to but newspaper-reading, and when he speaks of our lively participation in the construction of the German state, what can he mean but our daily visits to the beer house?²²

Here Nietzsche is developing a critique in the most general terms against the very ethos of democratic society—against the social and cultural institutions that make liberal democracy possible. Like many Nietzschean critiques, this takes the form of a cultural critique. What was wrong with the public sphere was that it represented modern decadence; it was the sphere of the philistine. What is more, if the public sphere was decadent then liberal democracy was decadent as well.

One of the essential characteristics of nineteenth century liberalism was its emphasis on rights, and it is with this notion that Nietzsche further directed his criticism against the democratic tradition. According to Nietzsche, liberals claim that they act to defend the rights and interests of individuals, yet he finds the reverse to be true. Democracy actually acts to protect the rights of the majority—of the herd. In his *Genealogie* he writes of “the old deceptive slogan of *ressentiment*, ‘*privilege of the majority*’” and

²¹ JGB 44; NSA V, p. 61 (06-09).

²² UB I 4; NSA I, p. 179 (05-10).

opposes to this a “rapturous counter slogan ‘*privilege of the few!*’”²³ Nietzsche felt there could be no reconciliation between the rights of the few and those of the many, and one of democracy’s fundamental flaws is that it insists on maintaining and defending the latter.²⁴ In an explicit passage, Nietzsche writes:

The human being who has *become* free—and how much more the *spirit* who has become free—spits on the contemptible type of well-being dreamed of by shopkeepers, Christians, cows, females, Englishmen, and other democrats. The free man is a *warrior*.²⁵

Nietzsche here is clearly characterizing democracy as the ideology of the “lower” man, or herd, in both a literal sense (“cows”) and a figurative sense (“shopkeepers,” Nietzsche’s derisive term for English mass society). Democracy is to him nothing more than the political language of the “lower” man, and as such it is to be categorically condemned.

The other fundamental principle of democracy Nietzsche critiques is the principle of equality. “The doctrine of equality! There is no more poisonous poison anywhere.”²⁶ It is important to note here that Nietzsche did not oppose equality outright, but only in its modern, democratic, enlightened form. Equality, in fact, is another idea whose basic core Nietzsche retained while condemning the way that this idea had manifested itself in nineteenth century political thought. As Mark Warren explains:

Nietzsche did not oppose equality on principle but rather because he viewed its modern form as an ideology devoid of content. All too often, in Nietzsche’s view, the ideal of equality expressed a mutual envy of,

²³ *GM* I 16; *NSA* V, p. 287 (32-33) and p. 288 (02-03).

²⁴ As I discuss in Part III, this is one of the major flaws of Nietzsche’s political thinking. Nietzsche never defined such terms as “rights” or “equality” or other such political notions. This vagueness poses a serious problem to Nietzsche’s political thinking.

²⁵ *GD* IX 38; *NSA* VI, p. 139-40 (29-02).

²⁶ *GD* IX 48; *NSA* VI, p. 150 (23-24).

and a revenge against, individual personalities. Moreover, notes from Nietzsche's middle period suggest that he did not believe—at least in principle—that equality is necessarily anti-individualistic. Indeed, culture under the right circumstances might serve to mediate power in ways that a community of equals could serve as a means to organizing individual power as agency.²⁷

Equality, then, was not necessarily a problem for Nietzsche in and of itself. When “equality” was made to serve the interests of the herd it quickly became transformed from a liberating force to one of domination and repression. Nietzsche's attack on this aspect of liberalism is reminiscent of his critique of Rousseau's idea of the general will.²⁸ Both critiques are based on the belief that these enlightened ideologies, although they claim to be providing a beneficent egalitarianism, actually produce a very dangerous mass, or herd, politics. So although Nietzsche did not object to equality in the general sense that everyone is able to understand and actualize his teachings, he objected strongly to any political belief system which promoted the herd-based politics of the Enlightenment. Furthermore, to Nietzsche nineteenth century liberalism was not just a clear example of such a system, it was perhaps the strongest of those systems.

Tracy Strong argues that Nietzsche's attack on the principle of equality is related to his critique of liberal individualism. “For everyone to become equal,” Strong argues, “means to Nietzsche for everyone to become individualistically oriented towards his private gains.”²⁹ Strong is correctly arguing that Nietzsche was opposed to the kind of leveling, liberal individuality that atomizes society into alienated pockets of subjectivity.

²⁷ Mark Warren. *Nietzsche and Political Thought*. (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988), p. 72.

²⁸ See chapter two, section B above.

²⁹ Strong, p. 201.

What Strong fails to see, I believe, is that Nietzsche retained a kind of subjectivity apart from this liberal individualism. Nietzsche's critique was aimed at the notion of subjectivity of liberal society—not at subjectivity in general. As I will argue below, this is perhaps the most fundamental way Nietzsche remained in the shadow of the Enlightenment. He leveled a devastating critique at the subject of liberal politics precisely because that subject depended on what was for Nietzsche the impossibly rational, autonomous subject of the Enlightenment. But he developed this critique in order to pave the way for the development of a new kind of subjectivity—that of the symbol of the *Übermensch*, and embodied in individual “higher” men. In this sense, Nietzsche's project remained true to the spirit of the Enlightenment. As Thiele points out, “Nietzsche distinguishes his individualism from what might be called democratic individualism . . . Nietzsche holds the individual to be unrepresentable and incapable of representing others . . . Nietzsche's individualism thus shows itself to be both undemocratic and apolitical.”³⁰ Again, Thiele's use of the word “individualism” is problematic mainly because of the baggage that comes with it. This term almost inevitably evokes images of the liberal, enlightened individual. But Thiele's basic point is quite sound. Nietzsche's critique of the nineteenth century Enlightenment's project to create democratic individuals was not a critique of the Enlightenment's general project to create viable subjects. The latter is a project which Nietzsche enthusiastically pursued, and this I believe places him under the shadow of that same tradition he wished to criticize.

³⁰ Thiele (1990a), p. 283.

Nietzsche saw the liberal democratic tradition as the child of the resentful, vengeful morality he hated most: The morality that developed from the Judeo-Christian tradition. In *Jenseits* he writes:

*Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality . . . it says stubbornly and inexorably, "I am morality itself, and nothing besides is morality." Yes, with the help of a religion . . . we have reached the point where we find even in political and social institutions an ever more visible expression of this morality: the *democratic* movement is the heir of the Christian movement.*³¹

Again we see here a criticism of democracy as a movement of the herd, but this time he situates his critique in moral terms.

The democratic idiosyncrasy which opposes everything that dominates and wants to dominate . . . has permeated the realm of the spirit and disguised itself in the most spiritual forms to such a degree that today it has forced its way, has acquired the *right* to force its way into the strictest, apparently most objective sciences . . . to the detriment of life, as goes without saying.³²

Democracy is not only politically dangerous for Nietzsche, it also represents an extreme spiritual threat. Democracy creates a decadent spiritual condition which makes his attempt to create a new kind of autonomous individual extremely difficult. In a word, Nietzsche is trying to discover what lies behind the façade of nineteenth century liberalism. This ideology claims to promote the best interests of humanity, but, as Nietzsche argues, nothing is further from the truth. In Nietzsche's view liberalism and democracy perpetuate a decadence which makes the development of meaningful human subjectivity extremely difficult.

³¹ *JGB* 202; *NSA* V, p. 129-25 (24-25, 30-32, and 33-02).

³² *GM* II 12; *NSA* V, p. 315 (24-26, 27-30, and 32).

As I have been arguing, Nietzsche renounces neither politics in general nor the project of subjectivity. On the former point Nietzsche saw many opportunities to overcome liberal politics and achieve something greater. As I argue below in Part II, the death of God wipes the horizon clean and represents the opportunity to reach beyond oneself.³³ This was precisely Nietzsche's aim. He wished to expose the dangers and faults of liberal politics to such an extent that it became impossible to pursue such a political form any longer. In this way Nietzsche set the stage for a new way of thinking about politics. In a word, Nietzsche meant to eliminate the conventional forms of enlightened politics in order to make possible his own (political) project—a project that was, ironically, in the shadow of the Enlightenment's basic goal to create subjectivity. To further approach his project, Nietzsche could not simply stop with a critique of liberalism. He needed to examine and critique several other major nineteenth century political ideologies.³⁴

Socialism is the second major political form that came under Nietzsche's attack. Between Marx being well known throughout most of Europe and the worker's movement being a potential political force in most industrialized nations, socialism had a strong political influence in the nineteenth century that rivaled even liberalism. Nietzsche even occasionally equates the two: "[Y]ou wealthy bourgeois who call yourselves 'liberal' admit to yourselves that it is the desire of your own heart that you find it so fearful and threatening in the socialists, though in yourselves you consider them inevitable, as though

³³ I present another critique of the state in Part II below. But here I situate it specifically in the context of the death of God.

³⁴ For this dissertation, I will only go over his critiques of liberalism and socialism. These two ideologies represent what Nietzsche considered the two primary political forms of the nineteenth century. The other forms he critiques are nationalism and anarchism.

they were something quite different.”³⁵ Here Nietzsche implies that the core of socialism is the same as liberalism, and what drives them is really the same thing. This is not an arbitrary criticism: Nietzsche sees both political systems relying on the enlightened principle of subjectivity he rejects.³⁶ Both political systems, according to Nietzsche, have evolved from the politics of the traditional Enlightenment. As a result, they are both open to the same essential Nietzschean critique: Firstly that they represent the politics of the herd, and secondly that they stand in the way of the development of a true “Nietzschean subjectivity.” With its emphasis on the progress of humanity towards a perfect society, socialism was the epitome of an enlightened political system.

In his notebooks Nietzsche questions the entire point of socialism: “Modern socialism wants to create the secular counterpart to Jesuitism: *everyone* a perfect instrument. But the purpose, the wherefore has not yet been ascertained.”³⁷ Nietzsche also critiques the socialist conception of “equal rights” in the same vein as he critiqued liberalism’s idea of equality:

The overall degeneration of the human being down to what today appears to the socialist dolts and flatheads as their “man of the future”—as their ideal— . . . this animalization of man into the dwarf animal of equal rights and claims, is *possible*, there is no doubt of it.³⁸

³⁵ VMS 304; NSA II, p. 503 (08-12).

³⁶ In an interesting study, Hugo Bund argues that Nietzsche is actually a proponent of socialism. Bund claims that Nietzsche’s works, those of socialism, and those of the Catholic church “all share a common belief in universality, sameness, and equality” (Hugo Bund, *Nietzsche als Prophet des Socialismus*. Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1919), p. 48. This is an odd interpretation of Nietzsche and could easily be dismissed as a poor reading of his writings. Looking into Nietzsche’s views on the various aspects of socialism shows Bund’s reading to be completely untenable. Nietzsche is an ardent critic of socialism that is just as virulent as his critique on liberalism.

³⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 25[263]; NSA XI, p. 80 (21-23).

³⁸ JGB 203; NSA V, p. 127-28 (29-32 and 34-02).

Far from representing the glorious collective future of humanity, as its proponents claim, socialism for Nietzsche was a regression, a move away from true equality to the false equality of the herd. Furthermore, the socialist was the herd animal *par excellence*. “Whom do I hate most among the rabble of today” asked Nietzsche? “The socialist rabble . . . who undermine the instinct . . . the worker’s sense of satisfaction with his small existence . . . The source of wrong is never unequal rights but the claim of ‘equal rights.’”³⁹ Again, we see here the critique of “equal rights” as a leveling force, this time with a direct attack on socialists as “undermining rabble.” Often in his critiques, Nietzsche saves his most severe comments for, what I call, his “German examples.” In 1886 he argued that

the reason the German socialist was the most dangerous was that he was driven by no *definite* need; he suffered from not knowing what he wanted; thus, even if he achieved a great deal, he would languish from desire even in the midst of plenty just like Faust, though presumably like a very plebeian Faust.⁴⁰

Motivated by a vague desire for equality which he could not articulate, the German socialist promoted only the leveling and decay that Nietzsche despised.

There is one other essential aspect to Nietzsche’s critique of socialism that is reminiscent to his critique of liberalism. Nietzsche writes that

the socialists desire to create a comfortable life for as many as possible. If the enduring homeland of this comfortable life, the perfect state, were really to be attained, then this comfortable life would destroy the soil out of which great intellect and the powerful individual in general grows: by which I mean great energy.

³⁹ A 57; NSA VI, p. 244 (24-25, 26, and 28-30).

⁴⁰ VMS 324; NSA II, p. 513-14 (30-01).

If this state is achieved humanity would have become too feeble still to be able to produce the genius.⁴¹

Nietzsche saw socialism, like liberalism, as a threat to the new kind of subjectivity he was trying to promote. As a result, he attempted to undermine the herd-based politics of liberalism and socialism, thereby clearing away the politics of the traditional Enlightenment in order to pave the way for the creation of his new notion of subjectivity. In this light, Nietzsche saw socialism as desiring “an abundance of state power, such as only despotism has had.” With such power, the socialist state “strives to the annihilation of the individual” in which the individual is demanded to completely surrender him- or herself to the state—this is in fact where it derives its “power” from. In a word, Nietzsche saw socialism as requiring “the complete subservient suppression of all citizens to the absolute state, which is something that has never happened before.”⁴² Any ideology that is so hostile to the individual should expect a severe degree of criticism from a thinker who primarily champions subjectivity.

In his notebooks he writes:

Socialism is merely a means of *agitation employed by individualism*: it grasps that, to attain anything, one must organize oneself to a collective action, to a “power.” But what it desires is not a social order as the goal of the individual but a social order as a *means for making possible many individuals*—this is the instinct of socialists about which they frequently deceive themselves.⁴³

This is a telling passage. Here Nietzsche seems to be equating socialism with liberal individualism for the purpose of denouncing both. Equating these two ideologies may

⁴¹ *MAM* 235; *NSA* II, p. 196 (20-28).

⁴² *MAM* 473; *NSA* II, p. 307 (12-13); (14); and (23-25) respectively.

⁴³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[82]; *NSA* XII, p. 503 (06-13).

seem strange considering the obvious hostility between liberals and socialists in the nineteenth century. But when this is placed within the context of Nietzsche's general project, this move does not seem so strange. Nietzsche is critical of any manifestation of enlightened politics, meaning he attacks any system of belief, political or otherwise, that relies on the autonomous, Cartesian subject, or on the enlightened notion of, in this case, social progress. For Nietzsche, socialism and liberalism are simply manifestations of a larger political project, the politics of the Enlightenment—a tradition he tries, with limited success, to resist. By "limited success" I mean that Nietzsche relentlessly attacks both the ideas and methods of the Enlightenment, but he does so in pursuit of a project that is quite similar to the Enlightenment project. In this case, working towards a new project of subjectivity.

As with his critique of liberalism, Nietzsche attacks socialism as a politics of the Cartesian subject and as an unrealistic program for the improvement of humanity. But as with liberalism, Nietzsche is unable to elude entirely the influences of socialism. He shares with both their basic goal: The creation of a kind of (political) subjectivity—albeit one that would seem quite alien to any nineteenth century socialist or liberal.

E. Nietzsche Contra Modern Subjectivity

In the preceding section I only examined Nietzsche's critiques of the liberal and socialist traditions. Nietzsche, though, offers critiques of nationalism, anarchism, and just about any other political ideology from the nineteenth century which he saw carrying over any enlightened ideals. The question now faces us: Has Nietzsche abandoned us in the political abyss? He has clearly left us in a position whereby we are uncomfortable in describing any of our political belief systems in terms of any modern political terms.

Have we simply come full circle in which we are left in an antipolitical position? I do not believe so. I wish to argue with Ansell-Pearson that the importance of Nietzsche's political thinking resides in its "confrontation with the 'modern' itself."⁴⁴ Specifically I argue that all of Nietzsche's political critiques, two of which I examined, were formulated as part of a broader project which itself motivated his entire political and philosophical thought in general. This project, of course, is a critique of the autonomous, Cartesian subject which he saw had been the "actor" in every political system since the Enlightenment, as well as up to Nietzsche's time. Walter Brogan insightfully observes:

The disruptive character of Nietzsche's thought *vis-à-vis* certain basic assumptions of the Western philosophical condition is nowhere more evident than in a consideration of the question of the self. Nietzsche's pervasive critique of the modern concept of selfhood . . . has had an explosive impact on the twentieth century.⁴⁵

Our understanding of Nietzsche's project cannot be complete without a rather detailed examination of his critique of the modern notion of (political) subjectivity.

One of Nietzsche's most sustained attacks is on a concept that is of central importance to all modern ideas of (political) subjectivity—the idea of free will. All political systems feature an implied belief in a free, independent agent able to choose between different options. Nietzsche however makes a strong argument throughout both his published works and his notebooks that belief in free will is an error. In *Menschliches*, *Allzumenschliches*, for example, he writes that the "belief in freedom of will is a primary

⁴⁴ Keith Ansell-Pearson. "The Significance of Michel Foucault's Reading of Nietzsche: Power, the Subject, and Political Theory." *Nietzsche-Studien* (1991), p. 269.

⁴⁵ Walter Brogan. "The Decentered Self: Nietzsche's Transgression of Metaphysical Subjectivity." *Southern Journal of Philosophy*. 29 (Winter 1991), p. 419.

error committed by everything organic, as old as the impulse to the logical self.”⁴⁶ Our belief that we have free will is as unfounded as our belief that we are defined solely as rational creatures. With these two main concepts put into question, the idea of free political choice becomes extremely problematic. Instead of free will Nietzsche argues for the complete predictability of the universe: “[E]verything here is necessary, every motion mathematically calculable. So it is too in the case of human actions.”⁴⁷ Nietzsche believes our “human wills” have absolutely no impact on the world around us, and our belief in it is merely a psychological device. As Nietzsche puts it, “[T]he will is not only a complex of sensation and thinking, but it is above all an *affect*, and specifically the affect of the command.”⁴⁸ Free will, for Nietzsche, is nothing more than the feeling of being in control over our lives which we, as insecure human beings, find necessary in order to keep from going mad in a world that just does not care what we will. In *Götzen-Dammerung* Nietzsche uncovers the origins of this concept in order to injure its status as an absolute truth. “The entire old psychology,” writes Nietzsche, “the psychology of will, was conditioned by the fact that its originators, the priests . . . , wanted to create for themselves the *right* to punish—or wanted to create this right for God.”⁴⁹ In place of “free will,” Nietzsche offers a vision of the universe as a “continuous flux. Now belief in freedom of will is incompatible precisely with the idea of a continuous, . . . undivided,

⁴⁶ *MAM* 18; *NSA* II, p. 40 (08-10).

⁴⁷ *MAM* 106; *NSA* II, p. 103 (05-06).

⁴⁸ *JGB* 19; *NSA* V, p. 32 (20-22).

⁴⁹ *GD* VI 7; *NSA* VI, p. 95 (23-24 and 25-27). One cannot help but think back to Nietzsche’s critique of Kant’s notion of free will. According to Nietzsche, Kant postulated free will to alleviate God of the evils that human beings do.

indivisible flowing.”⁵⁰ This idea goes against the idea we have had in the West since Descartes, that the universe is composed of distinct, individual particles and persons, each acting independently of the rest. In place of this idea, Nietzsche wished to offer the view of a unified universe not subject to the whims of individual wills.

The error of free will is especially dangerous, according to Nietzsche, because it leads to morality, which he viewed as one of the great destructive forces of his time.⁵¹ “[T]he history of the moral sensations is the history of an error, the error of accountability, which rests on the error of freedom of will.”⁵² The issue of accountability was important to Nietzsche. He saw this as the error which was essentially responsible for the guilt and *ressentiment* that characterized individuals in the herd. Time and again Nietzsche refers to “nature” to show the absurdity of using the notion of free will as an excuse to legislate morality and assign responsibility. Nietzsche wonders, “We do not accuse nature of immorality when it sends a thunderstorm and makes us wet: why do we call the harmful man immoral?”⁵³ Elsewhere he notes that the herd, or “lower” individuals, believe that “*it stands that the strong are free to be weak, and the bird of prey, to be the lamb—for thus they gain the right to make the bird of prey accountable for being a bird of prey.*”⁵⁴ To expect storms or animals to respond to the dictates of moral responsibility is obviously absurd. Such things have no will and are simply part of nature. But

⁵⁰ *WS* 11; *NSA* II, p. 546 (23-26). This is Nietzsche’s notion of the world as becoming. I examine this below in Part II.

⁵¹ I examine Nietzsche’s critique of morality below in Part II.

⁵² *MAM* 39; *NSA* II, p. 63 (11-14).

⁵³ *MAM* 102; *NSA* II, p. 99 (02-05). Later in this aphorism he answers his own question: “Because in the latter case we assume a voluntarily commanding free will.”

⁵⁴ *GM* I 13; *NSA* V, p. 280 (08-11).

Nietzsche insists that it is just as absurd to suppose that human beings possess this quality of free will and are somehow outside of nature. In *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* he suggests that the motivation behind such beliefs is largely psychological: "The joy . . . accompanying the performance of good deeds rests on the belief in the voluntary nature of our good or wicked acts, that is to say on an error."⁵⁵ Both the Christian and the moralist demand credit for their compassion. It angers them when Nietzsche claims they have no choice in their acts and that they are behaving in such a way simply because it is in their nature. This effective critique of free will is part of Nietzsche's critique of the subject who, according to most Western political philosophical positions since the Enlightenment, is supposed to enjoy free will.

Nietzsche also argues that, prior to his time, the primary function of individual subjectivity has been to fulfill a psychological need. In the *Genealogie* Nietzsche argues that modern man "*needs* to believe in a neutral, independent 'subject' prompted by an instinct for self-affirmation in which every lie is sanctified."⁵⁶ Modern man is terrified of non-existence and therefore seizes on every elusive, illusory possibility to try to convince them that they have a stable, independent existence. As a result, "Some will not give up their 'responsibility,' their belief in *themselves*, the personal right to *their* merits at any price."⁵⁷ We cling obsessively to these beliefs as if one were grasping a branch as they hanged off the side of a cliff. But the alternative of letting go of such beliefs, notes Nietzsche, is much too frightening to even consider. Nevertheless, if we insist on main-

⁵⁵ *VMS* 51; *NSA* II, p. 402 (06-09).

⁵⁶ *GM* I 13; *NSA* V, p. 280 (31-34).

⁵⁷ *JGB* 21; *NSA* V, p. 36 (22-25).

taining such illusions, we must be made to realize that they are merely illusions—dangerous illusions. The soul, for example, is nothing more than the instincts gone wrong: “All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* of man: thus it was that man first developed what was later called his ‘soul.’”⁵⁸ As a result, the enlightened individual emerges as the origin of bad conscience and as embodying the instinct for revenge, or *ressentiment*. In a word, this subject is a dangerous illusion. It may fulfill a certain psychological need for us, but if so we must consider either finding something else to play this role, or better yet transcend this need entirely.

Throughout his notebooks, especially from 1887, Nietzsche explicitly wrote on how the “subject” is a fiction which does not exist. In one of his more explicit passages he notes:

The subject: this is the term for our belief in a *unity* underlying all the different impulses of the highest feeling of reality: we understand this belief as the *effect* of one cause—we believe so firmly in our belief that for its sake we imagine “truth,” “reality,” “substantiality” in general.

“The subject” is the fiction that many *similar* states in us are the effect of one substratum: but it is we who first created the “similarity” of these states; our adjusting them and *making* them similar is *the fact*, *not* their similarity (—this ought rather to be *denied*—).⁵⁹

Here again we have the subject as being nothing more than a psychological effect, but to this Nietzsche also points out that it is a fiction—a deliberately fabricated belief. “The subject” becomes an artificial ordering principle imposed on the world by human beings

⁵⁸ GM II 16; NSA V, p. 322 (22-25).

⁵⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[19]; NSA XII, p. 465 (12-23).

in the attempt to make sense of and understand the world around them. So when Nietzsche was not critiquing the subject as a fiction he was denouncing it as an error. In a note from 1881 he argued, "In truth there is no individual truth, but rather pure individual error—the individual himself is an error . . . the errors of the ego are discovered! Egoism as an error is recognized!"⁶⁰ The "subject" of political, moral, and intellectual discourse since the Enlightenment is revealed as an illusion, a lie, and a fiction. There is no transcendental, autonomous subject who stands alone within the universe choosing and making choices.

This attack on the "metaphysical subject" presents a profound challenge to the thought of the Enlightenment. In a word, it presents a dramatic attack on enlightened epistemology. If there is no autonomous subject, Nietzsche argues, then there cannot be a transcendent knowing subject. A critique of the independent subject implies a corresponding critique of that subject as a knowing entity and therefore presents a critique of the possibilities of knowledge itself. Nietzsche's critique of the traditional "self" of metaphysics leads to a critique of subject-centered epistemology. Nietzsche begins this critique by offering a genealogy of reason. "How did logic come into existence in man's heads," asks Nietzsche? "Certainly out of illogic, whose realm originally must have been immense."⁶¹ He then widens his scope to include a genealogy of consciousness in general: "Consciousness is really only a net of communication between human beings; it is only as such that it had to develop; a solitary human being who lived like a beast of prey

⁶⁰ *Werke* V/2, p. 341.

⁶¹ *FW* 111; *NSA* III, p. 471 (21-23).

would not have needed it.”⁶² In a typical Nietzschean move, consciousness is now an historical development designed to meet specific historical needs. When we lose sight of this we make the dangerous move of elevating it as something universal and essential. As Nietzsche argues, “What gives me the right to speak of an ego, and even of an ego as cause, and finally of an ego as the cause of thought?”⁶³ This historical construct of the knowing subject is no more valid than any other such constructs, and to thereby ascribe to it such metaphysical powers as the production of thoughts is not only unfounded, but it is dangerous. This will only lead us to expect such things from the “knowing subject” which it could never possibly deliver.

This dangerous process through which we ascribe attributes to our fictitious consciousness has devastating results. In the *Genealogie* Nietzsche writes, “We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge—and with good reason. We have never sought ourselves—how could it happen that we should ever *find* ourselves?”⁶⁴ Nietzsche is here anticipating Heidegger’s critique of Western metaphysics. Metaphysics and consciousness lead to what Heidegger would refer to as a “Forgetfulness of Being”—they obscure the truth about ourselves and our place in the world.⁶⁵ By rejecting the view that knowledge is something exclusively possessed by autonomous, thinking subjects, Nietzsche hoped to rescue us from the hopeless project of trying to make existence fit into the limited framework of the traditional metaphysical subject.⁶⁶ Nietzsche was attempting

⁶² FW 354; NSA III, p. 591 (24-27).

⁶³ JGB 16; NSA V, p. 30 (19-22).

⁶⁴ GM Vorrede 1; NSA V, p. 247 (03-05).

⁶⁵ In Nietzsche’s terminology it should be a “forgetfulness of Becoming.”

⁶⁶ A project Kant ambitiously and passionately undertook with his “Copernican Revolution in Thought.”

the enormous task of undermining and overthrowing the firmly entrenched, yet deeply problematic, categories of subjectivity and knowledge given to us by the traditional Enlightenment. In his notebooks he writes, "Because we forget that valuation is always from a perspective, a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives."⁶⁷ Perspectivism, in other words, attacks the traditional enlightened notion of subjectivity at its roots. As I have been arguing, Nietzsche was not trying to destroy or abandon the concept of subjectivity as such. Rather he was trying to develop a new notion of subjectivity which did not yet exist but whose path was being cleared by Nietzsche's critique of the traditional enlightened subject. This is the one area I believe Nietzsche remains under the Enlightenment's shadow. His devastating critique of the autonomous, Cartesian subject cannot mask the fact that he is pursuing his own project of subjectivity. What is more, any such project must necessarily retain important traces of the Enlightenment.

Having shown the flaws and errors in the traditional notion of subjectivity of metaphysics and epistemology, Nietzsche's next target was the subject of traditional ethics. As we saw in the preceding chapter, Nietzsche offered a sustained critique of Kant's ethics, which was deeply entrenched in Enlightenment thought. I now, however, wish to read this critique as part of a more general attack on the concept of the autonomous subject as a morally responsible actor. According to Nietzsche, "Morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena—more precisely, a misinterpretation. Moral judgments . . . belong to a stage of ignorance at which the very concept of the real

⁶⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 26[119]; *NSA* XI, p. 181-182 (29-02).

and the distinction between what is real and imaginary, are still lacking.”⁶⁸ Like the notion of the ego, or self, or subject, morality is an historical illusion and an interpretive framework which we place over experiences. As Dana Villa puts it, “From the point of view of the active man—one who creates his own values as an exercise in self-affirmation, who is capable of great action, and who can distinguish himself and lives to do so—the distinction between the ‘subject’ and his effects makes no sense.”⁶⁹ Above we saw how Nietzsche critiqued the traditional subject and its so-called “free will” as dangerous illusions, yet this does not mean that he had no theory of action, responsibility, or ethics. We must keep in mind that Nietzsche’s attacks on the traditional views were made in the name of a new creation. In this case he refuted the traditional subject-centered ethics in order to pave the way for a new kind of ethics in which the actor and action are identical (or to use Nietzsche’s terms, in which the bird of prey was an ethical creature once it became a true bird of prey and acted according to its nature).⁷⁰ Once again we see Nietzsche refuting the content of the Enlightenment while retaining its form. Gilles Deleuze offers an insightful description of Nietzsche’s new ethics: “What makes the body something superior to all reactions and . . . superior to the ego’s reaction of consciousness, is the activity of necessarily unconscious forces . . . the active forces of the body make it a self and define that self as superior and wonderful.”⁷¹ From this passage

⁶⁸ *GD VII 1; NS4 VI*, p. 98 (09-11 and 12-14).

⁶⁹ Dana Villa. “Beyond Good and Evil: Arendt, Nietzsche, and the Aestheticization of Political Action.” *Political Theory* 21 (May 1992), p. 283.

⁷⁰ This is further examined in chapter seven below.

⁷¹ Gilles Deleuze. “Active and Reactive.” In *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*. Edited by David B. Allison. (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985), p. 82.

it is again important to realize that Nietzsche was not arguing against the possibility of selfhood, but only against the varieties of selfhood available to us in the modern world. As I argue below, a notion of subjectivity that does justice to Nietzsche's equation between nature and action is indeed possible. He begins this project by rejecting both the autonomous metaphysical and ethical selves, while retaining the essentially enlightened idea that subjectivity is possible.

The desire to escape from the trappings of traditional subjectivity is a theme that runs throughout all of Nietzsche's works. In his first published work, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, he points out that "By the mystical triumphant cry of Dionysius the spell of individuation is broken, and the way lies open . . . to the innermost heart of things."⁷² Again we see this theme of how traditional subjectivity, or "individuation," obscures existence rather than clarifying it. What Nietzsche suggests here is that rather than allowing us to understand our world and ourselves, traditional subjectivity actually makes the truth of existence opaque.⁷³ In this sense, Dionysius serves as Nietzsche's first attempt to escape from this trap of subjectivity. The Dionysian figure is one who breaks free of the chains of traditional, enlightened subjectivity in order to access the world as it truly is. Alexander Nehamas suggests that Nietzsche's notion of the eternal return serves a similar function in his latter works. For Nehamas, the eternal return serves as "a rejection of the substantial subject and its will."⁷⁴ From these two brief examples it seems as though Nietzsche utilized his most fundamental and creative principles in the service of

⁷² *GT* 16; *NSA* I, p. 103 (27-29).

⁷³ This truth being that the world is in a continual state of flux, or becoming. I examine this in more detail below.

⁷⁴ Nehamas, p. 154. I further examine both the eternal return and Nehamas' interpretation of it below.

this major theme in his writings: That the individual subject, or self, as it has been traditionally presented to us is a dangerous illusion that serves only to confuse and obscure the world and true selfhood.

A question now presents itself: What, if anything, did Nietzsche gain by this radical and devastating critique of traditional, and consequently, conventional subjectivity? Thiele suggests that Nietzsche offered a glorification of the self as multiple in which "consistency is not considered a virtue," and whereby the individual "who is concerned with growth overcomes himself" constantly.⁷⁵ I agree with Thiele in part. He is correct that one of Nietzsche's most important concepts is that of self-overcoming. It was mainly this concept which motivated his attack on traditional subjectivity. In fact he took this project so seriously that he began his project of self-overcoming by overcoming the very concept of the self. However, Thiele's use of the phrase "glorification of the self as multiple," or more specifically "glorification of the multiple soul," is I believe troublesome and misleading. This kind of phrase invokes visions of the subject of postmodern discourse—a frequently schizophrenic subject with multiple centers and no clear conception of its identity. This is not an accurate description of the subject which Nietzsche wished to propose. The motivation behind his critique, I believe, was to open a space within which he would be able to specify the characteristics of a radical new kind of subjectivity; a subjectivity which would be centered, but in a fundamentally different way from which subjectivity had been centered since the Enlightenment.

Die fröhliche Wissenschaft is, I believe, the work in which Nietzsche makes this part of his project the most clear. In the first edition this work ended with a declaration

⁷⁵ Leslie Paul Thiele. *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 61. Herein after "Thiele (1990b)."

that he was now ready for Zarathustra, and that he was ready to introduce us to a new concept of the self. I deal with *Zarathustra* more below. I believe that it was in this work (*Zarathustra*) that Nietzsche most clearly articulated his new notion of subjectivity—a notion which limits his attempt to completely overcome the Enlightenment. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche essentially foreshadows what is to come in *Zarathustra*. The tone of the book is joyous and often playful. Nietzsche is celebrating in it the freedom he has brought with the rejection of all modern political forms and the very concept of modern subjectivity itself. Granted he returns to these critiques in *Jenseits* and *Genealogie*, but for now he is saying we have had enough critique. “To lose firm ground for once! To float! To be mad!—That was part of the paradise and debauchery of bygone ages,”⁷⁶ Nietzsche tells us. He then implies that this freedom can be ours once again now that the debris of modern politics and subjectivity are behind us. It is now possible to “conceive of such a pleasure and power of self-determination, such *freedom* of the will that the spirit would take leave of all faith and every wish for creativity, being practiced in maintaining himself on insubstantial ropes and possibilities and dancing even near abysses.”⁷⁷ We have seen what some of these abysses were. One who danced near them might be dismissed as antipolitical or be recruited by those who wish to critique the possibilities of conventional subjectivity without reference to any new kind of selfhood. But Nietzsche knew he needed his critique, and needed for it to be formulated in the most radical way possible, if he was to make room for a truly new kind of subjectivity. “The total character of the world,” writes Nietzsche, “is in all eternity chaos—not in the sense

⁷⁶ FW 46; NSA III, p. 412 (05-07).

⁷⁷ FW 347; NSA III, p. 583 (13-18).

of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms.”⁷⁸ This “character of the world” should not be feared because it is “the beautiful chaos of existence.”⁷⁹ Its beauty comes from the possibilities that are created now that he has uncovered the groundlessness of our ideals of subjectivity. At the heart of Nietzsche’s critique of enlightened subjectivity and enlightened politics lies a kind of optimism that is in many ways the essence of the Enlightenment.

* * * * *

Mark Warren is correct when he suggests that “Nietzsche’s philosophy is in many ways an extended answer to a pivotal question: How can humans be subjects of actions, historically effective, and free individuals in a world in which subjectivity is unsupported by transcendent phenomena or metaphysical essences?”⁸⁰ Nietzsche suggests an answer to this in Book Five of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*:

Like trees we grow—this is hard to understand, as is all of life!—not in one place but everywhere, not in one direction but equally upward and outward and inward and downward,—our energy is at work simultaneously in the trunk, branches, and roots; we are no longer free to do only one particular thing, *to be only one particular thing*.⁸¹

In a word, Nietzsche is saying that human beings are no longer narrowly defined by anything but are in a sense free to become what they are. “True” human subjectivity is not

⁷⁸ FW 109; NSA III, p. 468 (06-10).

⁷⁹ FW 277; NSA III, p. 521 (31-32.)

⁸⁰ Warren, p. 7.

⁸¹ FW 371; NSA III, p. 623 (08-14). Emphasis mine.

supported by any transcendental/metaphysical ideal, but by life itself. And since life imposes no goal or restrictions on us, individuals are free to strive to become anything. Having thoroughly critiqued the restrictive concepts of liberalism and socialism⁸² as well as the even more dangerous illusions of free will and of conventional subjectivity in general, Nietzsche was now able to approach the project which had been his primary aim all along, but which had to remain “invisible” until the critique was complete. This project was his attempt to first describe a new kind of subjectivity that was entirely different from what I have been calling “traditional” or “conventional” subjectivity, and then to simultaneously suggest a “new” kind of political thinking that would be appropriate to subjects constituted in this new way. By completing this project, Nietzsche completed the Enlightenment’s project of subjectivity, and he did so in a way that was radically different from anything the thinkers from the traditional Enlightenment might have imagined.

In Part II I will discuss in more detail which of Nietzsche’s ideas I believe are still “in the shadow of the Enlightenment.” I begin by examining how Nietzsche continued the enlightened project of separating philosophy from any type of “outside” authority. He does this, I believe, with his notion of the “death of God.” Then I partake in a discussion of his will to power. I argue here that this notion plays a pivotal role in the development of his new conception of subjectivity. After developing his notion of subjectivity, I will then look at what kind of politics Nietzsche believed was appropriate for his “new subjects.”

⁸² As mentioned above, Nietzsche also critiques nationalism and anarchism. I only discussed socialism and liberalism because these earned Nietzsche’s most ardent criticism.

Part II:

The Nietzschean Enlightenment

No thing on earth to nought can fall,
The Eternal onward moves in all;
Rejoice, by being be sustained.
Being is deathless: living wealth,
With which the All adorns itself,
By laws abides and is maintained.

...

Then bygone time gives permanence,
The future lives, and in advance:
Eternity the moment is.

—Goethe
“*Testament*.”

CHAPTER FIVE: THE DEATH OF GOD AND NIHILISM

My argument in Part II will be two-fold. I will first look at those ideas which make up what I call the "Nietzschean Enlightenment." By doing so I will be arguing that firstly Nietzsche continued the Enlightenment project of distancing philosophy, and therefore the individual, from all kinds of authority, and secondly that he completed the Enlightenment's project of subjectivity—a project which was radically different from the traditional Enlightenment, yet one which still cast its shadow over Nietzsche. I will begin with a discussion of Nietzsche's notion of the "Death of God." Generally this idea breaks with the tradition of authority (the religious and moral tradition) and 'frees the horizon.' The death of God, I argue, provides the foundation for Nietzsche's "new" idea of subjectivity. I then turn to Nietzsche's will to power [*der Wille zur Macht*]. This notion makes up the core of Nietzsche's view of subjectivity. Also important will be his ideas of the innocence of becoming and of *amor fati*. The crux of his "new" idea of subjectivity is that through the process of self-overcoming, as embodied by will to power, human beings are continually engaged in creating themselves anew in a world characterized as Becoming. In this way Nietzsche distanced himself from the traditional Enlightenment while at the same time remaining in its shadow. I will then, in Part III, conclude this dissertation by discussing what kind of politics is appropriate for this "new subject."

On the most immediate level, the event of the death of God means that "the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable." More important, though, Nietzsche means that "the whole of our European morality" must "collapse now that this faith has been undermined." Furthermore, this morality must fall "because it was built upon this

faith [the belief in God], propped up by it, grown into it.”¹ But like a delicate house of cards, if one removes one card the entire “house” folds: “Christianity is a system, an *entire* view of things imagined together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the belief in God, one also breaks the whole.”²

As will become clear in the next chapter, the death of God also means that not only all theological faiths are destroyed, but so are “the various metaphysical faiths that have served as God surrogates since antiquity.”³ As Nietzsche argues first in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and then again in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*:

... [W]e seekers of today, we the godless and antimetaphysicians, also take *our* flame from the fire, enflamed by a faith thousands of years old, that Christian-faith, that is also Plato's faith, that God is the Truth, that Truth is divine. . .⁴

Nietzsche does go on to suggest that, although occurring slowly, this faith is indeed losing its hold:

But what if this idea is becoming more and more unbelievable, if nothing any longer turns out to be divine unless it is error, blindness, falsehood, — if God himself turns out to be our *oldest* lie?⁵

In its broadest sense, therefore, the death of God means more than just the demise of all absolutes and all ultimate sources of authority. This event means that even our faith in the possibility of absolutes, “at least of the kind that offered guidance to mankind in the

¹ FW 343; NSA III, p. 573 (9-10: 24-25; 22-23; 23-24).

² GD “*Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen*” 5; NSA VI, p. 114 (2-5).

³ Bruce Detwiler. *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), p. 69.

⁴ FW 344; NSA III, p. 577 (10-15).

⁵ GM III 24; NSA V, p. 401 (6-9). See also GD “*Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen*,” 5.

past,”⁶ have also been destroyed. In this sense, Nietzsche’s death of God is very much in the spirit of the Enlightenment’s project to eliminate humanity’s dependence on all “external” sources of authority.

The formulation, “God is dead” [*Gott ist tot!*],⁷ first appears in section 108 of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* under the heading “New Struggles.” Nietzsche’s entire philosophical enterprise thereafter can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with and transcend this event. “New Struggles” is an adequate description for this event. In this section, Nietzsche observes that “After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries.” This refers to the influence that Buddha has over his believers even after his death. But with the death of God and “given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years, in which his shadow will still be shown.” This, though, is not acceptable to Nietzsche. We cannot simply “sit around” and wait for those shadows to disappear; we “must also vanquish his shadow too!”⁸ This is what Nietzsche meant by “the New Struggle.” God is dead but his influence is still something with which human beings must deal. In section 108, Nietzsche does not yet offer advice on how to eliminate this “shadow;” at this point he is more concerned with pointing out the problem than prescribing the solution.

The death of God, seen in this light, is intimately connected with the advent of Western nihilism. “Nihilism,” explains Detwiler, “means there is no ultimate ground ac-

⁶ Detwiler, p. 69.

⁷ *FW* 108, 125, 343; *NSA* III pp. 467, 480-482, and 573-574 respectively.

⁸ *FW* 108; *NSA* III, p. 467 (3-4; 5-8; and 8-9).

cessible to universal human understanding upon which we can depend to get our bearings.”⁹ In a sense, humans have moved from one extreme, believing in Absolutes, to another, believing in nothing. This is why with the collapse of the Christian world view¹⁰ and its system of universal values, the world now seems meaningless and devoid of aim and purpose. Important here is that this is why nihilism must be experienced; it is “a pathological *transitional stage*.”¹¹ Only by experiencing nihilism can human beings overcome and thereby “pass through” the current diseased condition of modern times. Even with the event of God’s death, though, modern man is still ignorant and blind as to the resulting opportunities.

Nietzsche expresses this “blindness” of modern man in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, in the parable of the madman:

Have you not heard of the rushing about man, in the bright morning lighting a lantern, running into the market place and incessantly crying: "I seek God! I seek God!" — At that time there were a great deal of them standing together, who did not believe in God, thus causing much laughter.¹²

This “provoked much laughter” because, interestingly enough, Nietzsche describes many of those people in the market as already “not believing in God.” This is important because it reflects back to section 108. It appears that some people have accepted the fact that God is dead, but they are still no better off than those who still live “under the shadow.” Those who no longer believe in God take the event of His death as just another

⁹ Detwiler, p. 69.

¹⁰ The next chapter explores exactly how the Christian worldview has been destroyed.

¹¹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[35]; NSA XII, p. 351 (6-7).

¹² FW 125; NSA III, p. 480 (22-27).

fact in their lives. These people do not see the opportunity that is now open to them (more on this later). The madman, though, attempts to educate people as to this event: "Where is God? He cried, I will tell you! *We have killed him*, — you and I!"¹³ The madman wants people to do more than just realize this event which, apparently, some people already do. The madman wants human beings to accept and face this event and its consequences. Unlike those around him, the madman immediately recognizes the terrible implications of this event:

But how have we done this? How are we able to drink away the sea? Who gave us the sponge, to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we to do, after we unchained this earth from its sun? . . . Are we not wandering through an infinite Nothing? . . . God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed Him!¹⁴

The madman then falls silent and looks at his listeners who "stare at him in astonishment." The madman then concludes:

"I come too early," he then said, "I am still not on time. This tremendous event is still on the way and wandering, —it is not yet penetrated the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time . . . This deed is to them always still further away than the most distant star,—*and yet they have done it to themselves!*"¹⁵

Modern man does not believe in God, yet he is oblivious and blind to the unfavourable consequences of his disbelief. As Detwiler notes, "[Modern man] does not see that his irreligion will gradually dissolve the horizon, the moral firmament of ideals . . . that has made possible all that is worthy in the Western world."¹⁶ In the above quote,

¹³ FW 125; NSA III, p. 480-481 (32-02).

¹⁴ FW 125; NSA III, p. 481 (2-5, 9, 15-16).

¹⁵ FW 125; NSA III, pp. 481-482 (29-32, 34-02).

¹⁶ Detwiler, p. 72.

modern man does not see that he is unchaining "this earth from its sun," which is Nietzsche's reference to the destruction of the predominant Platonic ideal of the Good. But what exactly are the consequences of this event? Nietzsche hints at this in section 343 in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Here Nietzsche suggests that this event is just beginning to "cast its first shadows over Europe." By "shadows," Nietzsche is referring to the consequences of this event. The consequences are, for one, that there is a loss of meaning in this world. The other is that human beings are now forced to reacquaint themselves with and worship the earth. Taking this idea, which was first presented in section 108, a step further, Nietzsche suggests that a few people have already realized the significance of this event:

For the very few people, whose eyes, whose *suspicion* within their powerful and keen eyes is sufficient for this spectacle, some sun appears to have set, some ancient and profound trust has been turned around into doubt: to them our ancient world must everyday appear more like evening: distrustful, foreign, "older."¹⁷

These few individuals now see that "at long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright."¹⁸ But "these few individuals" are not the same as the above mentioned people who "apparently do not believe in God." The "apparent non-believers" are those who never were religious, but "these few individuals" are the truly religious. This is why God's death has more impact on them—they had to give up more.

This "horizon" that is free is the horizon of the morality of good and evil. God is dead and the higher justification in which human beings once grounded their values is

¹⁷ FW 343; NSA III, p. 573 (12-17).

I take this reference to the "ancient profound trust" which has now become doubted, to be the belief in dualism. I return to this point in the next chapter.

¹⁸ FW 343; NSA III, p. 574 (19-21).

destroyed. As Leslie Thiele says, "The death of God was to be taken as a cultural fact, and Nietzsche was not interested in burying the corpse."¹⁹ By not "burying the corpse," people will be forced to confront and deal with God's death. Nietzsche was interested in criticizing the traditional religious foundations that supported Western moral and metaphysical beliefs. This foundation, in fact, is based on Platonic-Christian metaphysics (this is the focus of the next chapter). But when these foundations are swept away and the rug is pulled out from underneath, the result is nihilism. Nihilism is intricately connected to the loss of meaning in the face of God's death.

A. The Cause(s) of Nihilism

For Nietzsche, it is important not to mistake the symptoms of nihilism for its causes. As he warns:

Nihilism stands outside the door: where comes this spookiest of all guests from?— . . . it is an *error* to call "social necessity" or "physiological degeneration" or even corruption as the *cause* of nihilism . . . Distress, mental, physical, intellectual distress is in itself by no means capable of nihilism. . . .²⁰

What he lists in the above quote are the symptoms of nihilism. The current, modern experience of nihilism is the result of a particular interpretation of the world. "But only," writes Nietzsche, "in an *entire given interpretation*, in the Christian-moral sense, is nihilism set."²¹ This section will both examine the cause(s) of nihilism and include some comments on Nietzsche's critique of contemporary morality and Christianity.

¹⁹ Thiele (1990b), p. 105.

²⁰ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[127]; *NSA* XII, p. 125 (14-18, 22-24).

²¹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[127]; *NSA* XII, p. 125 (20-22).

Nihilism, to Nietzsche, can be understood in terms of a fate or destiny: "Nihilism is meant to be the logical end to our greatest values and ideas."²² Nihilism is, in other words, the logical outcome of the beliefs and ideals human beings have held for centuries. Nietzsche, here, is referring to man's devotion to the "Christian-moral hypothesis" which "grants to human beings an absolute *value*, in opposition to his smallness and accidental occurrence in the current of becoming and passing away."²³ One of the consequences of humanity's faith in morality is the development of truthfulness—a will to truth.²⁴ Nietzsche's central argument here is that the development of the moral conscience is destined to reach the point where honesty dictates that the belief in an independent foundation for morality be abandoned. "In other words," Ofelia Schutte points out, "Nietzsche held that research into the origin of morality destroys the credibility of an appeal to morality as an independent or absolute foundation of values."²⁵

Over time this will to truth in Christianity is transformed into the intellectual conscience which underlies modern scientific inquiry. This eventually results in the will to truth calling into question the very foundations of Christianity itself:

[The will to truth] eventually turned against morality, discovered its *teleology*, its *interesting* thought—and now effected the *realization* in this long confirmed untruthfulness, that one despaired about doing, straight into a stimulant . . . This antagonism, that was recognized by us, that was *not* valued and likes to tell us lies, was no

²² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[411]; NSA XIII, p. 190 (24-25).

²³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 5[71]; NSA XII, p. 211 (8-11). I return to his notion of Becoming in chapter eight below.

²⁴ See *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 5[71] where he writes, "But under the forces, grown up out of morality, was truthfulness."

²⁵ Ofelia Schutte. *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche Without Masks*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), p. 114.

longer allowed to be valued:—this resulted in a process of disintegration.²⁶

Science discovers that morality is only a “partial perspective” on life. This is why for Nietzsche the experience of nihilism can be seen as a necessity: “For why is the advent of nihilism from now on *necessary*? Because our previous values, even they are drawing their final conclusions.” In other words, it now becomes necessary to undergo the experience of nihilism “before we come to know what the ‘value’ was of these actual *values*.” In the end, though, human beings will discover that “we require . . . *new values*.”²⁷

Keith Ansell-Pearson notes that, “The ultimate causes of nihilism lie deep within the history of Western religion and philosophy (what Nietzsche often calls ‘metaphysics’).”²⁸ Both man’s religious and philosophical understanding of the world has been built on a resentful attitude towards life, namely Christianity. But despite his ardent anti-Christian views, Nietzsche did see the cultural importance of Christianity: “[Christian] morality was the great *antidote* against practical and theoretical *nihilism*.” Christianity “set a *knowledge* of absolute value at the human being and . . . it prevented that the human being despise itself as a human being . . . [Christianity] was a *means of preservation*.”²⁹ But now in the wake of modern science, of the will to truth turning against itself, human beings can no longer believe in this foundation. Before getting too far ahead of myself, I wish to turn to Nietzsche’s critique of conventional morality—this is yet

²⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 5[71]; NSA XII, p. 211-212 (26-30, 4-7).

²⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[411]; NSA XIII, p. 190 (21-23; 26-27; and 27-28).

²⁸ Keith Ansell-Pearson. *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker: The Perfect Nihilist*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 37. Herein referred to as “Ansell-Pearson (1994).”

²⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 5[71]; NSA XII, p. 211 (22-23; and 16-17, 19, 21).

another foundation Nietzsche believes must be “swept away” in order to approach a “new” notion of subjectivity.

B. Nietzsche and Conventional Morality

Bernd Magnus correctly points out that, “One of the first things Nietzsche would have us understand and overcome . . . if we are to recover from [nihilism’s] sustaining grip upon our lives, is the origin and nature of moral valuations.”³⁰ This is an important point because Nietzsche sees traces of Christianity in the rise of both democratic and socialist movements (more on this below).

Nietzsche explicitly mentions the two primary types of morality he discovered for the first time in 1886: “I finally discovered two basic types [of morality] . . . There are *master morality* and *slave morality*.”³¹ This characterization is not intended solely to be a comparison of two moralities. There is an entire moral outlook which originates with the slaves and another which originates with their masters. This distinction is not done for historical reasons, but, as Ansell-Pearson notes, “[I]n order to carry out a critique of morals, what is needed is to construct a ‘typology of morals’ [*Typenlehre der Moral*].”³²

Nietzsche argues that all advanced civilizations display a mixture of both slave and master moral outlooks. In fact, elements of each morality are often simultaneously active “even in the same human being.”³³ The difference between the two moralities is

³⁰ Bernd Magnus, *Nietzsche’s Existential Imperative*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 13.

³¹ JGB 260; NSA V, p. 208 (23-24, 25-26).

Though developed here, Nietzsche examines these concepts in more detail a year later in *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887). These terms, though, have been on Nietzsche’s mind since 1878 in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, section 45.

³² Ansell-Pearson (1991), p. 128.

³³ JGB 260; NSA V, p. 208 (30).

thus—Master morality identifies “good” and “bad” as expressions describing persons, not their actions:

The judgment "good" does *not* derive from those to whom "goodness" is shown! Rather it is "the good" themselves, that is the noble, the powerful, the superior, and the high-minded, who felt themselves and their actions to be good.³⁴

In other words, to say X is “good” is the same as saying X is “noble;” to say X is “bad” is to say that X is “despicable.” “And again,” stresses Magnus, “masters judge the baseness [and nobility] of persons, not actions.”³⁵ According to Nietzsche, therefore, the master morality, the morality of strength and independence, defines itself by self-affirmation and is “unconcerned with how its actions are perceived and judged by others.”³⁶ As I will argue below, this plays an important role in both Nietzsche’s “new” notion of subjectivity and in the order of rank, which itself is an integral part of his political thinking.

Whereas the noble and strong declare themselves first as “good” and then define others as “bad” only after they have defined and affirmed themselves, the slaves define their identity by first defining others as “evil.” Only after the slaves designate others as evil do they then define themselves as “good.” Because the slaves are weaker and powerless compared to the masters, their moral standard becomes that which is useful or beneficial to the community. As a result, slave morality extols such qualities as humility, kindness, and sympathy, “all of which have high utility for the community.”³⁷ The problems begin when the slaves start to regard the independent, strong masters with suspicion.

³⁴ *GM I 2; NSA V*, p. 259 (14-18).

³⁵ Magnus, p. 14.

³⁶ Ansell-Pearson (1991), p. 128.

³⁷ Magnus, p. 14.

The masters are a threat and are judged "evil." What then occurs is subtle, yet it has disastrous effects: The person judged "good," or "noble," by the standards of master morality is now judged "evil" precisely for those traits according to the standards of slave morality. "The 'good' man becomes 'evil' in this scenario," notes Magnus. "The relationship is symmetrical. The 'good' man in slave morality terms is 'base' in terms of master morality."³⁸

This shift occurred subtly whereby the herd, in conscious opposition to the noble mode of self-affirmation, performed a radical revaluation of aristocratic values "through an act of the *most spiritual revenge*."³⁹ Through this "spiritual revenge" the slaves "dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good=noble=powerful=beautiful=happy=beloved of God)" into the new formula:

... [T]he miserable alone are the good; the poor, the powerless, the lowly alone are the good. The suffering, the deprived, the sick, the ugly are the only pious ones, the only blessed, for them alone is there salvation⁴⁰

This is, "*The slave revolt in morals*: that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we no longer see because it—has been victorious."⁴¹ Only through this slave revolt in morals do actions become subject to a moral interpretation and described as "evil," "cruel," and "wicked." What is more, the slave revolt can be seen as the historical event that necessarily culminates in the advent of nihilism. This slave revolt can also be seen as shifting the role of subjectivity. Previous to this revolt the noble

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *GM I 7; NS4 V*, p. 267 (8-11; and 14).

⁴⁰ *GM I 7; NS4 V*, p. 267 (22-25).

⁴¹ *GM I 7; NS4 V*, p. 268 (1-5).

individuals focused on themselves and were not concerned with others' actions. The emphasis was on the "inner life" of the individual and of creating values for oneself. This is, I argue, what Nietzsche is going to re-emphasize with his "new" notion of subjectivity.

To this point Nietzsche has only been criticizing conventional morality. To understand Nietzsche's shift to including Christianity in his critique, it is necessary to look at his notion of *ressentiment*.⁴² As Magnus explains, "The concept resentment is . . . used to explain why Christianity is slave morality sanctioned and incarnate."⁴³ *Ressentiment* is in fact the defining feature of slave morality. Slave morality can exist only by negating what it is not; by what is different to it. As Ansell-Pearson notes, "Unlike the master morality, the slave morality is totally dependent on a hostile external world for its identity."⁴⁴

Rüdiger Bittner further supports this point that *ressentiment* is a reactive phenomena: "[T]he action of *ressentiment* is reaction; negative reaction, that is, to the human flourishing it encounters."⁴⁵ As Bittner sees it, "it takes two" for *ressentiment*. The slave finds himself worse off than his master and takes an imaginary, symbolic form of revenge against them by "condemning him to hell." *Ressentiment* works, therefore, when people who are unhappy wish to improve their condition. But these people, the slaves, are

⁴² Nietzsche employs the French word *ressentiment* because the German language does not offer any word that is even semi-equivalent to the French term. The closest word in German would be *Groll*, which means either "grudge" or "ill will." But neither of these terms comes close to expressing the French *ressentiment*.

⁴³ Magnus, p. 15.

⁴⁴ Ansell-Pearson (1991), p. 129.

⁴⁵ Rüdiger Bittner, "Ressentiment," in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals*. Edited by Richard Schacht. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 129.

incapable of doing so, so they invent a story according to which they really are well off. As Bittner explains, "In the case at hand, the story is metaphysical or moral or both."⁴⁶

In morality, the slaves tell themselves that however miserable their lives may be, they really are better off based on the standard that really counts; the moral one. On the moral standard, the slaves see themselves as good. Metaphysically the slaves tell themselves that no matter how much they suffer in this world, there is a better, happier world waiting them. Seen in this light, *ressentiment* is one of, if not the, cause of nihilism.

Through *ressentiment*, the slave revolt in morality was brought about, and with it came a new, pervasive view of morality and metaphysical thinking. As Nietzsche writes:

"Definition of Morality: Morality—the idiosyncrasy of decadents, with the ulterior motive of revenging *oneself against life—and* with success. I place value on *this* definition."⁴⁷

Important here is that with *ressentiment* begins the slave revolt in morals. Let me back up a step. The master is, and his morality extols, autonomy, power, independence, self-control, and passion. The master derives his values not from "the herd," but "from a triumphant Yeah-saying to oneself,"⁴⁸ from the abundance of one's own life and strength. The slave, however, who is dependent, powerless, and without self-control, fears the strength of the master. "While the slave morality can only exist through its opposite," notes Ansell-Pearson, "the noble morality seeks its opposite only so far as to affirm even more its independence and difference."⁴⁹ The strong and noble do not need to establish

⁴⁶ Bittner, p. 130.

⁴⁷ *EH* XIV 7; *NSA* VI, p. 373 (7-10).

⁴⁸ *GMI* 10; *NSA* V, p. 270 (29-30).

⁴⁹ Ansell-Pearson (1991), p. 129.

their happiness and pleasure by “looking outward” and examining their enemies: “This need to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself—is of the essence of *ressentiment*.”⁵⁰ As mentioned above, the master morality before the slave revolt is what Nietzsche extols as “true” subjectivity. Such noble individuals were independent and praised autonomy as one of, if not the, highest value.

The slave, as a result, realizes that the only way he will be able to control his own destiny is to curb and tame his master—he must, in a sense, displace him. The way the slaves accomplish this is by displacing the master and his morality and rendering the values of the herd as absolute and universal.⁵¹ This slave revolt is both creative and resentful. Since the slaves are powerless to effect any significant changes in their condition, they lash out and take revenge against the masters by converting the master's attributes into vices.⁵² Whereas the masters sanction coexistence with the slaves, just so long as they keep their baser values to their own kind, the *ressentiment* of the slaves yearns for universality. As Magnus argues, “Nietzsche does not of course suggest that the slave's resentment of and revenge against the master is either direct or conscious.”⁵³ Since the slave cannot overcome the master in “reality,” he avenges himself symbolically. Enter Christianity—the religion of the slave.

C. Nietzsche's Critique of Christianity

Nietzsche's views on and critique of Christianity are multi-faceted. I will focus

⁵⁰ GM I 10; NS4 V, p. 271 (2-4).

⁵¹ Thus is Nietzsche's description: “The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values” [GM I 10; NS4 V, p. 270 (25-27)].

⁵² Nietzsche also calls *ressentiment* the “spirit of revenge” for this exact reason.

⁵³ Magnus, p. 15.

only on that aspect which is important to this paper—mainly that his critique of Christianity continues the Enlightenment project of eliminating all “external” sources of authority and re-establishes the autonomy (true autonomy) of the individual. First and foremost, Christianity is the ideology of slave morality. It expresses the slave’s *ressentiment* against the attributes of the master by denouncing and vilifying them. As Magnus points out, “The virtues of the master becomes ‘sin.’ In place of power, it is said that the meek are to inherit the earth.”⁵⁴ The *ressentiment* of slave morality, which finds expression in Christianity, becomes both extremely hostile and fateful. Its hostility results from its “moral imperialism,” in which its “moral” dictates are meant to cover all human beings at all times. It is fateful in that “it introduces into the Western psyche something virtually ineradicable—consciousness of sin and guilt.”⁵⁵

Not only does the slave construe his own condition of suffering as guilt and sin, the slave falsely construes the whole of existence itself as guilt and sin. The slave cannot accept that they are the cause of their own suffering, so they shift the blame onto something external to themselves as the cause of their suffering.⁵⁶ This is the “fatefulness” of *ressentiment*; existence becomes punishment:

That Christianity only takes up the struggle,
already begun against the *classical* ideal, against the
noble religion . . .

We have therefore as *misunderstandings*:

- 1) the immortality of the person
- 2) the alleged *other* world
- 3) the absurdity of the concepts of pun-

⁵⁴ Magnus, p. 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ I further discuss this theme in chapter eight.

ishment and atonement at the heart of the interpretation of existence⁵⁷

Furthermore, with the triumph of slave morality as Christianity, the innocence of becoming (*Unschuld des Werdens*) is abolished: "As soon as we *imagine* someone, who is responsible for our being thus and thus etc (God, nature), to him we therefore add our existence, our happiness and misery, our *intention*; we corrupt our *innocence of becoming*."⁵⁸ As soon as this aspect of existence is eliminated, the decline of life, or decadence, replaces the noble expression of the ascent to life. For Nietzsche, Christianity also depreciates human beings and their instincts.⁵⁹

The general thrust of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity is that it "was a means to preservation, but apparently it was not a means to growth."⁶⁰ Christianity, to Nietzsche, was a stifling doctrine that eliminated the desire to "reach beyond oneself" and "become what one is." It essentially compromised what Nietzsche saw as "true" subjectivity. As Nietzsche writes, "The ideas of the herd should rule in the herd,—but never over extend beyond it."⁶¹ What is good for the herd/slaves is not good for the masters. The development of Christianity is extremely harmful to the enhancement of human beings; it represents a "small, peaceful, mediocrity . . . which knows nothing of the greatest drive of the greatest accumulation of strength."⁶² This, in a word, eliminates all striving. Impor-

⁵⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[295]; NSA XIII, p. 115-116 (29-31, 17-21). Cf. to 11[262], 11[263], and 11[267]; NSA XIII, p. 98-100.

⁵⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[91]; NSA XII, p. 385-386 (33-04).

⁵⁹ I return to this point below in chapter four on Nietzsche's will to power.

⁶⁰ Lester H. Hunt, *Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue*. (New York: Routledge Books, 1991), p. 132-33.

⁶¹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 7[6]; NSA XII, p. 280 (20-21).

⁶² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[98]; NSA XII, p. 512 (16-19).

tant to this paper is Nietzsche's notion of the order of rank. In *Der Antichrist*, Nietzsche argues that there is an inner order of rank among human beings that is externally reflected onto society. I will discuss this notion below, but for now it is enough to say that noble individuals rank their instincts and impulses as to their degree of strength. In a word, the noble let their strongest instincts govern their bodies. But Christianity's revaluation turns the true order of rank on its head and denotes weakness as strength and strength as sin.

This is directly reflected onto society and in political life. In Nietzsche's words:

I *condemn* Christianity, I rise against the Christian church . . . It is to me the highest of all conceivable corruptions . . . it has [turned] every value into an unvalue, every truth into a falsehood . . . [it is] the [most] subterranean conspiracy that has ever been given,—against health, beauty, that which is well-ordered, courage, spirit, *goodness* of the soul, *against life itself* . . . ⁶³

Christianity, in other words, told people what values they ought to have, thereby eliminating the notion of self-creation, which is the core of Nietzschean subjectivity.

It would seem, then, that the "cure" for overcoming nihilism is to simply abandon Christianity and its accompanying morality. This is not such an easy task. Remember, it has a history of "two thousand years behind it." In the next chapter I discuss how the "true world" has in fact been destroyed, yet this becomes part of the problem of nihilism and not a solution to it. The "shadows" are already casting themselves across Europe. Abandoning Christianity is indeed a necessary condition for overcoming nihilism, but it is simply not enough. In order to completely overcome nihilism, individuals will have to expose and eliminate every trace of nihilism that has become rooted in us. Aside from rejecting Christianity's slave morality ideology, we need, according to Nietzsche, to rec-

⁶³ A 62; *NSA* VI, p. 252 (10-12, 13-14, 16-17, 5-8).

ognize our own individual yearnings for uniform, universal, and absolute moral systems.

For Christianity is not the only institution wherein our "slavishness" is expressed.

Nietzsche finds vestiges of Christianity and of slave morality even in the rise of democratic and socialist movements.⁶⁴ In *Also sprach Zarathustra* Nietzsche writes:

"Vengeance will we use and abuse against all who are not like us"—thus do the tarantula-hearts vow.

"And 'Will to Equality' – that shall henceforth be the name for virtue; and against all that has power we will raise our clamour!"

You preachers of equality, the tyrannomania of impotence clamours out of you for 'equality.' your most secret tyrant-desires disguise themselves thus in words of virtue!

Angered conceit, suppressed envy, perhaps your father's conceit and envy: they erupt from you as a flame and as the madness of revenge.⁶⁵

For Nietzsche, the "will to equality" is simply an expression of the slave morality he detests—it is a disguised lust for power. "Tyrannomania" is possible only for those slavish individuals who feel and are unequal, "for those who must legislate to others in order to feel equal, for those who must dominate."⁶⁶ For those who are genuinely superior, the masters, domination over others does not concern them—it is self-directed.⁶⁷

The relevance of including some remarks on Nietzsche's critique of democracy and socialism in this chapter is to illustrate how his critique of contemporary religion and

⁶⁴ I examined Nietzsche's critique of these political ideologies in Part I. I will briefly remark on them here to situate them within Nietzsche's critique of Christianity.

⁶⁵ Z II 7; *NSA* IV, pp. 128-129 (23-09).

⁶⁶ Magnus, p. 18.

⁶⁷ This is a recurring theme in Nietzsche's works. As I will discuss in a later chapter, the most powerful person is the least dependent on others. Powerful people, in the Nietzschean sense, do not entail overpowering others. Domination over others is, as will be seen, a lower level of power. See *GD* "Was den Deutschen abgeht" 4; *NSA* VI, p. 106. This, of course, has direct implications for Nietzsche's idea of subjectivity.

morality extends to the political realm. Nietzsche's basic point here is that democracy and socialism are secularized forms of Christianity. "Socialism," writes Nietzsche, "is the fanciful younger brother of the almost antiquated despotism, whose heir it wants to be."⁶⁸ According to Nietzsche, in order to bring about the transformation of society that socialism desires, it needs to exert a massive extension of social control over individuals. It accomplishes this through an abundance of state power:

[Socialism] very much seeks an abundance of state power, such as only despotism has had, yet it outbids everything through which is historical; that it aims at the formal annihilation of the individual: who which occurs to be an unauthorized luxury of nature and through it becomes a better improved, wise *voice of the community*.⁶⁹

This is bad, argues Nietzsche, because the state in contemporary times has become a surrogate god. In *Also sprach Zarathustra*, he devotes an entire section to this phenomenon titled, "On the New Idol" [*Vom neuen Götzen*]. Here, the herd instinct, or slavish morality, seeks expression in the "new idol," or state, and the vision of universality that the herd at one time attached to Christianity now gets attached to the state. Just as the Christian God represented, at bottom, a force essentially hostile to life, so too does the state represent the strivings of the slaves.⁷⁰

It seems as though Nietzsche offers no hope in our overcoming of nihilism. Just when he suggests that Christianity's influence is fading, he then points out that it

⁶⁸ MAM 473; NSA II, p. 307 (9-10). Please note that these are only a few brief remarks on Nietzsche's critique of politics.

⁶⁹ MAM 473; NSA II, p. 307 (11-17).

⁷⁰ See Z I 11; NSA IV, pp. 61-64.

becomes secularized and takes root in the political realm. But Nietzsche does maintain that the effects of the death of God will eventually be felt; the logical consequences of this event have not yet surfaced. Nietzsche argues that once the logical consequences are realized, a radical skepticism concerning absolute values will follow. Ultimately there will be an outright rejection of the idea of absolute and universal moral laws. Nietzsche's hope is found in his view that radical changes must be made. If modern man has been dominated by and has come to depend on moral values, which are associated with Christianity, then what is needed is a complete cultural and political revaluation. But with the collapse of our theological foundation for morality, there remains only a sense of ultimate purposelessness and meaninglessness. This triumph of meaninglessness is the triumph of nihilism: "Morality was the great *antidote* against practical and theoretical *nihilism*." As Magnus notes, "But insofar as Christian morality had infected everything, politics included, apostasy from Christianity and its values exposes mankind to nihilism."⁷¹ In other words, when the highest values become devalued nihilism is a danger not because there are no other possible values, but because modern man knows no other values.

D. Nihilism and the Loss of Meaning

Walter Kaufmann believes the death of God is not a "metaphysical speculation about ultimate reality," but is an attempt to "diagnose contemporary civilization." Kaufmann is correct in that Nietzsche was aware that God's demise would "diminish the value in man,"⁷² but Nietzsche is also critiquing a metaphysical viewpoint. The metaphysical aspect of the death of God is discussed in the next chapter. For now, I wish

⁷¹ Magnus, p. 20.

⁷² Kaufmann, p. 100-101.

to examine Nietzsche's concern with nihilism. Nietzsche wonders if people know "*how much* actually has to go with it—and how much everything, after this faith is undermined, must now collapse."⁷³ This event is, of course, the death of God. This passage expresses Nietzsche's concern that this event threatens human life with a complete loss of meaning. Meaning is lost because the foundations for our meaning have been shattered. These shattered foundations are, according to Nietzsche, "false" foundations and include the traditional moral and religious foundations—ones that are based on the dualism of Platonic-Christian metaphysics (see parts B and C above). Nietzsche, though, would contend that there is a "genuine" foundation on which to base meaning. This "new foundation" upon which meaning will be based is, according to Nietzsche, whatever is life affirming.

The devaluation of values, which leads to a complete loss of meaning, results in this nihilism I have been discussing. But this is not necessarily a bad thing. Nietzsche, in fact, sees nihilism as a necessary step in each individuals' advancement. In his notebooks we find Nietzsche speculating that nihilism "could be a *prerequisite to greatness*, to grow in such a manner in violent tension."⁷⁴ This theme, of destroying in order to create, is consistent throughout Nietzsche's writings. For example, in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* he writes:

Every progress in the whole must be preceded by a partial weakening. The strongest natures *keep the firm* types, the weaker help it *improve one's knowledge*.—
Something similarly, happens also to the individual;
seldom is there a degeneration, a mutilation, even a vice

⁷³ FW 343; NSA III, p. 573 (20-23).

⁷⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[186]; NSA XIII, p. 450 (1-3).

and a physical or moral loss in general without an advantage on the other hand.⁷⁵

This is why for Nietzsche there is no such thing as “progress” in the traditional sense of the word. In a Nietzschean sense, “progress” occurs only after a “partial weakening,” meaning that something (i.e., an idea) must first be shown to be flawed in order for it to be overcome and a new idea to be accepted. For example, the human spirit, to Nietzsche, grows and gains strength by being wounded and overcoming the inner struggle and conflict of those wounds.

Nihilism, or meaninglessness, is not Nietzsche’s diagnosis of the nature of existence. Nihilism, which “could be the *prerequisite of greatness*,”⁷⁶ is not a hopeless situation. The world now looks valueless because people placed meaning in God, and then placed God in the “beyond,” thereby displacing the center of gravity. But those few who have fully accepted the death of both God and God’s “shadow,” and who have accepted its consequences will realize that the world is not completely “valueless.” The world, it turns out, simply does not have the value we thought it had. Therefore to overcome nihilism one must first embrace it. Only by embracing and, therefore, accepting nihilism can one progress and develop new values for oneself.⁷⁷ In other words, only by experiencing nihilism can one get beyond it, that is, to the realization that the world does indeed have some value: “We philosophers and ‘free spirits’ feel when we hear the news that ‘the old God is dead’ as if a new dawn shone on us; our hearts overflow at the same

⁷⁵ *MAM* 224; *NSA* II, p. 188 (2-9).

⁷⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[186]; *NSA* XII, p. 450 (1-2).

⁷⁷ This is both an important and necessary step towards understanding Nietzsche’s notion of subjectivity. In order to “progress” in the Nietzschean sense, we need to first understand where we went wrong. Only in this way can human beings once again become self-creators.

time with gratitude, surprise, presentiment, expectation . . . ”⁷⁸ In this section and the section immediately following (sections 343 and 344 in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*), Nietzsche clarifies the meaning of his famous phrase: “That ‘God is dead’ [means] that the belief in the Christian God [i.e., that Christian faith which is also the faith of Plato, that God is Truth and that Truth is divine] has become unbelievable.”⁷⁹ In other words, human beings “killed” God when they equated God with Truth. The news that “the old God is dead,” i.e., the shattering of a belief that “is thousands of years old,” announces the arrival of “a new dawn.”

Nihilism, it turns out, is only a transitional stage and not a permanent state of the world. Nihilism is “the pathos which perhaps drives us to seek *new values*.” Only through nihilism can we discover that “the world may be far more valuable than we believed,” and that seeing “behind the *naiveté of our ideals* . . . we have not given our own human existence some moderate approval of value.”⁸⁰ As I discuss below, this is what being “truly” autonomous is to Nietzsche. Kaufmann asks, “If Nietzsche thus criticizes and helps destroy prevalent values, does he not hasten the advent of nihilism?”⁸¹ I believe Nietzsche does. Through hastening the advent of nihilism, he paves the way for the revaluation of values.

Nietzsche has thus far established that the world is not completely nihilistic and valueless, and that ultimately it has a greater value than we thought. The question now stands: What can human beings do, and how can they exist in this condition of nihilism?

⁷⁸ *FW* 343; *NSA* III, p. 574 (16-19).

⁷⁹ *FW* 343; *NSA* III, p. 573 (9-10).

⁸⁰ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 6[25]; *NSA* XII, p. 242 (22-23; 24; and 25-28).

⁸¹ Kaufmann, p. 107.

Human beings, for Nietzsche, cannot universally speak of the value of life. This denial of universality, or anti-absolutism, refers to the fact that there are no externally imposed objective standards of value. In other words, there is no kind of authority, no absolute notions, that exist for everyone at all times. If there were universal standards of value in the world, human beings could simply "turn" to them, thereby making life easier. We saw how Kant and the traditional Enlightenment favoured such systems and how Nietzsche attacked these views as actually limiting human autonomy. Alexander Nehamas recognizes this: "It is impossible to live without values . . . but the values and the judgments in which they are expressed need not and could not be universal."⁸² In other words, if we create new universal values we are simply replacing one "idol," or God, with another. Thiele, then, would be wrong in contending that in the face of encroaching nihilism, "the creation of new values assumes an unmatched urgency" for Nietzsche.⁸³ Nietzsche offers human beings not new values, but "revalued" ones. By "revalued," Nietzsche means that human beings will return to those values which were lost with the first revaluation of values (i.e., the slave revolt in morals). If human beings attempt to make new values within the same metaphysical framework, they would simply be substituting one value for another. (In the next section, the difference between "revalued" and "new" values will become clear.) Those people who accept God's death will realize that the revaluation of values is a reclaiming of what was once the values of the strong and noble-type. The revaluation of values, then, is Nietzsche's doctrine of the return to and the reclaiming of noble values following the discovery of the lost center of gravity. But

⁸² Nehamas, p. 135.

⁸³ Thiele (1990b), p. 85.

to those “lower” individuals, these revalued values will be new because they are not strong enough to “see” the meaning of the “new” values.

As a result, when Nietzsche posits the revaluation of values, he believes that he is grounding a “new” standard of evaluation in the world. Nietzsche posits a new principle of valuation, one grounded upon “the ideal of the *highest powerfulness* of the spirit, the overabundance of life.”⁸⁴ This ideal becomes the new standard by which to assign value, and in terms of which Nietzsche carries out his “revaluation of values.” As it turns out, this also plays a pivotal role in his notion of subjectivity. Let us now turn to this doctrine.

E. The Revaluation of Values

I have discussed so far that nihilism is the result of accepting the death of God. But the same nihilism that “devalues” our current beliefs also paves the way towards the “revaluation of values.” Nietzsche does not intend to present human beings with new values. As Detwiler explains, “The coming revaluation is . . . in large part a reversal of history’s first revaluation.”⁸⁵ Nietzsche uses the term “values” to refer to those notions which have long been taken by philosophers to be the primary moral referents (i.e., good and evil). Furthermore, it is these primary referents which Nietzsche hopes to change. Nietzsche discusses the “revaluation” of these primary referents in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*. Here, he argues that every living thing “strives instinctively towards an optimum of favourable conditions, under which it can expend all its strength and achieve its maximum feeling of power.”⁸⁶ This is how the original notion of “good” was formed

⁸⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[39]; *NSA* XII, p. 353 (13-14).

⁸⁵ Detwiler, p. 134.

⁸⁶ *GM* III 7; *NSA* V, p. 350 (19-22).

(see section B above). “Good,” according to Nietzsche, was originated by the noble who strove for the maximum amount of power.

The “conditions” under which one can “achieve the maximum feeling of power” are, according to Nietzsche, in the solitary life. Solitude, for Nietzsche, can be viewed as the way to escape the herd and their slave-morality. This is in part, why Nietzsche refers to it as a “virtue.” In solitude the individual can separate him/herself from the pettiness of the “good and the just” [*den Guten und Gerechten*]. Nietzsche’s line of reasoning here, essentially, is that no individuals, no matter how much strength they have, can better themselves in modern society where the herd, with their slave-morality, dominates.⁸⁷ The herd’s leveling effect aims at reducing everybody to “the same.” With their doctrine of equality, the herd tries to make it all but impossible for great individuals to appear. This is why Zarathustra encourages individuals to go forth into their solitude with only their loneliness as a companion—for it is the only way to begin one’s journey on the road to becoming a creator, and therefore a true “Nietzschean subject.”

Returning back to *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, the “high-minded,” noble individuals “one day said no to all bondage and entered into some *desert*.”⁸⁸ The word “desert” here functions for Nietzsche as a metaphor. He does not mean that people literally entered a desert, but that the “noble individuals” embraced solitude. Thiele discusses the importance of “solitude” in Nietzsche’s thought, and explains that “to struggle to be a law unto oneself, to speak of *one’s* way not *the* way, is to experience the force of Nietzschean

⁸⁷ Again, this plays a large part in Nietzsche’s notion of subjectivity. His notion of autonomy is so strong that the “Nietzschean subject” needs no one else for the “betterment” of him- or herself. I return to this below.

⁸⁸ *GM* III 7; *NSA* V, p. 351 (16-17).

solitude.”⁸⁹ Thiele should include that this is the way to also experience the force of Nietzsche’s “new” notion of subjectivity. In solitude the noble are not just getting away from the decadent, life-denying values of the herd, they are also not creating values for the herd. They create only for themselves.⁹⁰

This is precisely why Nietzsche deemed solitude a virtue.⁹¹ Being absorbed in one’s own thoughts signifies both a freedom from the surrounding world, and the exercise of “true” autonomy. Furthermore, what Nietzsche sees as virtuous in solitude is the inner struggle that occurs. Thiele notes that the solitary individual is “not only his [own] best friend and conversationalist, but also his own best critic and fiercest antagonist.”⁹² As a result Nietzsche concludes: “People must therefore allow certain human beings to be on their own and not be so foolish, as we frequently are, to therefore feel sorry for them.”⁹³ This is why Nietzsche says the “noble-type man” embraces his or her solitude. But the solitude of the noble-type is also what allowed the herd to come into power—what Nietzsche calls the “slave revolt in morality.”

Important to this paper is that, in the *Genealogie*, Nietzsche also argues that the values that ultimately triumph in any society reflect the interests of those who can wield the most power: “The political concept of superiority itself always triggers the psycho-

⁸⁹ Thiele (1990b), p. 173. This is a struggle because we are not only struggling to create values for ourselves, but we also must overcome the firmly entrenched tradition of the Enlightenment.

⁹⁰ In Part III I discuss how even though the Nietzschean individual creates only for him- or herself, they in the process unavoidably create for others.

⁹¹ see *JGB* 44; *NSA* V, pp. 60-63.

⁹² Thiele (1990b), p. 178.

⁹³ *MAM* 625; *NSA* II, p. 352 (22-24). This is an important point. The phrase “certain men” [*gewissen Menschen*] has a lot of impact on Nietzsche’s aristocracy. What Nietzsche flirts with here is the notion that not all people are capable of handling such solitude [*Einsamkeit*]. I address this in a later chapter.

logical concept of superiority.”⁹⁴ And now that the noble and “high-minded” were more interested in their solitude, and consequently their autonomy, the herd, through cunning deceit and trickery, were able to revalue those values of the noble. This is what Detwiler calls the “first revaluation,” or “slave revolt in morality” (see part B above). These “new” values dominated because the herd, gaining political power, was able to impose them on society. Returning to Nietzsche’s “slave revolt,” Detwiler explains this as not occurring in any “one time or place,” but “the decisive event in its history was clearly the revolt against [Greco-]Roman values.”⁹⁵ These “Greco-Roman values” included all values that served to make human beings great. Such values include cunning, physical and spiritual strength, and an eagerness to take on difficult tasks. For Nietzsche, the slave revolt is not necessarily a physical uprising or rebellion. Instead, the feelings of powerlessness felt by the herd were repressed and gave rise to a “festering *ressentiment*.” The result of this repressed, “festering” *ressentiment* is a “spiritual revolt.” *Ressentiment*, according to Detwiler, is a “deadly hatred that fuels a quest for revenge on a spiritual level.”⁹⁶ The slaves contemplate everything the “masters” stand for (nobility, strength, etc. . .) and then, through their repressed *ressentiment*, develop their conception of evil. “As a matter of course,” Detwiler writes, “the slave develops his notion of goodness and, as a result, claims the blessedness of the weak.”⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *GM I 6; NS4 V*, p. 264 (21-22).

⁹⁵ Detwiler, p. 120.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Detwiler, p. 121.

Seen in this light, Nietzsche's "revaluation of values" is "going back" to and reclaiming those values which were originally held by the noble. In a word, those values of the noble (i.e., strength and hardness) are renewed through the revaluation of values, but, as Nietzsche points out repeatedly, they are renewed in a more spiritual sense than ever before. As a result, Nietzsche's "new" subjectivity can be seen as a reclaiming of the original notions of autonomy and subjectivity. I argue below that Nietzsche's subjectivity is much more spiritual than any prior notion—especially that of the traditional Enlightenment. Nehamas recognizes that the way towards the "revaluation" is through accepting the life of solitude. In solitude, individuals discover that "pain and suffering are ineliminable parts of life," and that they are neither good nor bad in themselves. "Their value depends on what, if anything, is made of them."⁹⁸ The solitary life involves pain and suffering because those who enter the solitary life realize they have no equal, and, consequently, have no "model" by which to shape their lives. Nietzsche writes:

The higher philosophical human being has solitude about himself, not because he wishes to be alone, but because he *is* something that finds no equals: what dangers and new sufferings are reserved for him even today, when one . . . does not know how to honor and understand this solitude!⁹⁹

So the revaluation of values is the doctrine of the noble-type reclaiming the original values held by the "noble" types. The noble are now able to do this because the event of God's death has eliminated that religious-moral division of life into good and evil: "At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even sedate, although it is not bright: at long last our ships are again permitted to set sail on every danger there is . . .

⁹⁸ Nehamas, p. 136.

⁹⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 38[11]; *NSA* XI, p. 609 (19-22, 23-24).

the sea, *our* sea again lies open.”¹⁰⁰ Nietzsche here tells us that this “sailing” will not be easy and will in fact be dangerous. But what is important is that our future is now open to us. In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Nietzsche talks of the “re-valuation.”

By applying the knife vivisectionally to the chest of the very *virtues of the time*, they betrayed what was their own secret: to know a *new* greatness of man, a new untrodden path to his enhancement. Every time they revealed how much hypocrisy, indolence, letting oneself go and letting oneself fall, how many lies lay hidden under the best honoured type of their contemporary morality.¹⁰¹

In a word, the “revaluation” is the reversal of current values that were themselves reversed a long time ago.

The values that the noble, or “higher man” reclaims are those values which were esteemed before the advent of Christianity. Detwiler explains that these values “originated out of [a] politically inspired principle of difference . . . out of ‘the pathos of distance.’”¹⁰² The “pathos of distance” is created by the difference between social strata; between the noble and slave classes. This principle was characteristic of every aristocratic society, and it depends on the order of rank (which I discuss below). During this period of time, which pre-dates Christian values, these aristocratic societies reveled in the qualities that distinguished them from lower human beings. Consequently, the “higher men” consider their values good, and they observe the actions of the “lower men” and

¹⁰⁰ *FW* 343; *NSA* III, p. 574 (19-22, 23).

¹⁰¹ *JGB* 212; *NSA* V, p. 145-146 (30-05).

¹⁰² Detwiler, p. 117.

consider them bad. The rulers then ascribe to themselves "the right to create values [and then] assign names to those values,"¹⁰³ thereby expressing "true" Nietzschean autonomy.

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In this chapter I have examined Nietzsche's notion of the death of God and the implications of accepting this event. Although it brings on the advent of nihilism, which turns out to be a necessary step towards individuals improving themselves, this event also represents a tremendous freedom for humanity. This event ultimately paves the way for the revaluation of values, which itself tells us that the essential feature of all values should be to enhance human existence—in other words, whatever is life-affirming. Using this criterion, Nietzsche argues that the moral and Judeo-Christian values we inherited actually diminish and stifle the individual, autonomous life and as such they are "symptomatic of decline, *nihilistic* values."¹⁰⁴ For Nietzsche, a value functions as a value only insofar as it promotes the individual. From this basic notion of "value" Nietzsche begins to lead us back to the "true" idea of sovereignty, which involves the complete self-creation over one's life. Here we find the connection between subjectivity and the revaluation. The revaluation cannot simply be taken as an attempt to prescribe new values because wherever new values are imposed on life they can only confine and limit one's sovereignty. The revaluation, for Nietzsche, begins with the individual as the only proper point of determining value itself.

Besides his notion of subjectivity, Nietzsche's political thinking is also intimately linked with his notion of the revaluation of values. Before further discussing these ideas, I will first examine the metaphysical consequences of the death of God. This we shall

¹⁰³ GM I 2; NSA V, p. 259 (21-22).

¹⁰⁴ A 6.

see is Nietzsche's way of eliminating dualism and thereby further distancing the human being from any "external" authority. As I examine, these two notions, "God" and "dualism," are connected. The Christian concept of God is founded in Platonic dualism, and this dualism "killed" or displaced the center of gravity. Furthermore, the center of gravity can only be recovered by the death of the Christian notion of God, that is, by the elimination of its metaphysical foundations. By doing so, Nietzsche re-establishes and puts emphasis back on the individual. This is an important move he makes towards developing his "new" notion of subjectivity.

CHAPTER SIX: THE DEATH OF GOD AND METAPHYSICS

In the previous chapter I examined how Nietzsche's proclamation "God is dead" continues the enlightened project of distancing the individual from all sources of authority. I will continue this discussion in the present chapter focusing on how the death of God also eliminates all dualistic systems. Nietzsche saw dualism as dividing up the world and creating a "true" world more real than the world we live in, thereby making it "easy" to live one's life. Life becomes easy in that individuals merely need to live in accordance to, in Kant's case, a universal moral realm whereby it is known that some actions are "good" and some are "bad." Such dualistic philosophers believe they are upholding a view of subjectivity, but, as we saw in Part I, Nietzsche sees the autonomy of the individual eliminated. I will also examine Nietzsche's notions of the *Übermensch* and the "higher man," and how these ideas are important aspects of his "new" subjectivity.

Nietzsche credits Socrates as being the crucial "turning point" in history: "It must now be said how the influence of Socrates, down to this moment, as well as into all future times, has spread over posterity like a shadow that keeps growing in the evening sun."¹ Socrates' influence over Plato led Plato to posit a universal, timeless "true world" that existed beyond our world (this is commonly referred to as the "world of appearances"). In 1875, Nietzsche observed that, "*The flight from the world by the best people* was a great misfortune. From Socrates on: the individual took himself as too important at the time."² This was a "great misfortune" because Plato insisted that the "true world" was accessible through a rational process, and knowledge of it leads to individual happiness.

¹ GT 15; NSA I, p. 97 (02-06).

² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 6[13]; NSA VIII, p. 102 (10-12).

Important here is Nietzsche's account of the origin of the "true world." He examines this in *Götzen-Dämmerung* in an aphorism titled, "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable." [*Wie die 'wahre Welt' endlich zur Fabel wurde*].³

Bernd Magnus proposes that, "One quite useful way of approaching Nietzsche's thought is to borrow a medical analogy. Consider Nietzsche's philosophy to be offering his patient a diagnosis, prescription, and prognosis."⁴ The "patient" in this analogy is modern mankind/Western civilization as it has been formulated by Plato and, as we shall see, Kant. The patient is indeed suffering from an illness; from a "profound but unspecified *malaise*"⁵ that may perhaps be unknown even to the patient himself.⁶ Nietzsche diagnoses the illness as nihilism. The next important questions that need to be asked are, what caused this illness in modern man? What are the symptoms? And how do we "cure" ourselves of this illness?

A. The "True World" as a Fable

A preliminary look at Nietzsche's diagnosis can be seen in *Götzen-Dämmerung* in the section, "*Wie die 'wahre Welt' endlich zur Fabel wurde*." Here Nietzsche presents a refutation of philosophy through examining how the "true world" came to be identified as the world beyond the physical, sensory world. He traces this "error" back to Plato.

³ *GD* IV; *NSA* VI, pp. 80-81. So adamant about this point, Nietzsche sub-titled this aphorism, "*Geschichte eines Irrthums*" ("The History of an Error").

⁴ Magnus, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Being unaware of this "disease" is an important part of the etiology of the disease itself. Western nihilism has a dulling, anesthetic nature. See section 125 in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and "*Wie die 'wahre Welt' endlich zur Fabel wurde*," as examples. Here, individuals who hear of God's death, or the destruction of the "true world," exhibit cheerfulness and *bon sens*.

Nietzsche, in fact, uses the term "Platonism" to represent the belief in a metaphysical world. He calls Platonism the "History of an Error," and presents this error in six stages.

Interesting here is Nietzsche's use of scare-quotes around "true world" [*wahre Welt*]. Historically, the term "true world" has denoted reality—that which is really real. This has been distinguished from appearance, or the chaotic world of becoming. The true world, which has been labeled "being," is the realm of metaphysical absoluteness, and is contrasted with the apparent world, or "becoming". The true world, though, has become a fable, and must be placed in the aforementioned scare-quotes, because it is simply no longer taken seriously. Magnus notes that the "'true world' is simply the "congealed eccentricity of some philosophers . . . an idiosyncrasy to be accounted for."⁷

Nietzsche sub-titles this aphorism "*Geschichte eines Irrthums*" in order to stress that although the "true world" may have become a fable, it was always an error. The positing of a different, better world, the "true world," which lurks behind the apparent world is, simply put, the positing of dualism. This positing of a "true world," according to Nietzsche, is a fateful error and a slander against life. The "true world" is constructed out of the "evaporating mist of becoming." The "'apparent' world is the only one; the 'true world' is merely added by a lie."⁸ In *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, Nietzsche notes that:

Becoming does not achieve becoming and that underneath all becoming no grand unity rules in which the individual is allowed to completely submerge into an element of supreme value: there remains another *escape*, to condemn the entire world of becoming as a decep-

⁷ Magnus, p. 119.

⁸ *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Herausgegeben von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967). VI, 3 (pp. 68-9). Divisions are marked by roman numerals; the numbers refer to Volumes.

tion and invent a world, which lies beyond this one, as a *true* world.⁹

It is clear that for Nietzsche the “true world,” the belief that became a fable, is a fatal “error.” I will now turn to the six stages because this section best illustrates Nietzsche’s elimination of dualism.

B. The History of an Error

Of the first stage, Nietzsche says: “The true world available to the wise man, the pious, the virtuous,—he lives in it, *he is it*.”¹⁰ At this stage, the true world is identical with the world in which man lives. At this stage, which illustrates the ancient Greeks view of nature, there is no separation or distinction between man and nature—they are one. Furthermore at this stage religious ideas are not transcendent, but are still part of man’s world.¹¹ This is an important point. Nietzsche’s revaluation of values is a return to this perspective, or early Greek world-view, where Platonic dichotomies did not yet exist and where religious ideas were part of *this* world.

It is in fact with Plato, as discussed above, that the error begins. The “true world”, he posits, is attainable only for those who are pious and virtuous. Here we can see the “Platonic thrust” as a sign of nihilism. This thrust is Plato’s attempt to make intelligible, or put the stamp of Being, on the world of Becoming: “Knowledge in itself in the [world of] becoming is impossible,” writes Nietzsche. “So how is knowledge possible?” To Plato, the “solution” is to turn to reason and impose order on the fluctuating phenomenal realm of becoming. In other words, “*To stamp* upon becoming the

⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[99]; NSA XIII, p. 47-48 (30-02).

¹⁰ *GD* IV; NSA VI, p. 80 (03-04).

¹¹ “Religious” here denotes the religion of the noble, or masters, before the slave revolt.

character of being.”¹² Plato, in this stage, uses reason as a weapon to overpower the world of becoming. As Magnus explains, “Insofar as reason cannot grasp change without turning it into a static form of being, insofar as reason ossifies, all philosophic systems are grounded in error.”¹³ But it is not reason *per se* which Nietzsche wishes to eliminate; it is to be absurdly rational and to establish reason as an absolute kind of authority that he despises. This absurd rationalism, to Nietzsche, severs the mind from the body and leads to dualism.

Within the first stage, therefore, the “*wahre Welt*” is attainable only by the pious and virtuous because the virtuous man overcomes his impulses/instincts with reason. “Rationality at any price,” notes Magnus, “and away with instinct! The true world--he lives in it, he is it.”¹⁴ So Platonism has given form to becoming by placing it under the yoke of reason, while being, the “true world,” assumes the character of the Platonic dialect. The “true world,” according to Nietzsche, is just a roundabout way of saying, “I, Plato, *am* the truth.”¹⁵

In the second stage, which can be seen as the wedding of Platonism to Christianity, Nietzsche recognizes that the “true world” has been pushed out of our grasp and our center of gravity has become displaced. He identifies this move, of placing meaning outside of this world, as the advent of Christianity. In his notebooks Nietzsche explains that “the origin of religion lies in extreme feelings of power.”¹⁶ But when these feelings of

¹² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 7[54]; *NSA* XII, p. 313 (01-02) and p. 312 (11-12).

¹³ Magnus, p. 9.

¹⁴ Magnus, p. 125.

¹⁵ *GD* IV; *NSA* VI, p. 80 (06-07).

¹⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[124]; *NSA* XIII, p. 306 (14-15).

power are “felt” by individuals in the herd, they assume that they are not their cause and that they are not responsible for them.¹⁷ The result of such thinking is that “religion has degraded the concept ‘man’; its extreme consequence is that everything good, great, and true is superhuman and only through a gift of grace.”¹⁸ In other words, human beings alone are unable to achieve greatness because everything “good and great” in them is the result of God’s grace. In this aspect, Nietzsche saw dualism as destroying an individual’s “true” autonomy.

We see a shift as to the attainability of the “*wahre Welt*” between the first two stages. Whereas for Plato the “true world” is open as a possibility for the virtuous and truly wise man, with Christianity this world is no longer attainable at all. Christianity, in the second stage, only promises attainment of the “true world” not to those who obey and follow rationality, but it is promised “for the sinner, who repents.”¹⁹ As a result, the Christian “true world” has become available to everyone; not just the pious and virtuous individuals who use their rationality. In other words, the herd has overtaken the “true world”. The will to a “beyond” has become elevated from the individual to the collective majority, thereby further destroying the autonomy of the individual.

In this respect, Platonism and Christianity are both nihilistic and hostile to any notion of subjectivity. In both of them, the ascending, ‘Yes-saying’ aspect of life has been devalued. In fact, the highest value, life, has itself been devalued. Individuals are no longer self-creators; instead they can now simply follow a prescribed set of moral laws (i.e., religious and universal moral teachings).

¹⁷ see *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[125]; *NSA* XIII, p. 306-307.

¹⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[125]; *NSA* XIII, p. 307 (27-29).

¹⁹ *GD* IV; *NSA* VI, p. 80 (09-10).

In the first two stages, the true world has been attainable. The difference is when the attainment is possible (whether in this life or not). In the third stage, which represents Kant's critical philosophy, the "true world" becomes not just unattainable, but also unpromiseable and indemonstrable. Here Nietzsche mockingly refers to Kant in the sentence, "The idea [the true world] has become sublime, pale, Nordic, Königsbergian."²⁰ In other words, the "*wahre Welt*" is revived by Kant as "a pale echo in the postulates of God, freedom, and immortality"²¹ and is no longer guaranteed by reason. With Kant, the attainable "*wahre Welt*" penetrates "through [the] mist and skepticism" as "a consolation, an obligation, an imperative."²² Kant, whom Nietzsche characterizes as reviving a "subterranean Christianity of values,"²³ postulated a "better life" for moral human beings whose actions are consistent with the categorical imperative (that one acts only on that maxim which you would universalize). In a word, Kant's "moral man" acts only out of respect for the moral law and focuses his attention only on the categorical imperative.²⁴ As Magnus explains, "The true world is one's indemonstrable reward for consistency in conduct."²⁵

The fourth stage is important for Nietzsche. Since the "true world" is indemonstrable and unattainable, it is also unknown: "Consequently not either comforting,

²⁰ *GD* IV; *NSA* VI, p. 80 (17-18).

²¹ Magnus, p. 10.

²² *GD* IV; *NSA* VI, p. 80 (16 and 14-15 respectively).

²³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[3]; *NSA* XII, 340 (23-24).

²⁴ The discussion of Kant in this chapter only focuses on the contribution which Nietzsche saw Kant making to the metaphysical/dualistic school of thinking that has plagued the Western world (Plato and Schopenhauer would also be included in this category).

²⁵ Magnus, p. 10.

redeeming, obligating: how could something unknown obligate us?"²⁶ In other words, Nietzsche is arguing that since the unknown cannot address itself to consciousness, it can have no effect upon our lives. This stage also represents the rise of positivism, the "first yawn of reason,"²⁷ in which the search for the "*wahre Welt*" is abandoned. The essential point of this stage is that the "true world" does not even offer us consolation anymore.

In the fifth stage the "*wahre Welt*" has been exposed. It is "an idea which has become useless, superfluous." As a result of its superfluity, this idea has also become "a refuted idea." So "let us abolish it!", exclaims Nietzsche.²⁸ In other words, the fifth stage is a representation of Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead." Plato's error has been exposed and cheerfulness, or *bon sens*, has returned. This stage follows logically from the first four stages. Since we cannot know the "real world," it has become a useless idea to us. So instead of maintaining an "empty" belief in a "useless, superfluous, refuted idea," we should abolish it. If we take Heidegger's notion that "God" represents the metaphysical world, this fifth stage can be seen as the "death of God."

At the sixth stage, it seems Nietzsche would simply call for a "reclaiming" of this world. But Nietzsche's meaning is more subtle and complex.²⁹ By abolishing "*the true*

²⁶ *GD IV*; *NSA VI*, p. 80 (20-22).

²⁷ *GD IV*; *NSA VI*, p. 80 (23).

²⁸ *Ibid*; *NSA VI*, p. 81 (02-03; 03; and 04).

²⁹ Nietzsche here is not advocating a kind of secular humanism. In fact, he rejects "a kind of *this-worldly solution* . . . [whereby] we plunge suddenly into the *opposed* valuations, with the same amount of energy" that originally caused us to posit another world. *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[148]; *NSA XIII*, p. 69-70 (1, 19-21).

world we have also abolished the apparent one!"³⁰ By "world of appearance" Nietzsche means the physical sensory world inhabited by human beings—this world, the world of becoming. In a word, both worlds have been devalued and abolished, and human beings are the cause. "God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!"³¹ Important to remember is that it is the Judeo-Christian conception of God that Nietzsche is rejecting, and this results in the condition of nihilism that I discussed in the previous chapter. Human beings are left in nihilism because not only is the "*wahre Welt*" devalued, but so is the actual world in which human beings live (the world of appearance). Now that man is torn from "some ancient, profound trust,"³² nihilism threatens human existence. An important question now presents itself: Since we are freed from metaphysics will the world be more joyful or have we, in destroying metaphysics, also destroyed our own horizon and this world?

Bernd Magnus notes that the sixth stage "reflects the new reality which follows in the wake of this devaluation--the desert, the Absurd."³³ In the wake of this devaluation of the highest values, or the abolition of the true world, is an aimless becoming in every area of reality.³⁴ The result of this "aimlessness" is what Nietzsche calls passive nihilism. He characterizes this "as the *decline and fall of the power of the spirit*."³⁵ Nietzsche calls this "passive" because individuals do not knowingly confront this devaluation, but

³⁰ *GD* IV; *NSA* VI, p. 81 (09-11).

³¹ *FW* 125; *NSA* III, p. 481 (15-16).

³² *FW* 343; *NSA* III, p. 573 (14-15). See note 4 in chapter two above.

³³ Magnus, p. 9.

³⁴ This includes the cultural, historical, philosophical, and political aspects of the world.

³⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[35]; *NSA* XII, p. 351 (12-13).

accepts this event in total unawareness. Passive nihilism is a “pessimistic surrendering” to the inherent meaninglessness of life (what Albert Camus later calls “the Absurd”). In a word, passive nihilism has triumphed. Important here is that the same dualism which has marked Western culture has itself become bankrupt and meaningless.

It is important to note that this passive nihilism has only an anesthetic effect; it is the “return of *bon sens* and cheerfulness”³⁶ after the death of God. To completely overcome nihilism, it will have to be exposed for what it truly is. Human beings will have to come to know they live in passive nihilism, and when passive nihilism becomes active, then and only then can human beings overcome it. This, besides being an essential theme in Nietzsche’s philosophy, is pivotal to his notion of subjectivity. Individuals need to overcome what they have become—we must overcome ourselves.³⁷ To overcome what we have become, we will have to change our nihilistic ideas and change or habitual way of viewing the world. Through teaching a “new” kind of subjectivity, Nietzsche is calling for tremendous consequences and far-reaching implications for both the world and the way individuals view it. In a word, we will have to transform the current way we understand religion, morality, and political and social institutions.

In *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Nietzsche gives the reader some insight as to the possibilities the death of God presents: “The concept ‘God’ was up to now the greatest *objection* to existence . . . We deny God, we deny the responsibility in God: *with that* only now do we free the world.”³⁸ The world is now free in the sense that individuals no

³⁶ *GD* IV; *NSA* VI, p. 81 (05-06).

³⁷ This is an expression of Nietzsche’s notion of self-overcoming, which I address below.

³⁸ *GD* VI 8; *NSA* VI, p. 97 (05-08).

longer have to adhere to any metaphysical system, whether it be a reliance on God or on an absolute universal moral system. More importantly, Nietzsche sees that the conditions now exist to teach his “new” notion of subjectivity. Seeing the death of God as the destruction of the metaphysical world represents a great liberation. But the nihilism that results from this destruction does not pave the way for the “revaluation of values.” The revaluation of values, which can be seen as the return to the first stage, also represents the return to those values that were once considered “great.” But the sixth stage, which Nietzsche calls the highpoint of humanity [*Höhepunkt der Menschheit*], abolishes both the “*wahre Welt*” and this world (the world of appearance). Along with the destruction of this world, all values are also destroyed. As a way to work through this nihilism, Nietzsche introduces Zarathustra: “INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.”³⁹ This is important because with Zarathustra comes the “reign” of the *Übermensch* whose love of the earth will affirm everything. “Love of the earth” means that through the revaluation of values, all Platonic dichotomies will be eliminated and humanity will advance to the stage in which there is no alienation between God, human beings, and nature. This advancement is at once a return to the life-affirming spirit of the early Greeks—i.e., “the religious affirmation of life, the whole of life and not denied in part.”⁴⁰

Nietzsche makes this connection between Zarathustra and the death of God in *Götzen-Dämmerung*. “Incipit Zarathustra” echoes “Incipit Tragedia,” the opening sentence of the last section (section 342) of the fourth book of *Die fröhliche Wissen-*

³⁹ GD IV; NSA VI, p. 81 (14): “Zarathustra begins.”

⁴⁰ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[89]; NSA XIII, 266 (13-14).

Compare to EH XIV 5; NSA VI, p. 370 (23-27). Here Zarathustra teaches a new type of man who “conceives of reality: *as it is*: being strong enough for it —, this type is not estranged, transported [from reality], it is *reality itself*, it also has all that is terrible and questionable in it, *only in that way can human beings have greatness.*”

schaft. The first edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, published in 1882, ended with section 342. In the next year, the first and second parts of *Zarathustra* appeared. Section one of *Zarathustra*'s prologue contains section 342 from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*.

This one-in-the-same section tells of *Zarathustra*'s descent among the ranks of man:

"Behold! I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has collected too much honey, I need hands, out-stretched, to give away and distribute, until the wise man among men once again enjoy their folly and the poor enjoy their riches as they become cheerful. For that purpose I must rise to the depths: how you in the evenings, when you go behind the sea and still bring light to the underworld, you over-abundant star!—I must, like you, *go down* . . . Bless the cup, which wants to overflow, so that the golden water from it flows and everywhere reflects your burdensome joy! Behold! This cup wants to become empty again, and *Zarathustra* wants to become man again."—Thus began *Zarathustra*'s going under [*untergehen*].⁴¹

Zarathustra, teacher of the *Übermensch*, now becomes the prophet to save man. But from what is he saving man? I believe *Zarathustra* is saving man from the meaninglessness of incomplete nihilism. *Zarathustra* is going to save man from the temptation of replacing the dead God, or metaphysical system, with another one.⁴² For if human beings "feel the urge" to replace the recently vacated "space" of God with a new idol, they instead can and should look towards the symbol of the *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch*, which "*shall be the meaning of the earth,*" will keep human beings "*faithful to the earth*" and undermine those "who speak to you of supernatural hopes!"⁴³ Remaining faithful to the earth

⁴¹ *FW* 342; *NSA* III, p. 571 (13-22, 24-29). This passage is also found in *Z Vorrede* 1; *NSA* VI, pp. 11-12 (16-24 and 01-10).

⁴² This is what he saw as the function of the political ideologies of his time. As I discussed in Part I, such systems as democracy and socialism have served as new kinds of authority over individuals.

⁴³ *Z Vorrede* 3; *NSA* IV, pp. 14-15 (30, 01-02, and 02-03 respectively).

means that the highest value, or “the main emphasis of values,”⁴⁴ will not be placed in “the beyond,” but will be discovered anew from within. The symbol of the *Übermensch*, I argue, is an essential aspect of Nietzsche’s notion of subjectivity for this very reason.

C. The *Übermensch*

The following discussion of the *Übermensch* will focus on how Nietzsche uses this doctrine to keep human beings faithful to the earth by eliminating dualistic thinking.⁴⁵ The death of the Christian notion of God brought with it the “death” of all transcendent values; but if the resulting nihilism is not to destroy life completely, there must be a new criteria by which human beings can set new “goals” and create new values. For Nietzsche, modern man lacks any such higher ideals; having lost “the *center of gravity*, that abandoned our lives,—we do not know where we are for a while.”⁴⁶ The solution, he offers, is to seek a new center [*ein neue Zentrum*]. This new ideal will be an “earthly ideal”; if it is not, we would just be replacing the old God with a new one. Formerly it was God that provided the model of perfection by which individuals could strive. Also important is that in God’s eyes, all human beings are considered equal, but now that God is dead, human beings find themselves goal-less. Whereas God formerly upheld the notion of equality, in a godless world the notion of equality translates into mediocrity. Belief in equality ends the struggle for the growth of the spirit. The “wholeness of the spirit” is in fact what the *Übermensch* symbolizes. By “wholeness,” Nietzsche means that the spirit of “higher” individuals will embrace, affirm, and creatively

⁴⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[226]; NSA XIII, p. 88 (03).

⁴⁵ A thorough examination of this concept, however, must take into account the doctrine of the will to power, as discussed in the next chapter.

⁴⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[148]; NSA XIII, p. 69 (18-19).

employ all the various conflicting instincts that make-up human beings. Higher individuals must “have *all* strong, apparently contradictory gifts and desires: but so that they go with one another under one yoke.”⁴⁷

As Schutte writes, “What is tragic under the revalued system of values is not one’s return to the earth, but one’s persistent efforts to disassociate oneself from one’s origins in nature.”⁴⁸ Schutte here is referring to that reluctance to “return” to the earth and re-associate ourselves with nature—a division created by dualism in the human spirit which led to the spirit practicing cruelty against the body: “Once the soul looked contemptuously upon the body: and at that time this contempt was the highest.”⁴⁹ Zarathustra’s teaching about the *Übermensch* can be seen, in this sense, as a move towards the affirmation of the physical and the sensory in contrast to the cruelty against the body produced by dualism. One of the essential messages Zarathustra teaches through the *Übermensch* is to go beyond our traditional notions of good and evil. Going “beyond good and evil” means that the notions of “good” and “evil” that are based upon Platonic valuations are overcome and replaced by a more comprehensive and integrated view of reality. Since human beings have measured themselves by the standards of traditional morality, the overcoming of this tradition (which includes the tradition of the Enlightenment) requires the overcoming of one’s present understanding of the self.⁵⁰ The overcoming of dualism and the embracing of opposites is seen by Nietzsche as creating a

⁴⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[166]; NSA XII, p. 433 (24-26).

⁴⁸ Schutte, p. 117.

⁴⁹ *Z Vorrede* 3; NSA IV, p. 15 (11-13).

⁵⁰ In Part I we saw Nietzsche’s critique of the modern view of the self. In this chapter I am using “the self” to refer to the dualistic tradition in general.

great overflow of creative power, and this is precisely what he intends to replace dualism with—creativity. Instead of dualism, Nietzsche teaches that life is the creative process of self-overcoming. I will briefly discuss what Nietzsche means by “self-overcoming” [*Selbstüberwindung*] here, and then again in chapter four (when I discuss his doctrine of will to power). By “self-overcoming,” Nietzsche is referring to the sublimating process of the will to power through which human beings can channel seemingly baser impulses into more creative achievements. For example, a sexual impulse could both be sublimated and channeled into more creative spiritual activity instead of being either repressed or fulfilled directly. The new standard of Nietzsche’s revaluation of values is: “Whether out of abundance or out of desire . . . out of rareness of elements *or* out of overwhelming mastery over many, so that they are taken into duty, when they are needed.”⁵¹

Nietzsche discusses this theme of self-overcoming in “*Von den drei Verwandlungen*” in *Zarathustra*. This chapter illustrates how Zarathustra does not simply plan on waiting around for the appearance of noble, high spirits. Through his teachings, his gift, we find that Zarathustra seeks to create such spirits. Here he describes how the human spirit, through self-overcoming, passes from an ascetic stage (or cruelty against the body/earth), to the denial of all values, and then ultimately to a new beginning [*ein Neubeginnen*] in which the individual’s will “now wills the spirit, *his* world regains the lost world.”⁵² Essentially this notion of self-overcoming represents the desiring and struggling to reach beyond oneself in order to become what one is. This chapter in *Zarathustra* can also be seen as the way that Nietzsche, and the individual, can come to terms with the Enlightenment tradition. To illustrate, Nietzsche uses the symbols of the camel, the lion,

⁵¹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[145]; *NSA* XII, p. 537 (15-16, 19-21).

⁵² *Z I* 1; *NSA* IV, p. 31 (11-12).

and the child to point to three essential moments in the development of the “true” individual. In the first moment, symbolized by the camel, the true thinker must “carry” and incorporate the tradition from which he or she has come from. This is important to Nietzsche because individuals cannot just simply forget or distance themselves from whence they came. Everyone comes from a particular background, in this case the Enlightenment, and incorporating it is the only way to overcome it. This is precisely what the lion and the child symbolize respectively: After “carrying” the tradition, then the individual must find the strength to challenge it, and finally through the incorporation of the previous stages the individual must be able to create a new perspective. The nature of the individual’s relationship to tradition is a problem that troubled Nietzsche. Part I of this paper can be seen as Nietzsche’s struggle to come to terms with the first moment described above—of incorporating the tradition of the Enlightenment.

In his book, *Nietzsche’s Teachings*, Laurence Lampert discusses these three transformations. “On the first transformation, from the spirit’s prior state to the camel,” Lampert points out, “Zarathustra is silent, apart from declaring it to be necessary.”⁵³ Whereas the spirit’s transformation from the camel to the lion and the lion to the child can be taught, the first transformation to the camel cannot. To understand Zarathustra here, we must turn back to the prologue and the section on the tightrope walker. The tightrope walker is described as “walking over the rope, which was stretched between two towers, so that he was hanging over the market and the people,”⁵⁴ when he suddenly

⁵³ Laurence Lampert. *Nietzsche’s Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 33. Herein after “Lampert (1986).”

⁵⁴ *Z Vorrede* 6; NSA IV, p. 21 (09-11).

loses his balance and falls to his death after being leaped over and taunted by a malicious but talented jester:

“What are you doing here between towers? You belong in the tower, you yourself ought to be locked up; while you exist, you block the path for one better than yourself!”— And with each word he came closer and closer to him: when he was but one pace behind . . . he yelled out as if a devil and leapt over the man who was in his way. This man, however, seeing his rival win, lost his head and the rope; he threw his pole away and after this plunged into the depths rapidly, as a whirl of arms and legs.⁵⁵

Zarathustra, as a result, rushes to the fallen body and tries to console the tightrope walker.

He ends up, though, discomfiting him. Zarathustra tells him that the devil and the hell he fears does not exist and that “your soul will be dead even before your body: now fear no more!”⁵⁶ This makes the tightrope walker feel as though his life was worthless and meaningless. But Zarathustra tells him that his life has meaning and worth in itself.

“[Y]ou have made danger your companion, there is nothing to despise in that.”⁵⁷ By making danger his way of life, he has lifted himself high above the crowd and made himself the symbol for an ideal contrary to the crowd’s ideal of danger-free contentment. Lampert observes, “In living heroically, [the tightrope walker] has distinguished himself by a manliness worthy of Zarathustra’s respect.”⁵⁸

This heroic spirit is in fact the representation of the camel spirit. Whereas Zarathustra’s teaching aims to produce the qualities it deems worthy of a noble life, it depends at first on a quality, or gift, of the spirit that is not “givable.” Furthermore, those gifted in

⁵⁵ *Z Vorrede 6; NSA IV, p. 21 (17-21, 22-27).*

⁵⁶ *Z Vorrede 6; NSA IV, p. 22 (10-11).*

⁵⁷ *Z Vorrede 6; NSA IV, p. 22 (16-17).*

⁵⁸ Lampert (1986), p. 27.

this way, the spiritually adventurous, are already adjusted to undertake the heroic way of life. "By beginning this way," Lampert notes, "Zarathustra limits his appeal to spirited natures of a special and rare sort, those whose qualities of spirit already single them out from the people as a whole."⁵⁹

The camel, characterized by an unconditional obedience to the values and laws of tradition, is the beast of burden. Although the camel is a homely and domesticated beast, its possession of a spirit that would bear much [*der tragsame Geist*] renders it noble and heroic, like the tight-rope walker who lives his life dangerously. Since Zarathustra searches to find disciples, it makes sense that he should first insist that potential followers have a willingness to bear much. For without the camel's qualities, there would be no foundation on which the spirit could grow. It is precisely this willingness to bear much burden that that camel kneels down "wanting to be well loaded"⁶⁰ with the burdensome weight of the laws of tradition. "Tradition" here refers to both the Judeo-Christian religion and the tradition of the Enlightenment that was discussed above in Part I.

Once burdened down, the camel spirit "speeds into its own desert" where "in the loneliest desert . . . the spirit here becomes a lion, he would capture freedom itself and then be master in his own desert."⁶¹ The "desert" here stands for Zarathustra's isolation in the midst of a world still plunged in the ways of traditional laws and values.

According to Lampert, "The lion spirit is transformed by the need of the spirit for a home, not the ancestral home, but one it builds for itself." The "ancestral home," or tradition, has been exposed and thereby destroyed. What is left is a kind of "homeless

⁵⁹ Lampert (1986), p. 33.

⁶⁰ Z I 1; NS4 IV, p. 29 (10).

⁶¹ Z I 1; NS4 IV, p. 30 (04-05 and 06-08).

nihilism”⁶² where the lion “seeks out his last master: he wants to become it and its last gods enemy; for victory, he will wrestle with the great dragon.”⁶³ This “master” is not some physical, external ruler, but is the camel-determination of the spirit (i.e., the tradition-burdened spirit). The lion wants to become an enemy to this last master so that the experience is transformed into something positive. In a word, the camel’s exile into “the desert” is transformed by the lion into an inner spiritual kingdom in which he is master and creator of himself. Although not published until four years after *Zarathustra*, one cannot help but think of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* and how the noble individuals enter alone into the desert.

The greatest enemy of the lion-spirit is the “thou shalt” [*Du sollst*], which is the name of the great dragon. Zarathustra describes this dragon as:

... [An] animal covered in scales, and on every scale
shines a golden “thou shalt!”

Thousand year old values shine on those scales,
and thus speaks the mightiest of all dragons, “the values
of all things—they shine on me.”

“All values have been created already, and I am
all created values. Verily, there shall be no more ‘I will!’”
Thus speaks the dragon.⁶⁴

These “golden scales” refer to the Ten Commandments, and this is why the “thou shalt” is so dangerous. The great dragon stands in the way of creation. All the dragon requires is a blind obedience to these values “thousands of years old,” or the Judeo-Christian tradition. But it is these values which weaken our courage to destroy. Furthermore, without our courage to destroy, creation is impossible. The lion, though, is able to resist these

⁶² Lampert (1986), p. 35.

⁶³ Z I 1; NS4 IV, p. 30 (09-11).

⁶⁴ Z I 1; NS4 IV, p. 30 (15-22).

old values and thus can be seen as the spirit of the revaluation of values. So the power of the lion lies in its resistance. The lion issues out a mighty "I will"⁶⁵ against the dragon's "thou shalt," thereby destroying these traditional values. Important here is that both the camel and the lion cannot create any new values. As Stanley Rosen points out, "The camel is also incapable of creating the freedom from old values which is the necessary precondition for the creation of new values."⁶⁶ But herein lies the strength of the lion-spirit: With its "I will," the lion destroys and breaks free of all current value systems, thereby creating the freedom necessary for new creation.

So the lion's strength comes through its "I will," which is the same, notes Zarathustra, as "a sacred 'No.'"⁶⁷ But for new values to be created a "sacred Yes" to existence is needed, and this is symbolized by the child. It is precisely the lion's strength that prevents it from being able to create. By destroying the old value system tradition, the lion is in fact still restricted by that tradition—it is all the lion knows. For creation, though, a fresh beginning is needed: "Innocence and forgetting is the child, a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yeah-saying.'"⁶⁸ A new beginning is now possible because the child has both no memory of the old value system, and the child acts spontaneously. Rosen notes that, "Children do not act on the basis of a rational reappropriation and application of tradition."⁶⁹ The child starts with a

⁶⁵ Important to point out is that in Nietzsche's fully developed philosophy there is no "I." The ego is a psychological construct and an illusory combination of continuously dissolving points of consciousness which are in themselves moments of will to power. I discuss this more in the next chapter.

⁶⁶ Stanley Rosen. *The Mask of Enlightenment*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 82.

⁶⁷ Z I 1; *NSA* IV, p. 30 (28).

⁶⁸ Z I 1; *NSA* IV, p. 31 (07-09).

⁶⁹ Rosen, p. 83.

tabula rasa and approaches life playfully with laughter. Creation is a game, Zarathustra tells us, and the child's playful approach enables him to create. Creation is a game here because of the innocence of becoming [*Unschuld des Werdens*], and nothing embodies this better than the child.⁷⁰ The child, seen as the embodiment of the innocence of Becoming, can be seen as the symbol of self-overcoming (and consequently as the symbol of the *Übermensch*). "His will now wills the spirit, *his* world regains itself from the lost world."⁷¹ In a word, the child's affirmation of life transcends dualism.⁷²

This chapter from *Zarathustra* is important because it connects the two meanings of the "death of God" that have been presented. The child, the symbol of the *Übermensch*, symbolizes the wholeness of spirit that was missing from the alienated, nihilistic life marked by dualism. This fulfillment of the wholeness of spirit can only be realized with the strength to revalue all existing values. What is more, this fulfillment of the wholeness of spirit is also a move towards approaching Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity. As Schutte notes, "The fulfillment of the moral consciousness that identifies itself with the camel's bearing of what is difficult finally lies at the stage of the *Übermensch-Child*."⁷³ But what exactly does Nietzsche mean by "the *Übermensch*"?

For Nietzsche, the innocence of becoming, which "gives us the greatest courage and the greatest *freedom*,"⁷⁴ is the closest we can come to giving the world character.

⁷⁰ I discuss the innocence of becoming below in chapter eight.

⁷¹ Z I 1; NS4 IV, p. 31 (11-12).

⁷² Here I cannot help but think back to Arthur C. Clarke's 2001: *A Space Odyssey* where the character of Dave Bowman is transformed into the "Star-Child" and re-delivered to earth. Back at earth the "Star-Child" is to lead humanity to their next stage of development.

⁷³ Schutte, p. 119.

⁷⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 8[19]; NS4 X, p. 341 (03).

There is no "Being." In this respect we can see why self-overcoming is so essential to Nietzsche: If there is no state of "being," then human beings have the capacity to always "become." As a result, Nietzsche does not set up any goals for humanity. A goal implies that there is a state of "Being" or some final stage that is possible to achieve. This is why the *Übermensch* is presented by Nietzsche/Zarathustra as a symbol. By remaining at the level of a "symbol," the *Übermensch* can be used by humanity as a guide by which to live ones life. If established as a goal to achieve, the *Übermensch* would then simply become a new idol that has replaced the "old idol," or God.

The *Übermensch*, therefore, is the symbol which humanity should look to as the perfect embodiment of both self-overcoming and the innocence of becoming. It is the ideal that stands beyond the human condition, beyond good and evil, and beyond the dualism of the modern spirit. It is the model to which Nietzsche refers when he asks us to "lose" our humanity and strive for the reunification of the divided self,⁷⁵ thereby approaching "true" subjectivity. The human self originally became divided, according to Nietzsche, when man's instincts were devalued and repressed. From this state "they themselves felt awkward in performing the simplest tasks," and this resulted in individuals losing their "ancient guides . . . their regulating, unconscious, infallible drives."⁷⁶ In other words, individuals were no longer self-creators and simply followed the dictates of some "external" authority—whether it be God or some universal moral system. For this "transformation" of the human spirit to be possible, many changes must take place. At this point we find Nietzsche starting to think about politics. Since the split psyche of modern man is manifest in fragmented culture, and since he sees the increasing fragmen-

⁷⁵ Losing our humanity here is another way of talking about the overcoming of dualism in the individual.

⁷⁶ *GM* II 16; *NSA* V, p. 322 (10-11 and 11-13).

tation of the social and political world as a result of modern man's split psyche, the change must begin with the inner condition of individuals. In the social conditions that currently exist, Nietzsche sees only alienated communities. Such communities are still bound by that morality based on the Christian notion of God and therefore marked by the duality between good and evil. These alienated communities, though, could be transformed into authentic communities. Nietzsche, in fact, stresses the need for change, and such change begins with the transformation of man:

*Not to make human beings "better," not to preach to them any form of morality, as if "morality in itself," or any ideal for human beings were given at all: but to create conditions, under which stronger human beings are necessary, which on their part need and consequently will have a morality (more clearly: a *physical-spiritual discipline*) that makes them strong!*⁷⁷

Nietzsche here is saying that if stronger human beings are to exist, those who are self-creators, there must first exist strong conditions.⁷⁸ One way of bringing about such strong conditions is to use the *Übermensch*-Child as the guide and symbol:

Awake and listen, you who are lonely! From the future there come winds with secrets flapping their wings; and on delicate ears fare good messages.

You who are lonely today, you who are withdrawing, you shall be first a nation: out of you, you who have chosen yourselves, shall a chosen people arise:— and out of them the *Übermensch*.

Verily, a place of recovery shall the earth yet become! And already a new odor lies around it, bringing salvation,—and a new hope!⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[68]; NS4 XII, p. 495 (20-27).

⁷⁸ By "stronger" Nietzsche means those individuals who have a rigidly defined inner order of rank. This, as it turns out, is the foundation of the Nietzschean individual.

⁷⁹ Z I 22 §2; NS4 IV, p. 100-101 (30-05).

Zarathustra tells his disciples that in solitude they are the ones revitalizing their spirits, and the day will come when they will be the rulers of the "New Communities." These "New Communities" will be founded on the principle of respect for the earth. By respecting the earth, human beings will not make up "another world." Respecting the earth will result in staying grounded in this world because we will realize that values cannot come from "out there" but only from oneself, thereby insuring that no new dualistic system is developed to replace the old one. To insure this, Zarathustra offers the *Übermensch*-Child as the symbol of this "new way."

I cannot stress enough that the *Übermensch* is a symbol to strive for and be used as a guide, not a figure to be actualized. By striving for this goal we still seek to be more than what we are, yet we remain faithful to the earth in that we are not looking "out there in the beyond" for meaning. This is how the *Übermensch* is the meaning of the earth: By not positing "good" beyond oneself, striving toward the *Übermensch* ensures that one will not "look to the beyond" for meaning. Nietzsche makes it clear that there has not yet been an *Übermensch*, and that there will never be an actualized, physical *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch* cannot be attained in the current nihilistic and dualistic culture. Therefore, as long as man stays alienated from the earth, the *Übermensch* is unapproachable. "Physician, you help yourself: thus you help your patients too,"⁸⁰ urges Zarathustra. Human beings must first heal themselves and their socio-political environment from the alienating values and institutions, and this will consequently help the rest of humanity.⁸¹ One way to do so is by striving toward the symbol of the *Übermensch*.

⁸⁰ Z I 22 §2; *NSA* IV, p. 100 (24).

⁸¹ Such "alienating institutions" refer to socialism and democracy and the other political ideologies prevalent in Nietzsche's time. For a critique of such ideologies, see chapter four above.

If the *Übermensch* is an unattainable ideal, then why should human beings even bother to strive towards it? The answer, according to Nietzsche, is because striving for the *Übermensch* makes possible the emergence of the "higher man." Nietzsche was more concerned with cultivating the emergence of "higher" human beings than he was in trying to get men to become *Übermenschen*. But there is an essential connection. One could not become the "higher man" without the symbol of the *Übermensch* anymore than one could be an adult without first being a child.

D. The "Higher Man"⁸²

Many commentators equate the *Übermensch* with the "higher man." They see the two terms as one-in-the-same. Arthur Danto and Walter Kaufmann, for example, both argue that the *Übermensch* must be an attainable goal. Danto argues that if the *Übermensch* is to be more than an ascetic ideal, then it must be attainable. This I believe is wrong. I agree with Schutte that the *Übermensch* is a "reminder of one's origins and a symbol of fulfillment beyond good and evil."⁸³ In other words, the *Übermensch* is the symbol of the reunified self. The whole of *Also sprach Zarathustra* is about the title character preaching how the coming of the *Übermensch* is seen as a gradual evolution. What is immediately within reach, though, is the process of "working towards" and striving or self-overcoming, not the actual ideal itself.

Kaufmann, in his discussion of the *Übermensch*, overlooks an important line from *Zarathustra*: "Never yet has there been an *Übermensch*."⁸⁴ Kaufmann then concludes

⁸² Please note that this is only a preliminary discussion of the "higher man." I pursue a more detailed discussion of this notion when I discuss Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power, and when I discuss his politics.

⁸³ Schutte, p. 121.

⁸⁴ Z II 4; *NSA* IV, p. 119 (26).

his discussion of the *Übermensch* by stating that the man who has become the *Übermensch* “has overcome his animal nature, organized the chaos of his passions, sublimated his impulses, and given style to his character.”⁸⁵ But Kaufmann is in error to merge the idea of the *Übermensch* with the idea of the “higher man.” In an illuminating notebook entry from 1887 (and latter revised in 1888), Nietzsche explicitly acknowledges his *Übermensch* as a symbol, and that he was really aiming at the actual emergence of “higher” individuals. In this notebook entry, Nietzsche is speaking out against what he calls “economic optimism” [*ökonomische Optimismus*] which claims that “as if the increasing costs of *everything* must necessarily increase the use of everything.” But he notes that this really only leads to a loss in which “human beings become *diminished*”⁸⁶ and leveled to a common herd. To this he proposes a counter movement:

To bring to light a *stronger* species, a higher type that emerges and preserves itself under difficult conditions from the average man. My notion, my *parable* for this type is, as one knows, the word “*Übermensch*.”⁸⁷

Nietzsche is very clear that he is using the *Übermensch* as the symbol, or parable, for the “higher man,” and that it is his notion of the “higher man” which can be actualized.

In a word, the *Übermensch*, as a symbol, is a metaphor for the means to transcend the dualism of the modern human condition. The “higher man,” on the other hand, is the “figure” that is attainable, by degree, when one uses the *Übermensch* as a guide.

⁸⁵ Kaufmann, p. 316. Will to power, though, does not aim at “organizing the chaos of the passions,” or “overcoming our animal nature.” This view reflects a more Platonic reading of will to power as creating a harmony in the soul. I discuss Nietzsche’s will to power in the next chapter.

⁸⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[17]; NSA XII, p. 463 (24-26 and 28).

⁸⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[17]; NSA XII, p. 462 (16-21).

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From the above discussion of Nietzsche's critique of "*Wie die 'wahre Welt' Endlich zur Fabel Wurde*," it is important to recognize that Nietzsche means more than just a "loss of meaning" with God's death; there is also the destruction of an entire "other world." For Nietzsche, transcendent and "other-worldly" ideals have always imprisoned humanity within the shadow of a higher realm; whether it is Plato's world of Forms, the Christian idea of heaven, or Kant's world of things-in-themselves. As values they could never inspire us to go beyond ourselves. They have instead served as sources of authority by which individuals should blindly follow. In this context, against the dualistic tradition, to proclaim "God is dead" is to accept the failure of all transcendent ideals and to search for a new mode of valuation which would lead us back to the earth and ultimately inspire the process of self-overcoming, an essential aspect of Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity. "God" in this aspect refers not only to the omnipotent, omniscient Christian deity, but also to the supersensory world in general—that world which has been taken as the "true" world. So along with the resulting nihilism that results from God's death, as discussed in the previous chapter, the metaphysical world has also lost its power and no longer functions as the authority that determines this world.

Heidegger notes that the "position in the supernatural world" once held by God is now vacant. Yet this "empty place demands to be occupied anew and to have God, now vanished from it, replaced by something else."⁸⁸ New ideals do indeed fill this void—specifically one ideal. Now that God is dead Nietzsche, through Zarathustra, announces the *Übermensch* as humanity's new ideal, or symbol. As I examine in the next chapter,

⁸⁸ Martin Heidegger. *Gesamtausgabe, Band V: Holzwege. "Nietzsches Wort: 'God ist Tot,'"* p. 225.

the teaching of the *Übermensch* looks forward to the emergence of something beyond humanity and encourages us to participate in this by engaging in the process of self-overcoming and abandoning all of our restricted notions of traditional selfhood. In this aspect, the *Übermensch* embodies a very general notion of individual autonomy—one very different from the traditional Enlightenment. But, as I have been arguing, Nietzsche stays under the shadow of the Enlightenment. After the death of God, the symbol of the *Übermensch* represents the overcoming of every traditional notion of the self, morality, and dualistic tendency which asserts the absolute distinction of the subject and the world.

In the last two chapters I have argued that Nietzsche remained within the shadow of the Enlightenment by continuing the project of distancing the individual from all “external” sources of authority (i.e., religion and universal moral systems). And by doing so Nietzsche has been paving the way for his “new” notion of subjectivity, which is the focus of the next chapter. By continuing, and in a way finishing, the Enlightenment project of subjectivity, Nietzsche remains firmly in the shadow of the Enlightenment.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NIETZSCHEAN SUBJECTIVITY

The two previous chapters situated Nietzsche's proclamation "God is dead" within the context of the Enlightenment. I argued that for Nietzsche, the death of God continued the enlightened project of distancing the individual from all "external" sources of authority, thereby paving the way towards "true" subjectivity. Nietzsche "paved the way" by destroying both transcendent values and all traditional dualistic systems. These are precisely what I mean by "all external sources of authority"—they served as absolute and universal models by which individuals could simply adhere to and follow. Whereas figures of the Enlightenment, especially Kant, believed they were celebrating the autonomy of the individual, Nietzsche critiqued this movement as smothering and eliminating "true" human subjectivity. In this chapter I will discuss Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity and argue that although he critiques the rational, Cartesian notion of autonomy that was developed by the Enlightenment, he nonetheless completes this movement's project of developing a strong notion of subjectivity. In this way Nietzsche remained in the shadow of the Enlightenment. In the course of discussing Nietzsche's subjectivity I will examine his notion of will to power. As will become clear, by discussing will to power I will simultaneously be developing his notion of subjectivity.

Before discussing Nietzsche's "true" subjectivity, it is important to see how he viewed modern man—the one carried over from the traditional Enlightenment.¹ The psyche of modern man is marked by an unhealthy condition of inner chaos, meaning that each drive, or instinct, wants to dominate. When Nietzsche talks about the "lower man"

¹ When I say "modern man" in this chapter, I am referring to the view of the individual from the Enlightenment.

or herd, he is referring to those people who let any instinct rule. The “higher man,” by contrast, is the individual who can integrate his or her contradictory instincts by discovering the central unifying and organizing instinct—will to power.

The internal chaos of modern man is, for Nietzsche, the defining characteristic of modern civilization. Modern man is an animal² whose instincts have become fragmented and devoid of any purposeful ordering. To Nietzsche, this disordering is the mark of the diseased condition of modern man:

That man has, in contrast to the animals, an abundance of *contrasting* drives and impulses in his great body: because of this synthesis he is able to be master of the earth . . . so that in their *contradictions* man does not perish. Thus a drive as master, its opposite drive weakened, refined, as the impulse provides the *stimulus* for the activity of the chief drive.

The highest man would have the greatest multiplicity of drives, as well as the greatest relative strength, that one is allowed to endure. In the action: where the plant man shows his strength, one finds powerful instincts driving *against* one another . . . but are brought under control.³

This passage, along with describing the “diseased condition of man,” also illustrates how the entire arena of human action is accounted for in terms of instincts and drives.

Furthermore, Nietzsche explains that human beings need a unifying instinct to order the other instincts, and this is will to power:

The multitude and disintegration of drives, the lack of a system among them, results in a ‘weak will;’ their coordination under a single hegemony results in a ‘strong will;’—in the first case it is the oscillation and

² By “animal,” Nietzsche is here situating the human being within nature.

³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 27[59]; *NSA* XI, p. 289 (8-10, 12-21).

the lack in gravity; in the latter, the precision and clarity of the direction.⁴

So the chaotic state of the instincts results in the “diseased condition of modern man” and in such a condition the recovery of “true” subjectivity requires the coordination of instincts by a central, unifying drive, or will to power.

A. Will to Power as the Unifying Force of the Self

The interpretation of Nietzsche’s notion of will to power is perhaps the most widely disputed of all Nietzsche’s doctrines and is, I believe, an essential aspect of his notion of subjectivity. In this section I will consider Alexander Nehamas’s interpretation and argue that when the notion of self-overcoming is added to his view, a more comprehensive interpretation of will to power emerges. Whereas Part I examined Nietzsche’s critique of the traditional self, here I will discuss Nietzsche’s notion of the self. The “Nietzschean self,” I argue, is a direct result of the unifying force of the will to power and therefore is the locus of Nietzschean subjectivity.

The doctrine of will to power is undoubtedly the most difficult of Nietzsche’s doctrines to formulate. Part of the problem is that the will to power is not a concrete thing. It is not something that can be isolated and described in definite terms. Nehamas rightly points out that things do not have a will to power, things are will to power: “Nietzsche strains language by writing that things *are*, and not that they *have*, the will to power.”⁵ By emphasizing Nietzsche’s claim that things *are* the will to power, Nehamas

⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[219]; *NSA* XIII, p. 394 (5-10).

⁵ Nehamas, p. 76. Nehamas’s comment about “straining language” refers to Nietzsche’s observation that language objectifies whatever it denotes. As soon as we say “the will to power” we make it an object, yet Nietzsche did not think of the will to power as an object. For more on Nietzsche’s views on language see Alan Schrift’s *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation* (esp. chapter five).

rejects the interpretation of will to power as an object. In this way Nehamas, following Nietzsche, establishes will to power as a process, and disassociates it from the common psychological notion of the will.⁶ What this means is that will to power is more than a force of motivation in people. Nietzsche is quite adamant in rejecting this notion of a psychological will:

[I]s "will to power" a kind of "will" or identified with the concept "will"? Is it called the same as desiring? or commanding? . . .

[M]y theorem is: that the previous *will* of psychology is an unjust, prefabricated generalization, that this will *does not exist at all*.⁷

By denying that the will is a separate psychological function, Nietzsche is also rejecting the view that mental acts are separate from physical acts. In other words, the idea of cause and effect is an illusion. Acts cannot be separated from their many features because they, the acts, are inseparably interconnected with one another (just as lightening and its flash are connected). One cannot separate acts and label some "causes" and others "effects." In a word, there is no need for a distinct faculty in which acts reside and are made possible because, "There is no '*willing*,' but only a *willing something*: one must not release the aim from the condition."⁸ One consequence of this view is that there is no substantial self that unifies actions.⁹

⁶ I examine this above in Part I, chapter four.

⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[121]; NSA XIII, p. 301 (14-16, 19-21). See also *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[73] where he states, "there is no will" [NSA XIII, p. 36 (31)].

⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[114]; NSA XIII, p. 54 (20-21).

⁹ See Part I, chapter four above for a more detailed critique of the traditional self.

In denying that things can be separated into distinct acts, Nietzsche is insisting that everything in the world inseparably interconnects. According to Nietzsche, all human behavior consists of long, complicated events that cannot be distinguished:

The most recent history of an action relates to this action: but further back lies a prehistory which covers a wider field: the individual action is at the same time a part of a much more extensive, *later* fact. The brief-er and the more extended processes are not separated.¹⁰

In a word, all events are connected with one another. Human beings cannot determine where one event ends and another ends. "We separate ourselves, the doers, from the deed, and we make use of this pattern everywhere—we seek a doer for every event." But causes for Nietzsche are self-deceptions that were invented to explain why something has changed. In reality, "the thing, the subject, the will, the intention—[these are] all inherent in the concept 'cause.'"¹¹ Inventing causes and effects, though, is where human beings "get into trouble." Human beings have come to believe that their actions and behaviors are simple, uncomplex events which they can know. People believe that a thought, a belief, a desire, or an intention are all separate and distinct faculties. But to Nietzsche, the intention/belief/thought is the event itself. Furthermore, Nietzsche calls the separating of some actions into causes and others into effects, "a great stupidity."¹²

The belief that events are distinct from each other, or "the problem of causality," is a problem Nietzsche deals with in his notebooks in a section titled, "The Struggle Against *Determinism*" ["*Zur Bekämpfung des Determinismus*"]. The "problem of causality" created many problems. "Cause and effect—a dangerous notion, so long as

¹⁰ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 7[6]; *NSA* XII, p. 283 (20-25).

¹¹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[98]; *NSA* XIII, p. 275 (11-12).

¹² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[83]; *NSA* XII, p. 102 (28).

one thinks of *something* that is *caused* and of something on which becomes *affected*."

The way to avoid this problem, according to Nietzsche, is to "understand that the 'subject' is not what *affects*, but is only a fiction." When this is done, "so much follows."¹³ The most important result which follows is that one realizes that all events are connected in such a way that one cannot determine where one event ends and another begins. Another result that emerges is Nietzsche's notion of the self.

If all actions and events are connected and interrelated in such a way that one cannot determine where one event ends and another begins, how then can one determine which actions to group together as actions of one agent, or person? This is essentially asking whether we have a unified self. In a typical Nietzschean move he notes that there is a unified self, but not in the "traditional" sense. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche denies that consciousness constitutes or underlies the unity of the organism:

Consciousness is the last and latest development of the organic and hence also what is most unfinished and unstrong. From consciousness comes countless errors that lead an animal or man to perish earlier than is necessary . . . One thinks that [consciousness] constitutes the *kernel* of man; what is abiding, eternal, ultimate, and most original in him! One takes consciousness for a determinate magnitude! One denies its growth and its intermittences! One takes it for the 'unity of the organism!' This ridiculous overestimation and misjudgment of consciousness has the useful consequence that it *prevents* an all too fast cultivation of consciousness. Believing that they possess consciousness, men have not exerted themselves very much to acquire it;—and things have not changed much in this respect!¹⁴

¹³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[91]; NSA XII, p. 383 (19-22; 25-24; and 24).

¹⁴ FW 11; NSA III, pp. 382-383 (18-22, 33-09). This idea that consciousness determines personal identity is a view defended by John Locke.

Nietzsche rejects the "subject as unity" view in favor of the "subject as multiplicity" view. This reflects Nietzsche's notion of will to power as a unifying force: Mental acts, such as thinking and desiring, are inseparably connected with their contents, and these in turn are inseparably connected with the contents of other thoughts and desires. In this multiplicity, therefore, is a unity (a unity in diversity), and this is what Nietzsche means by things being nothing more, or less, than the sum of all its effects.

When speaking of "the self," Nietzsche attributes to it the sum of its acts along with their contents so that each subject is made-up not simply by the fact that it thinks, wants, and acts, but also by what it thinks, wants, and acts. So "unity" for Nietzsche is found in the organization and coherence of the many acts that each organism performs. In other words, it is not a single, substantial self which unifies our actions; it is the result of the unity of actions that gives rise to the unity of the self.

Now I can address the above question: What is it that enables us to group together some multiplicities so as to create a unified self and distinguish them from others? The answer, in a word, is the body. The unity of the body provides for the identity that is necessary for the unity of the self. The body too is a multiplicity, but it appears to be organized more clearly. The body, according to Nietzsche, is the more clear and tangible phenomenon to be discussed first because whenever a human being sees a movement in the body, they conclude that there is a subjective, invisible life appertaining to it. This "invisible life" is will to power. So the Nietzschean self is a multiplicity of conflicting instincts (i.e., desires, thoughts, and actions), and it is the body which provides both the common ground for these instincts, and which allows these instincts to be grouped together as features of a single subject, or person.

This notion of subjectivity is intricately connected to his notion of will to power. With this view of the self, Nietzsche makes one of his central claims: "How one becomes what one is" [*wie man wird, was man ist*]. Everything that one does is equally essential to what one is. Who I am today is the result of everything that I have ever done, and the things I do today are also a result of my past actions. To become what you are, therefore, involves the constant and continual process of integrating all of one's experiences, and this "constant process" is will to power. Through the will to power unifying our actions, this gives rise to the unity of the self. To become what one is is to identify oneself with all of one's actions and to see that everything one does is what one is: "*How could I fail to be grateful to my whole life? And so I tell my life to myself.*"¹⁵

From the above discussion we can see that through formulating his will to power as the "primitive form of the world of affects" in which all other affects are contained in a "powerful unity,"¹⁶ Nietzsche has developed a monistic principle which accounts for all drives and processes. By formulating such a unifying, monistic doctrine, Nietzsche is abandoning the ordinary notions of wanting and desiring. As a result, willing becomes a striving that does not have an aim distinct from it. In fact, the only aim of willing is its own continuation. By making this move, Nietzsche is developing a highly individualized notion of subjectivity whereby the individual is not concerned with others. As we will see, the Nietzschean subject focuses only on him/herself and is engaged in the continual process of self-creation. Willing therefore can be viewed as perpetuating itself because all activity of the will creates new effects in the world, and these effects result in new

¹⁵ *EH Vorwort*, NSA VI, p. 263 (9-11).

¹⁶ *JGB* 36; NSA V, p. 54 (29-30).

objects. What is more, the activity of perpetuation is will to power. As perpetuation, will to power tends to produce more and more effects upon the world. When an effect is produced on the world, this is the process Nietzsche calls "the manifestation of a drive." The manifested drives, which are constantly engaged in activity, continually perpetuate the will to power. Furthermore, all drives have a common source. For Nietzsche, the belief that there are essential differences between drives is a prejudice. In other words, "drive itself" (will to power) is common to all drives (manifestations of will to power) which bring into being everything in the world, including both animate and inanimate objects.

We can see that Nietzsche develops a view of will to power as an activity that effects and constitutes both the world and individuals. In fact, will to power is itself both the origin and the result of such effects. This also illustrates how will to power is Nietzsche's monistic doctrine, bringing together all the different effects of the world into a unity. It is these effects which Nietzsche calls "power" because they embody, establish, and preserve the essence of whatever effects them. It is also clear why Nietzsche wishes to eliminate dualism. If you talk about a Kantian thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*) or a Platonic Form, you are speaking of something that exists independently of all other things. Nietzsche, on the other hand, insists that the very notion that "'things have a condition in themselves'—[this is] a dogmatic idea with which one must break absolutely."¹⁷ Things cannot have a "constitution in themselves" because, as we have seen, all things are interconnected and parts of a steady process of continual change, or becoming. Nietzsche's most ardent statement on the elimination of dualism can be found in his notebooks:

¹⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[134]; *NSA* XIII, p. 62 (10-11).

"Ends and means"	[These should be
"Cause and effect"	viewed] as inter-
"Subject and object"	pretation (<i>not</i> as
"Acting and suffering"	facts) and in what
"Thing in itself and appearance"	respect perhaps
necessary interpretations?	(as 'maintaining') All
in the sense of a will to power. ¹⁸	

The previous way human beings have divided the world no longer has any ground upon which to stand. God is dead, and with "Him" all transcendent values and dualistic systems have perished. I will now turn to another important aspect of "Nietzschean subjectivity": Self-overcoming.¹⁹

B. Subjectivity as Self-Overcoming

The notion of self-overcoming (*Selbstüberwindung*) is very rich and plays a large role in Nietzsche's thought. Walter Kaufmann is one of the few commentators who attempts to explain self-overcoming in detail. According to Kaufmann, self-overcoming entails the sublimation or transformation of the passions by reason. Kaufmann conceives of reason, intellect, and spirit as being capable of standing over and against impulse, inclination, and passion. In a word, reason is capable of controlling instinct: "Self-overcoming," notes Kaufmann, "is conceivable and meaningful when the self is analyzed into two forces, such as reason and the inclinations."²⁰ Reason is viewed as "that which overcomes," and inclination as "that which is overcome."²¹ But as we have seen in the above section, for Nietzsche, one's instincts, or drives, play an essential role—an aspect I believe Kaufmann marginalizes.

¹⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[147]; *NSA* XII, p. 139 (17-24).

¹⁹ It is important to note that Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity is bound up in his doctrine of will to power. As a result, when I discuss one concept, I am unavoidably discussing the other as well.

²⁰ Kaufmann, p. 215.

²¹ Kaufmann, p. 215 and 238 respectively.

According to Kaufmann, Nietzsche, contrary to popular opinion, values reason because it can “give consideration to all the impulses” and “organize their chaos, to integrate them into a harmony—and thus . . . give man power.”²² Rationality, therefore, is an important tool of the will to power. The “higher man” is he whose reason has so thoroughly mastered his passions that reason and passion are joined in creative interaction. As a result, Kaufmann argues that Nietzsche is a “dialectical monist.” This means that everything is reducible to will to power, but the will to power manifests itself as two different forces—reason and passion. This, according to Kaufmann, is what makes the process of self-overcoming possible.

Kaufmann’s interpretation has much merit to it, but in the end he provides a limited view of reason. Kaufmann, I believe, retains the view of rationality that Nietzsche was trying to distance himself from—that Cartesian view of reason that was carried throughout the Enlightenment.²³ Part of the problem is that Kaufmann refers to Nietzsche’s early works when he discusses the reason-passion opposition,²⁴ but his early works do not represent Nietzsche’s final position. For example, in his notebooks Nietzsche writes:

The whole interpretation of a rank among the
passions: as if the right and normal thing is that one

²² Kaufmann, p. 230.

²³ There also seems to be a distinct Platonic edge to Kaufmann’s interpretation of will to power. Kaufmann is essentially saying that reason can and should control our passions and instincts. He seems to be supporting the Platonic notion of a harmonious soul. There are two problems with this: Firstly, Kaufmann talks as if human beings have three distinct features—instincts, passions, and reason. But there is no such distinction. Nietzsche uses the terms “instincts,” “passions,” “impulses,” and “drives” interchangeably. Secondly, Kaufmann is basically resurrecting dualism. With Kaufmann’s interpretation of reason controlling one’s instincts, *et al*, there must be a “playing field” for this to occur. But as we have seen in Part I, there is no “soul” separate and distinct from the body.

²⁴ Kaufmann here refers to Nietzsche’s *Morgenröte* 548 (NSA III, pp. 318-319) and *FW* 290 (NSA III, pp. 530-531).

should be guided by *reason*—whereas the passions are abnormal, dangerous, semi-animal, and according to their goal, moreover, is no different than the *desire or pleasure* . . .

Passion is degraded (1) as if it were merely in indecent cases, and not necessary and always the motive force . . .

The misunderstanding of passion and *reason*, as if the latter were an essence itself and not rather a system of relations among the various passions and desires.²⁵

Here Nietzsche is rejecting the view that reason can ever be a “force” independent of the many passions, or instincts, which can stand against and rule over the passions.

Kaufmann’s above interpretation provides an important discussion of Nietzsche’s view of the instincts and reason. I believe, though, that Kaufmann winds up reestablishing the dualism that Nietzsche eliminated with will to power. Kaufmann is taking Nietzsche’s earlier views and paralleling them to Nietzsche’s later works. Kaufmann interprets the apparent dualism of reason and passion in Nietzsche’s latter works as analogous to the Apollo-Dionysian dualism found in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Just as the Apollonian tendency gives form to the Dionysian chaos, reason, to Kaufmann, gives form to the passions.²⁶

Nietzsche does indeed praise reason in his final period (1884-1888), but I believe Kaufmann’s interpretation omits many of Nietzsche’s criticisms of the reason-passion dualism. The above quote from his notebooks²⁷ stresses the fact that reason can never stand alone against the instincts, but it also emphasizes that it can never overcome them.

²⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[310]; NSA XIII, p. 131 (2-9, 11-14).

²⁶ I am only exploring that area of the reason-passion duality which pertains to my argument so as not to go too far outside the parameter of this dissertation.

²⁷ See footnote 25 above.

This is because for Nietzsche reason itself is just another one of our instincts—what human beings refer to as thinking: “Thinking is merely a behaviour of the drives to one another.”²⁸ Furthermore, Nietzsche notes how every one of our instincts, including reason, “has already done philosophy at some time,—and that each and every one of them would like to willingly direct *itself* as the justification of existence and the legitimate *master* over the remaining drives.” In other words, “Every drive is domineering: and that *as such* it attempts to philosophize”²⁹ An individual will act and behave according to the instinct that is “currently governing” the body. Each one of our instincts or drives gives rise to a particular valuation in response to an experience, and as a result orders the world in a particular fashion.

What emerges here are particular definitions of “thinking” and “reasoning.” Thinking is a manifestation of the interaction and struggle between the instincts, all having different perspectives as they contend for power. The drive or complex of drives that is able to dominate the others determines what human beings call “reason”. As I discuss below, this directly pertains to Nietzsche’s notion of the order of rank and the “higher man.” The “higher man” does not let just any instinct govern or rule his body: “His moral standards bears decided and determined evidence of, *who he is*—that is, in which order of rank [and] the innermost drives of his nature are posed to each other.”³⁰ As I discussed in the above section, will to power is Nietzsche’s unifying doctrine. All the

²⁸ JGB 36; NSA V, p. 54 (22-23).

²⁹ JGB 6; NSA V, p. 20 (13-16 and 16-17). It is this view of our instincts that gives rise to the interpretation of the will to power as domination. I discuss this in this section.

³⁰ JGB 6; NSA V, p. 20 (32-34).

various instincts of human beings, including reason, are nothing but manifestations of will to power:

Assuming at last that it reaches towards explaining our entire instinctive life as the organizing and ramification of one basic form of the will—namely of the will to power, how *my* theorem goes . . . one would have found, that one had the right oneself to find, *all* efficient power clearly as: *will to power*.³¹

In this way Nietzsche distances himself from the dominating view of reason that the Enlightenment, embodied and developed by such figures as Descartes and Kant, maintained.

Allow me to back up one moment. From the above discussion I do not mean to imply that Nietzsche completely disavows reason. Reason, for example, is not completely eliminated from the notion of self-overcoming. Self-overcoming is, in part, the overcoming of one or more of our instincts by a more dominant one, or as Detwiler argues, “A dominant passion’s increase in power and ascent to a higher level.”³² In both of these cases, self-overcoming appears as the reason that reflects one organization of our instincts overcoming the reason that reflects an earlier organization. Reason here operates as a function of perspective; every new organization of the instincts causes new perspectives and interpretations of experience.

There is a further connection between reason and self-overcoming that is more directly related to this paper. The process of self-overcoming tends to rationalize the organism as a whole insofar as all the various drives learn to obey the dictates of a single ruling passion. Being “rational,” therefore, results when the organism, or as it turns out

³¹ JGB 36; NSA V, p. 55 (23-26, 29-31).

³² Detwiler, p. 159. Detwiler examines this topic in his chapter seven.

the “higher man,” acknowledges that there is really only one “single ruling passion”—will to power. This point reflects back to Nietzsche’s view on modern man. Nietzsche has nothing but disdain for modern man because their instincts are in chaos and they let any instinct govern their body.³³

This is an important point. In the struggle among our instincts to dominate it is not reason that is ultimately decisive, but power. For it is the will to acquire power that originally causes the individual instincts to contend with one another. This connection between the will to power and self-overcoming can be found in Nietzsche’s notion of struggle. For Nietzsche, life is characterized by struggle, yet modern, enlightened human beings try to eliminate that aspect of life:

We have made for us a world which we constructed, one which we are able to live in—with the assumption of bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith nobody now could hold onto life! But that does not prove it. Life is no argument . . .³⁴

Those ideas that were invented to make life easier were only illusions. “The entire character of the world,” writes Nietzsche, “is however in all eternity chaos,” in that it lacks “order, arrangement, form, beauty, [and] wisdom.”³⁵ There is, in other words, no permanent form in the world.³⁶ Instead, “All events, all motion, all becoming, [are] as a

³³ See *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[312]; *NSA* XIII, p. 131-133. Here Nietzsche criticizes the irrationalism of the romantic whose instincts are in anarchy.

³⁴ *FW* 121; *NSA* III, pp. 477-478 (31-03). This ties in with section A above in that people have invented cause and effect in order to explain why things change. Read and compare this with the above quote from *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[147].

³⁵ *FW* 109; *NSA* III, p. 468 (6-7, 9).

³⁶ I discuss Nietzsche’s notion of the world as Becoming and its consequences in the next chapter.

determination of degrees and relations of force, as a *struggle*.³⁷ Struggle, as a characteristic of the world, can be reduced to will to power because “the world viewed from the inside, the world defined and characterized according to its ‘intelligible character’—it would be ‘will to power’ and nothing besides.”³⁸

Will to power, therefore, can be seen as the hypothesis that explains the observable character of the world, including individuals engaged in self-overcoming, without relying on the causal agency of the disembodied metaphysical subject on which dualism depends. This position, I examined in Part I, originated with Descartes and was carried throughout modern philosophy by such thinkers as Rousseau and Kant. In other words, this is the view of subjectivity of the traditional Enlightenment. But through adding the notion of struggle will to power can be seen as the striving for self-assertion which finds its highest expression in the will to give form to both the self and, as it turns out, the “Nietzschean state.” At this point I wish to discuss Mark Warren’s influential interpretation of will to power. I believe that combining Warren’s and the above views together results in what Nietzsche means by will to power. Warren also sees Nietzsche’s will to power as leading directly to his political thinking.

Mark Warren acknowledges that Nietzsche was concerned with political matters and argues that Nietzsche believed his philosophy of life as will to power justified the exploitation and political domination of the many by the few. Warren, though, further

³⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[91]; NSA XII, p. 385 (23-25).

³⁸ JGB 36; NSA V, p. 55 (31-34).

In Nietzsche’s essay, “*Homer’s Wettkampf*,” written in 1872 and published posthumously, Nietzsche noted how the Greek genius acknowledged struggle to be a necessary aspect of life. Only through struggle will the Common-Wealth thrive. Every individual’s endeavors were directed to the welfare of the community: “The Hellenic genius had another answer ready for the question ‘what is a life of struggle and victory for?’ and it gave that answer through the whole breadth of Greek history” (NSA I, p. 785 [29-32]). I will address this obvious political interpretation of struggle in chapter nine below.

argues that Nietzsche's politics are wholly inconsistent with his underlying philosophy of power because:

What Nietzsche means by his famous claim that humans are "will to power" is that they desire subjectivity, the experience of being an effective subject in the world, the experience of transforming what one was into what one will be. In more classical terms, humans are motivated by positive freedom.³⁹

In other words, subjectivity, selfhood, and the capacity to be an effective agent in the world are not given but must be achieved through a particular self-reflexive organization of power: "Thus power has *value* when it attains a self-reflective identity experienced as subjectivity, when it is an individuated capacity for free agency."⁴⁰ As a result, will to power, for Warren, denotes the need for subjectivity—a universal motive to self-constitution. As Warren argues, "[B]ecause humans strive to effect their environment as a means to self-constitution, it is possible for power to be organized as 'will.'"⁴¹ To emphasize Warren's interpretation of will to power as self-reflection, he notes that

to claim as Nietzsche does that humans are universally motivated by power is not to make a claim about what kinds of acts they will engage in if they only have the chance, but rather to claim that human motives are necessarily self-reflective in nature: humans are fundamentally motivated by a desire to experience the self as autonomous, as a free will.⁴²

So will to power, as autonomy of the self, is a universal motive and therefore a universal value of self-reflective beings. Turning to Nietzsche's political thinking, Warren notes

³⁹ Warren, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Warren, p. 139.

⁴² Warren, p. 140-41.

that, "If Nietzsche had chosen to judge societies on the grounds of his philosophy of power alone then he would have done so in terms of their capacities to enable the positive freedom of individuals."⁴³

According to Warren Nietzsche bases his politics on domination. But, as Warren argues, "The universal motive identified by the concept of will to power is not domination but self-constitution."⁴⁴ This leads Warren to conclude that Nietzsche's politics are inconsistent with his underlying philosophy.⁴⁵ Yet from the above discussion we have seen how self-constitution is actually a function of the struggle for domination among an organism's warring instincts. Viewing will to power solely as the will to dominate is faulty. Nietzsche's will to power is a rich and complex notion that encompasses more than a narrow "will to dominate," just as it entails more than being the process of self-constitution. I believe it encompasses both views. Each organism goes through an inner struggle in which each instinct, or passion, wants to dominate. Only through this struggle of the instincts can a unity in diversity be created, thereby transforming this unity in diversity into a cohesive center of power, or "self." As mentioned above, this view combines two interpretations of will to power, as domination and as self-constitution. With this interpretation of will to power, Nietzsche's political thinking and

⁴³ Warren, p. 234.

⁴⁴ Warren, p. 232.

⁴⁵ I believe Warren makes such a conclusion due to his trying to extract a political philosophy out of Nietzsche. As I have and will argue, Nietzsche does not have nor wanted developed a systematic political philosophy. He was indeed concerned with political matters, but the most that can be said is that Nietzsche has a "political thought." This will be the subject of Part III.

his overall philosophy, I believe, stay consistent. As will be shown below, the interaction among selves within a society⁴⁶ resembles the interaction of the drives within a body.

C. Subjectivity and the *Übermensch*

Besides playing an essential role in Nietzsche's overall thought, self-overcoming is one of the major themes in *Zarathustra*. Here self-overcoming is identical with life and it is, in fact, the meaning of life. "And the secret of life was spoken to me. 'Behold, it said, I am that *which must always overcome itself*.'" By "life," Nietzsche is referring to all the processes that occur in the world: "Indeed, you call [life] the will to procreate or a drive towards an end, towards height, distance, multiplicity: but this is all one and one secret."⁴⁷ This "secret" is that everything is will to power, and self-overcoming unifies all the processes of the will to power. Self-overcoming, therefore, is the process by which life, or will to power, perpetuates itself. As a result, all reality can now be described as particular aspects of life. By "particular aspects," Nietzsche does not limit the process of self-overcoming only to the human organism. The "self" does not refer exclusively to a human self. As we have seen, will to power creates a unity between individuals and the world, so what could be overcome may be an aspect of an organism, a set of beliefs, or an aspect of the world. Through self-overcoming human beings engage in the continual process of creating and destroying the self. This is the core of Nietzschean subjectivity. Through such creating and destroying one is constantly creating new values and asserting oneself as an individual in the world. This is the activity of "higher" individuals and can be seen as symbolized by the *Übermensch*.

⁴⁶ By "society" I am referring to a Nietzschean society.

⁴⁷ Z II 12; NS4 IV, p. 148 (16-18 and 19-21).

Self-overcoming, in *Zarathustra*, is also identified with the task of self-perfection.

By "perfection," Nietzsche means the drive towards the integration and wholeness of life:

All creatures, so far, brought about something
beyond themselves: and they wanted to be the ebb of
this great flood and would rather still go back to the
beasts than overcome man?

[. . .]

Behold, I teach you the *Übermensch*!

The *Übermensch* is the meaning of the earth.
Your will will say: the *Übermensch* is the meaning of
the earth!

I swear to you, my brothers, *remain faithful to
the earth* and do not believe them, they who talk about
supernatural hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether
they know it or not.⁴⁸

Through self-overcoming and striving for self-perfection human beings will aim towards the symbol of the *Übermensch*, and in doing so will "remain faithful to the earth." As a result, people will no longer see a division between the body and the soul—a division created by Plato and maintained by Descartes and subsequent thinkers of the Enlightenment. Instead, people will now only recognize "oneself." As Zarathustra proclaims in the chapter "*Von den Verächtern des Leibes*:"

But the awakening, the knowing say: body am
I completely, and nothing besides; and soul is nothing
but a word for something in the body.

The body is a great reason, a plurality with one
sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a shepherd.

A tool of your body is also your little reason,
my brother, which you call "Spirit," a small tool and
toy of your great reason.

[. . .]

Always the self listens and searches: it com-
pares, aims, conquers, destroys. It governs and is also
the ego's governor.

⁴⁸ *Z Vorrede* 3; *NSA IV*, pp. 14-15 (16-18, 28-04).

Behind your thoughts and emotions, my brother,
stands a powerful master, an unknown wise man—named
the self. In your body it lives, it is your body.⁴⁹

As a result, such human beings who aim at self-perfection are involved in what Nietzsche would call “true” subjectivity—of creating and developing the innermost self.

Now I am prepared to discuss what will to power is and how it is essential to Nietzsche’s notion of subjectivity. Will to power is a process that characterizes both human beings and the world; it is a constant willing to perpetuate itself which, in the process, re-affirms its existence. Will to power, through the process of self-overcoming, does not seek to simply control (i.e., dominate or suppress) certain instincts or passions. Self-overcoming, it turns out, is the process through which will to power expresses and exerts itself. As the “goal” to strive for and pattern our lives after, Nietzsche offers the symbol of the *Übermensch*, the perfect embodiment of will to power. By using the *Übermensch* as the symbol to strive for, human beings are able to seek self-perfection and are “truly” autonomous beings. Consequently, self-perfection leads to the unity and wholeness of life.

Some commentators have argued, or just assumed, that Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* is an achievable goal. Walter Kaufmann and Arthur Danto are two such commentators. Kaufmann, for example, in discussing the *Übermensch* notes: “The *Übermensch* at any rate cannot be disassociated from the concept of *Überwindung*, or overcoming. ‘Man is something that should be overcome’—and the man who has overcome himself has

⁴⁹ Z I 4; *NSA* IV, pp. 39-40 (7-14, 1-5).

become an overman.”⁵⁰ Kaufmann then goes on to discuss whether Nietzsche viewed Napoleon and Caesar as *Übermenschen*.⁵¹ Danto, similarly, refers to the *Übermensch* in the nominative case form “he:” “He is merely a joyous, guiltless, free human being, in possession of instinctual drives which do not overpower him.” Furthermore, Danto argues that “if the *Übermensch* is to be a nonascetic ideal, it must be an attainable one.”⁵²

I cite Kaufmann and Danto as examples of commentators who view the *Übermensch* as an attainable goal. I believe Nietzsche intended this notion only as a symbol or metaphor for human beings to strive towards. Nietzsche himself hints that, “My notion, my *parable* for this type is, as one knows, the word '*Übermensch*.'”⁵³ Kathleen Marie Higgins notes that “Zarathustra’s positive message is premised on the idea of the overman.”⁵⁴ I agree that the *Übermensch* is the new symbol for human beings and represents something that in principle is unattainable by the merely human: “And the human being shall be just that for the *Übermensch*: a laugh or a painful shame.”⁵⁵ What is more, this ideal surpasses human capacity for “resilient self-transcendence” and can therefore only be established as a symbol for human beings to model their lives after. For Zarathustra, the *Übermenschideel* serves as the new basis for meaning in human life.

⁵⁰ Kaufmann, p. 309. Besides referring to the *Übermensch* as an achievable goal, Kaufmann also seems to suggest here that there is an actual end to the process of overcoming one’s self. As argued, self-overcoming is a continual process.

⁵¹ See Kaufmann’s *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, chapter eleven (esp. pp. 313-317).

⁵² Arthur C. Danto. *Nietzsche as Philosopher*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 199. Danto here refers to the *Übermensch* as a “human being,” yet Nietzsche very clearly stresses that the *Übermensch* is something ‘beyond man:’ “*I teach you the Übermensch. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him*”(Z “*Vorrede*” 3; NSA IV, p. 14 [13-15]).

⁵³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[17]; NSA XII, p. 462 (19-21).

⁵⁴ Kathleen Marie Higgins. *Nietzsche’s Zarathustra*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), p. 81.

⁵⁵ Z *Vorrede* 3; NSA IV, p. 14 (20-21).

This reflects back to my discussion of nihilism. God's death should not be mourned as the loss of meaning. The real threat after God's death is the tendency of people to persist in demanding an other-worldly ground for meaning. By establishing the *Übermensch*, the perfect embodiment of will to power, as the symbol to strive towards, this keeps human beings "faithful to the earth" and symbolizes that meaning is to be found nowhere but through one's own creations.

Interesting here is that by definition, the *Übermensch* is a symbol that human beings will always fail to achieve.⁵⁶ Even the "highest" human beings could never achieve the "super-human" level of self-overcoming that the *Übermensch* embodies. Yet the actions and events of one's life can be seen as steps and experiments towards this symbol. Nietzsche writes, "*the greatest elevation of the consciousness of strength of man, after of which, he then creates the Übermensch.*"⁵⁷ It is not important to try and actualize the *Übermenschideel*; the striving, or becoming, is what is important. As Higgins notes, "The goal of the overman . . . emblemizes a vision of greatness that has not yet appeared on earth but that should nevertheless be brought into being."⁵⁸

Furthermore, with the above interpretation of will to power and self-overcoming, a connection to the revaluation of values becomes clear. Claiming that "God is dead" is itself an expression of the will to power. This expresses the desire to overcome oneself. But when the event of God's death is accepted, the world falls into nihilism. So it takes another affirmation to overcome nihilism. This is the revaluation of values. This is life-

⁵⁶ Due to the *Übermensch* being something that is "beyond man."

⁵⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 26[283]; NSA XI, p. 225 (9-10).

⁵⁸ Higgins, p. 82.

affirming because it embodies the strength to “reclaim” and creatively employ those values that were originally life-affirming. The traditional, enlightened subject is incapable of making such an affirmation because this view of subjectivity is founded on that same dualistic tradition that must be overcome. The individual who proclaims “God is dead” and fully accepts the consequences is the “true” Nietzschean subject. Such a subject is not proclaiming for all of humanity, but is engaged in the process of self-creation and self-overcoming.

Throughout this chapter I have been implying that “self-creation” is the activity of the true Nietzschean subject. I will now turn to this notion and discuss how it is the way the Nietzschean subject expresses their individuality.

D. Subjectivity as Self-Creation: Nietzsche’s Challenge

In his brilliant work on Nietzsche, Karl Jaspers notes that by “freedom” Nietzsche means that “man . . . is responsible for his own transformation.”⁵⁹ In other words, for individuals to become what they are involves more than simply changing in accordance with the assumed laws of nature that “control” the world. Each individual is responsible for his or her own development.⁶⁰ This is why Nietzsche leveled such a fervent critique against morality. Human beings have lived according to those actions which they deemed “good,” and in this sense they believed they were “becoming what they are.” This, though, was extremely restrictive and in no way reflected the “true” autonomy of individuals. Morality, as I examined early in Part II, was so destructive because it essentially “stepped in” and filled the void when the faith in religion began to waver and

⁵⁹ Jaspers, p. 136.

⁶⁰ “Development” here does not imply any notion of improving or moving towards a certain end.

fade. Jaspers notes: "As modernism becomes godless, it regards morality as a solid ground upon which it still stands and by whose laws it lives."⁶¹

Nietzsche attacks morality in every contemporary form not to lessen or alleviate the burden on individuals, but rather to force human beings to attain and strive for more. By doing so Nietzsche is in fact putting a heavier burden on the backs of individuals. The essential problem with morality is that people held moral values to be the highest values in the world. Those actions deemed "good" are believed to be the highest values one can have. By attacking and condemning the moral law and the so-called 'freedom' that accompanied it, Nietzsche wished to replace it with a new challenge. Furthermore this new challenge is not to be based on any kind of metaphysical or "other-worldly" foundation, but would be grounded in what he saw as distinctively human. In place of the moral law, Nietzsche now challenges the individual with creation [*Schaffen*]. With creation Nietzsche was re-establishing the individual and their actions as more important than the Absolute. For Nietzsche, there is no single, universal morality that can "make" all people moral. Through challenging people to become creators, he places the individual ahead of all moral and rational universals. From the above discussion, it is clear that by 'individual' Nietzsche is not talking about the isolated private person but the single human being who knows that they are the culmination of everything they have done in the past and through acting in the future will become what they are.

In the next chapter I will discuss Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return and the meanings of his themes of the innocence of becoming and *amor fati*. But before these

⁶¹ Jaspers, p. 137.

themes can be adequately examined it is important to look more closely at “creation.” For this is the driving force, the activity, of the “true” Nietzschean subject.

Creation is the highest demand that Nietzsche asks of human beings; it is the way individuals live an authentic existence. Authenticity is possible because individuals turn to no “outside” authority for their values. As we saw in Part I, Nietzsche dismisses the traditional notion of free will as a human invention constructed to try and better understand their place in the world. But only through creation can “true” human freedom appear. Through creation, no matter what it is we create for ourselves, we transcend ourselves to become something new. As Nietzsche notes, “Even the most trivial creative act is better than talking about what has [already] been created.”⁶² By the very nature of “creation,” what an individual creates must always remain necessarily indefinite. Nietzsche is not going to tell us what we ought to create, just that we must create in order to experience true freedom and subjectivity.

In chapter five above I mentioned the theme of “creation through destruction” which runs throughout Nietzsche’s writings. This plays a pivotal role here. Only the true creator can be called a “destroyer”—to create anew, we must first destroy what we have already become. This is Nietzsche’s self-overcoming. The will to create is the desire “for change, for future, for *becoming*,” and in order to achieve this, destruction must necessarily be a part of creation. As Nietzsche argues, “The desire for *destruction*, change, and becoming can be an expression of an overflowing energy that is pregnant

⁶² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[370]; NSA XIII, p. 317 (12-13).

with the future.” Furthermore, those “who destroy *must* destroy, because what exists, indeed all existence, all being, outrages and provokes them.”⁶³

Nietzsche further describes his notion of self-creation in several chapters in *Zarathustra*. In one passage he asks, “Can you give yourself your own evil and your own good and hang your own will over yourself as a law? Can you be your own judge and avenger of your law?”⁶⁴ This, again, is the challenge Nietzsche makes. It is no easy task to continually create oneself anew, but the alternative is to retain the inadequate categories of enlightened subjectivity that have dominated for so long. Against this flawed subject Nietzsche notes, “He . . . has discovered himself who says, ‘This is *my* good and evil’; with that he has reduced to silence the mole and dwarf who say, ‘Good for all, evil for all.’”⁶⁵ Nietzsche is offering self-creation as the life-affirming alternative to both the ethics of Christianity and to the thought of the Enlightenment, which claims that rationality is good for everyone. Important to keep in mind is that Nietzsche’s challenge to the content of enlightened subjectivity is actually an affirmation of its basic program. Nietzsche is attacking the rational, autonomous self of the conventional Enlightenment, but at the same time he is attempting to create a new principle of individuality based on self-creation. As Ludwig Nagl insightfully points out, “In his critique of morality, Nietzsche emphasizes a vision of practical self-creation the Enlightenment-related core of which is easily overlooked due to his full-blown rhetoric against all moral vocabularies.”⁶⁶ The

⁶³ FW 370.

⁶⁴ Z I 17.

⁶⁵ Z III 11 §2.

⁶⁶ Ludwig Nagl. “The Enlightenment—A Stranded Project: Habermas on Nietzsche as a Turning-Point to Postmodernity.” *History of European Ideas* 11 (1989), p. 748.

aim to create individuals as viable human subjects was, after all, always the way the Enlightenment understood its own project. The passion with which Nietzsche critiqued the Enlightenment's failure to complete this project has tended to mask the real reason why Nietzsche was so hostile to the conventional Enlightenment. In a word, Nietzsche believed that he, unlike the figures of the Enlightenment, could complete the modern project of subjectivity successfully. He completed this project by taking subjectivity in a radical new direction, but his basic concerns and motivations remained under the shadow of the Enlightenment.

An important point to keep in mind here is that by "creation" Nietzsche does not mean that a few create for the many. There is no elite that creates new values for the masses. This is precisely the function and role that priests and universal, systematic philosophers have filled. For those "higher" individuals strong enough to accept Nietzsche's challenge of creation, they create only for themselves. They do not concern themselves with others' values. This self-creation is the core of Nietzschean subjectivity. Such self-creators realize that there are no absolute values that exist in some "other-world" reality and which simply needs to be discovered. As Jaspers explains:

[V]alues are the form in which man, in a unique moment of historical actuality, lays hold not only upon the conditions of his existence but even those of his own self-being.⁶⁷

What Jaspers refers to here, and which will become clear in the next chapter, is that "higher" human beings create their values individually through affirming the Moment [*Augenblick*]. The Moment is all that can be affirmed—the past is "gone" and the future

⁶⁷ Jaspers, p. 153.

has not yet occurred. Since values are never final and at any given time must be created, the Moment is the only "time" creators can create new values for themselves.

* * * * *

This chapter explored Nietzsche's "new" notion of subjectivity. I argued that the autonomy of individuals is essential to Nietzsche's philosophy. Through his will to power he hoped to show how both the world and human beings are part of the same unity, and how this unity ultimately gives rise to his notion of "the self." In the end, Nietzschean subjectivity is not based on an "other-worldly" dualism or on some absolute, universal value system. But in the same breathe Nietzsche tells us that "meaning" is also not to be found in this world—it is to be created. Nietzschean subjectivity is founded on the activity of creation. For it is through creating values only for oneself by which an individual experiences true freedom and, consequently, subjectivity. To emphasize his notion of subjectivity, Nietzsche stresses the opposition between individual sovereignty and morality. In this tension he does not say that "true" subjectivity involves moral abandonment, only that the ideal of subjectivity can no longer be associated with a strictly moral ideal. As opposed to Kant, Nietzsche does not believe that the fulfillment of the individual is equivalent to a moral fulfillment.

From the above discussion of will to power, I examined how the Nietzschean self is engaged in a continual process of essentially dismembering and regathering, and that ultimately it is through this very process that reflects the movement of subjectivity itself. Through regathering, the self experiences all of its instincts and is able to essentially choose which instinct or drive will govern the body. This is why Nietzsche argues that selfhood is a "result." When I identify myself with my "ruling thought" I am willing my

own will. So even when I identify my ruling thought as an external command I can say that "I" am following orders—I am following orders that I created for myself. This is precisely the difference between the "higher man" and the modern man of the Enlightenment: The former have the strength of self-commandment, or self-creation, to express a ruling thought whereas the latter let any instinct govern their body.

While he continues the essential project of the Enlightenment, the project of subjectivity, Nietzsche transforms this into something completely different and unique. He exposes the flaws and inadequacies of the Enlightenment's view of subjectivity and develops a highly individualized subject concerned with only the self-creation of values. In a word, Nietzsche's critique on enlightened subjectivity is motivated by the desire to produce a new and superior kind of subject—he is motivated by a desire to complete the project of the Enlightenment in a way the thinkers of that movement could not.

In the next chapter I will examine the world these "Nietzschean subjects" occupy and how it differs from the world developed by the figures of the Enlightenment. This next chapter will then lead into a discussion of the kind of political world Nietzsche envisions for his "subjects" (in Part III).

CHAPTER EIGHT: NIETZSCHE'S ENLIGHTENED WORLD

In Part II I have been examining Nietzsche's brand of Enlightenment thought. I began by discussing a theme he shared with the traditional Enlightenment itself—the eliminating of all “external” sources of authority. This is one way in which his notion of the death of God can be interpreted. With God's death comes a tremendous freedom for human beings. Now individuals no longer need to blindly follow the dictates of anything external to themselves. Nietzsche here is of course referring to the Judeo-Christian tradition. But with God's death also comes a liberation from all dualistic systems. With the elimination of “God”¹ as a source of authority, individuals also no longer need to follow the rigid rules of universal moral theories, like the kind of system Kant developed. Through his elimination of dualism Nietzsche re-grounds the individual back into this world because, as he argues, it is the only world there is.

Now that individuals are “liberated” from all authority and the horizon is again free, this led to my discussion of Nietzsche's view of subjectivity. With no authority to blindly follow, Nietzsche challenges us to become self-creators whereby we create values for ourselves. In this chapter I will take a step back and examine what kind of world Nietzsche sees his self-creators inhabiting. This is important to look at, I believe, because Nietzsche not only develops a “new” notion of subjectivity apart from the tradition of the Enlightenment, but he also envisions a world fundamentally different from that tradition. The world that the traditional enlightened subject occupied was an ordered, rational world capable of being mastered through the use of one's reason. Nietz-

¹ The use of quotes here denotes that I am referring to the entire Judeo-Christian tradition and not just the figure of God.

sche, on the other hand, attempts to teach the true character of the world, the world as Becoming. In such a world, which is devoid of absolute truth and meaning, of God, and of dualistic systems, Nietzsche places emphasis back on the individual. This chapter, in a word, discusses the "true" Nietzschean Enlightenment and looks at the "foundation" for his notion of subjectivity. I will examine his view of the world and why he believes his notion of subjectivity is the "true" way to both become an effective subject in the world and become what one is. This chapter will also set the stage for Part III: In a world characterized by becoming what kind of politics, if any, does he envision?

In the course of this discussion I will also examine Nietzsche's doctrines of the eternal return [*die ewige Wiederkehr*] and the *Übermensch* and examine his notions of the innocence of becoming [*die Unschuld des Werdens*] and *amor fati*.

For Nietzsche, life is will to power; it is the principle through which individuals engage in the continual process of self-overcoming. As discussed in the above chapter, this doctrine underlies and is fundamental to Nietzsche's entire philosophy. But fundamental even to will to power is the idea that life is constant movement and change, or what Nietzsche calls "becoming." Life as becoming requires us to think of life without the need for a moral interpretation of its meaning and significance. Against the tradition of the Enlightenment, in a world conceived of as becoming existence does not aim at a final state or goal. Nietzsche notes:

Becoming shall be explained without recourse to such final intentions: becoming must appear justified at every moment (or *unable to be evaluated*: which amounts to the same thing); the present must absolutely not be justified by reference to a future or the past by reference to the present . . . For it is necessary to deny an entire consciousness of becoming, a "God," to avoid bringing the events under the point of a being who is sympathetic

and knowing, but does not *will*: "God" is useless if He does not exist . . .²

This in fact is one of the essential consequences of the world as becoming. The world is in a constant state of flux and change. Nietzsche characterizes the world as forever in the Heraclitean state of chaos: "The entire character of the world is, however, in all eternity chaos."³ As a result, there are no final state or goal(s) with which the world or individuals strive towards. This is precisely the role religion has played. Most people cannot accept this chaotic characterization of the world because this results in such consequences as there being no absolute Truth or universal moral systems by which one can adhere to. As a result, religion has stepped in and attempted to ease the pain of becoming by condemning "the entire world of becoming as a deception and invent a world which lies beyond this one—as a *true* world."⁴ Besides foreshadowing the chapter in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, "Wie die 'wahre Welt' endlich zur Fabel wurde" (see chapter six above), the above quote illustrates how people try to escape from becoming by immersing themselves in such institutions as religion and universal moral systems.

If the character of the world is this chaotic, ever-changing process of becoming, how then are human beings supposed to approach life? It seems Nietzsche's philosophy would simply lead to a kind of Schopenhauerian pessimism. But Nietzsche is striving towards the greatest affirmation of life, not a pessimistic worldview. He accomplishes this by teaching human beings to embrace the innocence of becoming, and this is done through affirming "the Moment" [*Augenblick*]. By affirming the moment, human beings

² *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[72]; *NSA* XIII, p. 34-35 (24-30, 2-6).

³ *FW* 109; *NSA* III, p. 468 (6-7).

⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[99]; *NSA* XIII, p. 48 (1-2).

overcome the “spirit of revenge” and restore the innocence to becoming. By restoring this innocence, people come to understand and accept that no one gives human beings their qualities (i.e., God or the state), and that nobody is accountable for their actions. For a person's nature cannot be disentangled from all that they have been and will become. Furthermore, human beings cannot even think of existence as the result of either having a special design or aiming at any specific final goal or purpose. Most people, though, cannot accept this innocent character of becoming: “How can *I* be in favour of being lousy! But something must be responsible for it, *otherwise it would not be bearable!*” This illustrates the spirit of revenge mentioned above. People not able to face the innocence of becoming require a “theory in which one can *pass off* the fact of your existence, your being thus and thus, onto some scapegoat. This scapegoat can be God.” Unable to face “becoming” as such, human beings have lashed out and have sought revenge on existence. “Man,” writes Nietzsche, “has dragged the bacillus of revenge into things. He has made God Himself sick with it, he has deprived existence of its innocence.”⁵ Nowhere is this revenge more prevalent than in the traditional Enlightenment.

One can see this revenge throughout the history of Western metaphysics whereby philosophers, such as Plato and Kant, have constructed two-world theories in which the world of being, the beyond, is viewed as the “true world,” and the world of becoming, the here and now, is viewed as merely the apparent world.⁶ But, as Nietzsche notes, there are those who “desire to restore innocence to becoming” by teaching “that nobody has given to man his qualities, neither God, nor society, nor his parents and ancestors, nor he him-

⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 15[30]; *NSA XIII*, p. 423 (29-34); (19-22); and p. 425 (6-9).

⁶ I examine this in detail in chapter six above.

self.” Later in the same notebook entry, Nietzsche adamantly states: “There is missing in every place, every purpose, every sense, where we can shift our being, our being thus and thus.”⁷ This refers back to my discussion about will to power. Every human being is a unity in that their entire lives are interconnected and parts of a steady process of continual change, or becoming. Nietzsche calls this “how one becomes what one is” [*wie man wird, was man ist*] and says “that to become what one is, one must not distantly know *what* one is.” He further notes that everything one does in life, including one's mistakes, has meaning and value not to some end or goal, but only to that individual. Once we shake off religion and other such life-denying doctrines that attempt to disguise becoming, the organizing “idea” [*die organisierende Idee*] that is destined to rule will then be realized by human beings. This “idea,” will to power, will “slowly lead us *back* from side roads and mistakes.”⁸

Such “side roads and mistakes” are, for example, the belief in God and the belief that human existence has some special purpose or goal. But the truth of the matter is, of course, that life has no purpose or goal(s). Nietzsche, in fact, calls it an “absolute necessity” to have a “*total liberation from ends*.” For it is only “the innocence of becoming” which “gives us the greatest courage and the greatest *freedom!*”⁹ As early as 1880 this thought was on Nietzsche's mind: “Man regards himself as the purpose of the entire existence of the world, and mankind itself will be seriously satisfied with nothing but the view of a world mission.”¹⁰ But in reality there are no goals for human existence. This

⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragment* 15[30]; NSA XIII, p. 426 (2-3, 4-7) and (18-20).

⁸ *EH* I 9; NSA VI p. 293 (22-24) and p. 294 (12-13).

⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 8[19]; NSA X, p. 340-341 (24-01, and 2-3).

¹⁰ *WS* 14; NSA II, p. 548 (17-19).

is, I believe, where the power of his *die fröhliche Wissenschaft* lies. In this work, Nietzsche once and for all destroys any notion of a final goal or end for human beings. We find this especially in Book III in aphorisms 108 and 125, and in Book IV, aphorism 343. These sections are where Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead" comes to full impact. In the wake of God's death, all of our "horizons" are wiped away and the sun has become eclipsed. Nietzsche, though, recognizes what he has done to human beings—he has made existence meaningless, valueless, and most importantly, goal-less.

A. From Goal-lessness to Hope

The first publication of *die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) ended with Book IV with the section, "*Incipit Tragoedia*." In 1887 Nietzsche added Book V. At the end of Books IV and V Nietzsche is offering human beings hope and guidance in the face of this meaninglessness and goal-lessness he developed. At the end of Book IV Nietzsche offers Zarathustra to be our guide in this new, goal-less world. In the penultimate aphorism in Book V titled, "The Great Health" [*Die grosse Gesundheit*], Nietzsche observes that human beings may actually need a new "goal,"¹¹ but if they do, this new "goal" must be unlike any previous goal thus far. Nietzsche realizes he threw us into this "new" world without any warning. So if human beings are going to look for a new goal, he wants to be the one to present this new goal that "stands divinely apart in the old style:"

Another ideal runs in front of us here, an odd, tempting, dangerous ideal to which we want to persuade no one, because we concede this light of the *right to it* to no one: the ideal of a spirit, called naiveté, not forced, but out from our overflowing abundance and powerfulness.¹²

¹¹ By using quotes around "goal" here I am denoting a Nietzschean goal as opposed to a final end or purpose that is usually referred to in a teleological sense.

¹² *FW* 382; *NSA* III, p. 636-637 (31-02).

This ideal is the symbol of the *Übermensch*. This ideal must “run ahead of us” because if human beings are going to seek a new “goal,” then it is imperative to look ahead and not revert back to our previous life-denying goals. Such life-denying goals include the traditional Enlightenment’s aim to create a moral and political world to accommodate, what Nietzsche saw as, the flawed Cartesian subject. As I discuss below, this point plays a pivotal role in my interpreting the *Übermensch* as a symbol and a necessary fiction.

Important to remember is that the above quoted section from *die fröhliche Wissenschaft* was written in 1887, after he wrote *Zarathustra*. So after he destroys all of our goals, he then sets forth a new destiny—one which human beings may become. “But as I slowly, slowly put this dark question mark at the end . . . what you get to hear is at least new.”¹³ This “new goal” is what the teacher, Zarathustra, has himself learned. In a word, a “new way” and a new teaching in the figure of Zarathustra follow the destruction of our goals in *die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Zarathustra wills to go under [*untergang*] and become who he is—the teacher of the doctrine of the eternal return. This doctrine also plays an important role in Nietzsche’s notion of subjectivity. The eternal return provides the way which “higher” individuals can affirm existence in the face of such meaninglessness. It provides the “test” whereby individuals are able to affirm themselves in the wake of God’s death and thereby engage themselves in the process of self-creation which, as we saw in the previous chapter, is the core of Nietzschean subjectivity.

B. *Die ewige Wiederkunft*

The seeds of this doctrine are found scattered throughout Nietzsche’s notebooks and early writings, but the most significant first mentioning can be found in *die fröhliche*

¹³ FW 383; NSA III, p. 637-638 (17-18, 8-9).

Wissenschaft. In Book III (1882) he writes, "What I now do or leave is thus important *for all I command*, as is the greatest event of the past: in this enormous perspective of consequences, all actions are equally great and small."¹⁴ This aphorism notes the importance of every single deed one does. Nothing is insignificant no matter how small it may appear. Everything a human being does contributes to that person's becoming what he or she is, at this moment. The most explicit account of the eternal return is seen in Book IV under the heading, "The Greatest Weight" [*Das grösste Schwergewicht*]. Here the doctrine is presented by a demon who, after creeping into your "lonely solitude," asks you:

"this life, how you live it and have lived it, you must live it once again and again countless times: and there becomes nothing new in it, but every pain and every desire and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small and great in your life must return to you, and all in the same sequence and succession—and even this spider and this moonlight between these trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again—and you with it, speck of dust!"¹⁵

After formulating this doctrine, the demon then goes on to ask how we would react. He asks if this state-of-affairs would crush us and whether we would curse him, or if we would view this event as a "tremendous moment" [*ungeheuren Augenblick*] which would forever change the way we are. These questions are precisely why this doctrine is the greatest weight [*das grösste Schwergewicht*]¹⁶—it endows our individual existence with meaning and significance. This doctrine teaches us to affirm life and not seek redemption or attempt to flee from its tragic character of becoming.

¹⁴ FW 233; NSA III, p. 512 (8-12).

¹⁵ FW 341; NSA III, p. 570 (10-19).

Here we find the connection between the eternal return, will to power, and the notion of becoming what you are. In undergoing the experience of the moment, which is an assertion of the will to power, we must will the return of one's life in its entirety—with every pain, every joy, every thought, and everything “unspeakably” small and great in the same succession and sequence. It must be willed this way because everything one has ever done in one's life, and the manner which it was done, is necessary to who we are.

The above preliminary remarks are an interpretation of the eternal return as an “existential imperative.” As Bernd Magnus argues, “When the real or possible truth of recurrence is called upon to play a role . . . the role is always heuristic.” Recurrence here is a “*particular attitude toward life* . . . the attitude of affirmation . . . which expresses ascending life, life as celebration.” What is more, this attitude is “*the* expression of nihilism already overcome,” and is the attitude of the symbol of the *Übermensch*.¹⁶

Alexander Nehamas also interprets the eternal return as a symbol for the fullest affirmation of life, but he differs slightly from Magnus. I appreciate Nehamas's interpretation in that he emphasizes the essential interconnectedness of all that exists.¹⁷ The doctrine, formulated by Nehamas, means that, “If anything in the world recurred, including an individual life or even a single moment within it, then everything in the world would recur in exactly identical fashion.”¹⁸ He then concludes that the insight of this doctrine is that the only life that could recur, if recurrence were to happen, would be this life. Differing slightly from Magnus, Nehamas argues that the attitude the eternal

¹⁶ Magnus, p. 142. For a more in-depth formulation of this interpretation, see Magnus's chapter five.

¹⁷ See my discussion of will to power in the previous chapter for a more detailed explanation on this point.

¹⁸ Nehamas, p. 156.

return reflects is that of the fullest affirmation of this life, but it does not, as Magnus argues, represent an unattainable ideal (the *Übermensch*). This is because our lives, unlike those of *Übermenschen*, are not lives in which every moment of our past could be willed to recur eternally. Only the Moment can be willed to recur. "In accepting the present," argues Nehamas, "one also accepts all that is past."¹⁹ So by focusing on the interconnectedness of the past, present, and future, the doctrine stresses that the significance of the past depends on the way it is interpreted in the present.

With the above interpretation of the eternal return by Magnus and Nehamas, it becomes clear how this doctrine is utilized by Nietzsche to unify the other aspects of his thought: It takes an expression of the will to power to "affirm the moment" of the eternal return. This comes as one of the highest expressions of the will to power as self-overcoming. Once this important affirmation is accomplished, then "the real answer to the question *how one becomes what one is* can no longer be avoided . . . That to become what one is, one must not distantly know *what one is*."²⁰ Some goal or final end does not define human beings. Human beings, in fact, cannot be anything. In this sense Nietzsche restores for humanity the innocence to becoming, and with it provides human existence with its own justification. The meaning of life is to be found nowhere but within life itself, as we live and shall live it. To some, as the demon points out, this insight will be crippling, while others will be inspired by it. This thought should inspire us in such a way that we are able to unconditionally affirm the eternal return of all the moments of our existence because we realize that every one of those moments are necessary to who we

¹⁹ Nehamas, p. 162.

²⁰ *EH* II 9; *NSA* VI p. 293 (15-17, 22-24).

have become today, at this moment. Through this doctrine, furthermore, Nietzsche is paving the way towards the highest affirmation that one could proclaim.

C. Behold! "*Amor Fati*!"

Laurence Lampert, in his brilliant analysis of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, notes that "Part III is the climax and culmination of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the part for the sake of which the two previous parts exist."²¹ Nietzsche would agree with Lampert's assessment. In Part III, he notes, Zarathustra becomes the teacher of the "highest formulation of affirmation that can at all be attained," the eternal return.²² In Part III, Zarathustra presents the doctrine of the eternal return in a parable in the section "*Vom Gesicht und Räthsel*." In his vision, Zarathustra stands before a gateway that has two paths that face two directions simultaneously. The paths meet at a gateway and Zarathustra notes that "no one has followed either [path] to its end" because the two paths go on forever into eternity.²³ Where he stands, at the gateway where the paths meet, is written the word "Moment" [*Augenblick*].

Zarathustra then suggests that if we behold the Moment we see that from the gateway "runs a long, eternal lane *backwards*: behind us lies an eternity."²⁴ This leads Zarathustra to ask several questions:

And if everything has already been present:
what do you consider . . . of this moment? Must not
this gateway too already—have been there?

²¹ Lampert (1986), p. 155.

²² *EH* IX 1; *NSA* VI, p. 335 (6-7).

²³ *Z* III 2 §1-2; *NSA* IV, p. 199 (26-27).

²⁴ *Z* III 2 §2; *NSA* IV, p. 200 (13-14).

And are not all things knotted together firmly
in such a way, that this moment commands *all* things
yet to come? *Therefore*— —itself too?²⁵

Important here is the affirmation of "the Moment." The Moment is the highest point of one's life that can be affirmed. By affirming the Moment, one affirms the innocence of becoming and no longer yearns for revenge against life. What is more, the Moment brings together the past, present, and future in a moment of eternity, and its affirmation leads to the affirmation of time itself. This is because no single moment is self-sufficient but is connected to all other moments of one's life. In a word, affirming one single moment entails affirming all of existence, including one's own. We realize that it took the eternity which we are to produce this one event, and in the single moment of affirmation, all eternity is redeemed and affirmed.

When human beings are able to make such a tremendous affirmation, they accept both the world and themselves as they are and as they have become. Once the eternal return is completely and whole-heartedly affirmed, one is then able to make what I believe is Nietzsche's supreme and highest affirmation: *Amor fati*.²⁶ The person strong enough is able to affirm and redeem his or her every action and thought, including the "unspeakably small" deeds, and assign to it a meaning and a redeeming function. This "higher" human being realizes that one's own existence is inextricably entangled in "the fatality of all that has been and what will be,"²⁷ and that when one affirms one's own

²⁵ Z III 2 §2; NSA IV, p. 200 (19-24).

²⁶ Love of fate. This is first introduced in Book IV of *die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: "What thought shall be for me the ground, surety, and sweetness for the rest of my life? . . . I want to learn more and more, to see as beautiful what is necessary in things . . . *Amor fati*: that is to be my love from now on!" [FW 276; NSA III, p. 521 (18-21, 22-23)].

²⁷ GD VI 8; NSA VI, p. 96 (20-21).

existence one also affirms the rest of the world. This is what Nietzsche has formulated above through the doctrine of eternal return. This I believe is precisely what he intended his eternal return for—to prepare, condition, and ready human beings to be able to proclaim “*Amor fati*!” Some commentators equate the eternal return and *amor fati* as being a one in the same affirmation.²⁸ I interpret these two notions as distinct and separate ideas and in fact do not even read *amor fati* as a doctrine. *Amor fati*, instead, is the highest affirmation, or attitude, that one can have and make about the world and oneself. Through making such an affirmation, individuals thereby overcome the tradition from which they came and are able to become self-creators. This is now possible because they will no longer hold a revenge against life, and will instead see and accept that everything they have done in their lives has contributed to what they have become. The connection between these two notions is, I believe, that Nietzsche uses the eternal return as doctrinal support to introduce and teach *amor fati* as the highest affirmation one can proclaim.

Nietzsche does indeed realize the world in which he “threw” human beings into—a cold, harsh world incapable of sustaining any absolutes. He also does not expect all individuals to simply “open their eyes” as to the “true” character of the world and accept it whole-heartedly. There are indeed those who will be able to affirm the world as it is, but for those who cannot Nietzsche does not intend to simply abandon them. Nietzsche, I believe, provides the “means” by which all human beings are able to accept the world as becoming. He does this through the use of what I call a day and night wisdom. Involved in these views are the use of “necessary fictions.” Through such fictions, Nietzsche aims to ease individuals into realizing and accepting his “true” enlightened worldview. This is

²⁸ See Walter Kaufmann's *Nietzsche* and Arthur Danto's *Nietzsche as Philosopher*.

important to Nietzsche because it is only through seeing the “true” character of the world whereby individuals can finally involve themselves in “true” autonomy. This is essentially the core of Nietzsche’s brand of Enlightenment thought (and what has been argued for in Part II). By teaching the world as becoming, individuals will realize that the world cannot uphold such universal and absolute concepts and notions that apply to all people everywhere. Once this is realized human beings will eliminate all those concepts which have served as ultimate sources of authority in their lives. By doing so individuals make the important move towards “true” subjectivity whereby they become self-creators.

Now I will turn to and develop what I see as Nietzsche’s notions of day and night wisdom. As I argue Nietzsche’s doctrines of the *Übermensch* and eternal return are two such necessary fictions he utilizes to help ease individuals into accepting the true character of the world. What is more, by also viewing the *Übermensch* as a necessary fiction, I believe this will shed further light on my interpreting this doctrine as a symbol by which to guide one’s life.

D. Day and Night Wisdom

In this section I will develop the idea that Nietzsche intended for humanity two types of wisdom: One which makes life “livable,” or day wisdom, and the other reflecting the cold, harsh reality of the world as becoming, or night wisdom. I will argue that in day wisdom, Nietzsche attempts to make life bearable by offering human beings necessary fictions. Nietzsche’s most pertinent necessary fiction is the doctrine of eternal return. This serves to liberate human beings from the tyranny of the past, including both universal moral systems and religion and the tradition from which individuals come from—in

this case, the Enlightenment. For now, I will turn to *Zarathustra* and examine how he develops his notions of day and night wisdom.

Throughout the four parts of *Zarathustra*, one may notice that Nietzsche continuously lets the reader know the time of day or night in which Zarathustra is either teaching or encountering others. While this serves as a good guide for reading *Zarathustra*,²⁹ it also plays an essential role in Zarathustra's teaching of the doctrine of eternal return. Zarathustra explicitly mentions "day wisdom" for the first time in Part III in "*Von den drei Böse*," but begins to formulate this notion as early as Part II in "*Das Nachtlied*." The key, though, to understanding the notions of day and night wisdom is, I believe, in Part III in the section "*Vor Sonnen-Aufgang*." It is here that Zarathustra finally realizes both the existence of and need for both a day and night wisdom.

Before looking at this section in *Zarathustra* I think it is important to take a step back and look at what I believe Nietzsche means by a "day wisdom" and a "night wisdom." As mentioned above, Nietzsche's teaching that the world is nothing but becoming shatters even the possibility of human beings having any final goal or ultimate purpose. There is no special purpose or goal which people can strive towards. As well as being goal-less, the world is also meaningless and valueless, as is captured in his proclamation, "God is dead." The only way to characterize the world is as "becoming." Most people cannot accept such a consequence and thereby invent religions and systems of morality to "fill the void." Nietzsche does realize the difficulty involved in accepting such reality. Enter his day and night wisdom. Night wisdom is the wisdom of the world as it actually

²⁹ The point here, of course, is not to partake in a new reading/interpretation of *Zarathustra* in light of this thesis of day and night wisdom. For the purpose of this dissertation I will simply develop these notions I find in *Zarathustra* and argue that they form an important part of Nietzsche's brand of Enlightenment thought.

is (i.e., reality). For Nietzsche, therefore, night wisdom is that the reality or character of the world is becoming. But night wisdom also includes the consequence of this reality; namely, that both the world and human beings are will to power (I return to this below).

Not everyone is able to accept this reality and its consequences. Zarathustra himself is constantly struggling to come to grips with it. To those unable to affirm night wisdom, Nietzsche offers day wisdom. Nietzsche realizes that those individuals who cannot accept night wisdom will look for and cling to external goals and meaning that such institutions as religion offers.³⁰ Nietzsche, though, is not cruel. He does not just "wipe away" the goals and meaning from people's lives and leave them with nothing. But instead of having human beings create harmful, life-denying goals, Nietzsche offers a day wisdom by which people can live their lives and bear everyday existence. Nietzsche creates, in other words, necessary fictions for people to live by and which will serve as Yes-saying, affirmative doctrines. Such necessary fictions, as embodied in day wisdom, are the doctrines of the eternal return and the *Übermensch*.

As mentioned above, the section in *Zarathustra* where day and night wisdom is most fully developed is "*Vor Sonnen-Aufgang*." In the section immediately preceding this, "*Von der Seligkeit wider Willen*," we find Zarathustra in a mood of unexpected happiness during the afternoon. He is still experiencing his day wisdom when the world is clear and makes sense. But he knows the evening is coming, and with it the reality of the world. As the evening approaches, Zarathustra is expecting his happiness to fade with the sun: "There the evening already nears: the sun sinks. Away—my happiness!"

³⁰ In my discussion on Nietzsche's doctrine of the death of God (chapters five and six above), this is exactly what I examined: Religion offers a safe refuge from the stark reality of the world. But now that "God is dead," there is no such safety and comfort.

This illustrates Zarathustra's dread of the approaching reality of the world, of his night wisdom. But no matter how long he waited for his happiness to fade, the oncoming evening only brought with it more happiness: "And he waited for his unhappiness the entire night: but he waited in vain. The night remained bright and still, and happiness itself came to him all the time closer and closer." During the night, when he finally accepts that his happiness is not going to fade away, "Zarathustra laughed to his heart."³¹ This laughter leads directly to the next section, "*Vor Sonnen-Aufgang*," where Zarathustra can finally praise, accept, and affirm, the nighttime and the wisdom it brings.

"*Vor Sonnen-Aufgang*" begins with Zarathustra praising and affirming the nighttime sky: "O heaven above me, you pure! Deep! You abyss of light . . . To throw myself into your height—that is *my* depth! To hide in your purity—that is *my* innocence!"³² In the darkness of the night sky, Zarathustra finds the purity of both the world and existence. He realizes that the purity of his night wisdom restores the innocence to becoming, which is the "pure and deep" reality. He realizes that even the dark night sky is brighter than the daytime sun. Here we understand the meaning of the previous section's title. Up to this point, Zarathustra was like most people—happy and content with day wisdom. Then unexpectedly he felt a bliss, a happiness, that went against his will. He suddenly became unsatisfied with his wisdom, sensing there was something other than day wisdom—something deeper down. Those necessary fictions he had previously lived by no longer offer him any solace. Zarathustra is ready to accept the night wisdom. "That you [the night] speak to me silently, revealing your wisdom . . . *Before* the sun you came to me,

³¹ Z III 3; NS4 IV, p. 206 (24-25); (26-29); and (29).

³² Z III 4; NS4 IV, p. 207 (2, 4-5).

the loneliest.” This expresses that his coming to accept the night wisdom was a slow and gradual process. The night does not shout its wisdom for everyone to hear. For everyone does not have the ears for it. Instead, certain “higher” individuals will come to fully embrace the nighttime and its wisdom, and this remains between the individual and the darkness: “We do not speak to each other, because we know too much—: we are silent to each other, we smile our knowledge at each other.”³³ Night wisdom can be seen as an exclusive club in which the “members” keep the knowledge of the club, the true character of the world as becoming, amongst themselves. To the rest of humanity, who are not willing or ready to accept such wisdom, they have the sun and the wisdom which comes with it (i.e., the necessary fictions) to make life more bearable.

Zarathustra realizes that he often followed false paths in his search for the “truth” of the world.³⁴ But at the same time he knows that all of his journeys were “sheer necessity” that contributed towards his embracing and affirming the night wisdom. This illustrates Zarathustra already seeing his life in its entirety. Herein is the connection between night wisdom and will to power that I alluded to above: Zarathustra accepts the night wisdom through an act of willing. In a word, he has fulfilled the single goal of his entire will through an act of self-overcoming. He threw off the chains of day wisdom and with it the necessary fictions designed to make life bearable for the life-affirming, Yes-saying night wisdom.

³³ Ibid; *NSA* IV, p. 207 (11-12, 13-14) and (17-18).

³⁴ I use throw-quotes around “truth” here to emphasize that I am not talking about truth in a universal/absolute sense. “Truth” here is the Nietzschean characterization of the world as becoming.

Zarathustra then offers to those unable to affirm the night wisdom, a “bright doctrine.” “Whoever cannot bless, shall *learn* to curse!”³⁵ It would be better for those people who cannot give the nighttime sky an affirmation to curse the world. It is better to curse the world rather than accept it as anything other than it really is, as becoming. Lampert addresses this point: “[F]or the open sky implies that bringing a curse is higher than half-hearted uncertainty, and bringing a blessing is highest of all.”³⁶ And Zarathustra is now one of those special individuals who is both “a blesser and a yes-sayer,” carrying his blessing even into the deepest, darkest abyss.³⁷ In other words, only in his night wisdom is he able to affirm the entire world with all its abysses. Zarathustra achieved this affirmation through a long struggle. He describes himself as a fighter who has become one who blesses and says “Yes.” Again, this is Zarathustra's self-overcoming; he finally “sees” the world as it truly is, as becoming, and can accept the consequences that result from such a world view.

At this point in the section, Zarathustra relates to us his blessing: “[T]o stand over every single thing as its own heaven, as its round roof, its blue bell and eternal security: and bless it, whom blesses thus!”³⁸ Zarathustra is affirming and saying “Yes” to the fact that he is the creator of himself. This blessing, his Yes and Amen, sets over everything an open sky of security as the highest affirmation of things. Zarathustra's highest affirmation is that all things should be just as they are. In other words, Zarathustra's

³⁵ Z III 4; NS4 IV, p. 208 (32) and (31).

³⁶ Lampert (1986), p. 175.

³⁷ Z III 4; NS4 IV, p. 208-209 (34-04).

³⁸ Ibid; NS4 IV, p. 209 (6-8). Compare this blessing with the section “The Seven Seals” [*Die sieben Siegel*] at the end of Part III (especially §7).

blessing is allowing things to become what they are, thereby restoring innocence back into the world. Lampert takes this blessing to be the blessing of the eternal return, but here I believe Zarathustra is not affirming a "doctrine," but is making the highest affirmation of the world that one can proclaim: *Amor fati*. As I discussed above, *amor fati* is not put forth as a doctrine (like the eternal return or the revaluation of values). It is a proclamation of the world as becoming and, therefore, is the highest affirmation one can make. The acceptance of night wisdom does not lead to *amor fati*; it is *amor fati*. Zarathustra uses the eternal return as the doctrine to teach about the affirmation of *amor fati*. The eternal return is the doctrinal support used to teach what *amor fati* is. Just like will to power, *amor fati* is difficult to discuss precisely because it is not a doctrine. These constitute the character of the world—it's reality. Will to power and *amor fati* make up the core of night wisdom, which at the bottom is becoming. The doctrines of the *Übermensch* and eternal return, or day wisdom, are used as necessary fictions in order to ease the harsh reality of existence while at the same time keeping human beings faithful to the earth.

Zarathustra explains that "it is a blessing and not a blasphemy, when I teach: 'Over all things stand the heaven Accident, the heaven Innocence, and heaven Chance, the heaven Prankishness.'" Here Zarathustra is fully affirming the beauty of night wisdom by proclaiming the world as becoming and life as the innocence of becoming. He continues that he has restored chance, or fate, "the ancient nobility of the world," to all things.³⁹ In doing so he teaches that there is no purpose or meaning inherent in

³⁹ Ibid; NSA IV, 209 (12-14) and (15).

anything, whether divine or not. “No ‘eternal will’—wills.”⁴⁰ The innocence of the world as becoming is restored to human beings and taken out of the hands of some divine being. The world as such eliminates any “eternal will” and makes the Kantian type of rationality, which believes it can “know” the real world, impossible.⁴¹ But, Zarathustra continues, “A little wisdom is ever possible”—a new wisdom about the heavens.⁴² This “new wisdom” is of course night wisdom and is new only in the sense of individuals coming to discover and affirm it in their own time. Once one comes to fully accept this wisdom, one will embrace chance, or fate, and the innocence of becoming: “O heaven above me . . . That is your purity to me now . . . that you are to me a dance floor for divine accidents, that you are to me a divine table for divine dice and dice players!”⁴³ With night wisdom, one can accept such “divine accidents” because one knows that everything no matter how big or “unspeakably small” contributes to what one is. And fully accepting night wisdom with a Yes and Amen is also the highest affirmation of the world: *Amor fati!*

In the middle of his affirmation of the night wisdom, the nighttime sky suddenly “blushes.” Startled, Zarathustra asks, “Did I speak the unspeakable? Did I blaspheme, by wishing to bless you?” But the sky’s blush [*erröthest*] is a warning of the danger of betraying their secret (the night wisdom) to the quickly approaching day. The night sky is “telling” Zarathustra that he should not openly discuss/bless the night wisdom so close

⁴⁰ Ibid; NS4 IV, p. 209 (20).

⁴¹ We see this notion again addressed in 1888 in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, especially in the chapters “Die ‘Vernunft’ in der Philosophie” and “Wie die ‘wahre Welt’ endlich zur Fabel wurde.”

⁴² Z III 4; NS4 IV, p. 209 (28).

⁴³ Ibid; NS4 IV, p. 209-210 (31-32, 34-02).

to the light of day. Zarathustra, too, realizes this: "Do you wish me gone and silent because now—the *day* comes?"⁴⁴ Most people blissfully sleep through the night ignorant of there even existing a night wisdom. Therefore Zarathustra must not mention and thereby expose the night wisdom to those sleepers slowly waking to the dawn.⁴⁵ The danger here is in exposing the night wisdom to those individuals not yet ready, or willing, to accept it. This would have a shattering effect on their lives. But by keeping the necessary fictions of day wisdom as their "truths," this will help to gradually pave the way and ready people to possibly one day affirm the night wisdom. In 1878 Nietzsche wrote, "Whoever unveiled to us the nature of the world, would produce for all of us the most unpleasant disappointment."⁴⁶ People must come to this realization and affirmation on their own and in their own time.

Before the dawn finally comes, Zarathustra praises the night sky one last time: "The world is deep—: and deeper than has ever been meant for the day. Not everything may have words for the day. But the day is coming: thus we now part!"⁴⁷ Day wisdom teaches and upholds such necessary fictions as the doctrines of eternal return and the *Übermensch*. But the world is much "deeper." The reality of the world, though, is hard to accept and even harder to teach. One cannot "put into words" the reality of the night-time during the day. Zarathustra finally realizes this and recognizes the function of the day wisdom; to both pave the way for accepting the night wisdom and to keep human

⁴⁴ Ibid; *NSA* IV, p. 210 (3-4) and (6-7).

⁴⁵ For an excellent description of these "sleepers," see *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*, 8.

⁴⁶ *MAM* 29; *NSA* II, p. 50 (5-6).

⁴⁷ *Z* III 4; *NSA* IV, p. 210 (8-10).

beings faithful to the earth (so they do not have to turn to such life-denying alternatives such as religion).

* * * * *

“*Vor Sonnen-Aufgang*” is I believe an extremely pivotal part of understanding both *Zarathustra* and Nietzsche in general. This section provides a very useful insight into his philosophy. Nietzsche realized that most people did not understand *Zarathustra*, but with the separation of a day and night wisdom Nietzsche's philosophical activity becomes more defined. What he intends is for human beings to fully understand and unconditionally accept the world as it truly is (as becoming). As discussed above, though, this has tremendous repercussions which many people will not be able to handle. But instead of presenting the world as it truly is to human beings and ignoring those who cannot deal with it, Nietzsche develops a day and night wisdom to make life bearable. The doctrine of eternal return is, I argue, a necessary fiction which is meant to help ease people into proclaiming “*amor fati*.” In approaching an affirmation of the eternal return, an individual is presented with a challenge. Essentially one must ask the question of whether one can accept the destiny of one's being in such a way that they could also accept the necessity of their past. In this way Nietzsche is presenting a doctrine, the eternal return, to support an attitude, *amor fati*:

My formula for the greatness in the human being is *amor fati*: that one wants to have nothing different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely endure that which is necessary, still seldomly concealing—all idealism is untruthfulness before the necessary—, but *to love it* . . .⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *EH* II 10; *NSA* VI, p. 297 (24-29).

Many commentators believe the eternal return and *amor fati* to be two expressions of the same affirmation. *Amor fati*, I believe, is the highest affirmation one can make of one's life and the world. It is a complete acceptance of both the world and of oneself as the innocence of becoming. This is why Nietzsche includes this as part of night wisdom; accepting it has severe consequences. It is to realize that "the world is deeper than the day has been aware."

The *Übermensch* is also a necessary fiction Nietzsche included in day wisdom. Nietzsche has turned the world inside out. Nihilism, that inevitable event, has destroyed all meaning, all value, and all goals. Instead of the ordered, rational world of the traditional Enlightenment, Nietzsche teaches that the world and individuals are continually changing, or becoming. Nietzsche, though, intends this to be experienced as a great liberation. Through knowing the "true" character of the world individuals can now engage in "true" subjectivity—that of self-creation. This type of life, however, is difficult in that one is always both striving to become something new and continually creating new values for oneself. It is a difficult and dangerous way of life. Most people could and would not choose to live as such. As a result, Nietzsche conceals this aspect of night wisdom with another necessary fiction, the *Übermensch*. In Part II I have argued that the *Übermensch* is to be "used" as a symbol by which to guide one's life. As a result, the *Übermensch* is the symbol of the perfect embodiment of will to power as self-overcoming and is thereby the supreme symbol of Nietzschean subjectivity. Instead of allowing human beings to invent a new god to replace the dead one, Nietzsche creates and presents the *Übermensch* into their day wisdom. This doctrine helps people "see" that this type of life is possible, despite its difficult character. The *Übermensch*, as a

necessary fiction in day wisdom, will help prepare and ready people to accept the night wisdom of will to power as the continual process of self-overcoming.

Now that Nietzsche has exposed the "true" character of the world and how individuals can exist in it, he believes he has destroyed both the flawed worldview of the traditional Enlightenment and its flawed "subject" which occupied that world. We are now confronted with the question, what kind of politics, if any, can the Nietzschean self-creator be engaged in?

Part III:

Nietzsche's Political Thinking

What from your forebears you received as heir
Acquire, if you would possess it!

—Goethe
Faust

You tremble, carcass?
You would tremble a lot more
if you knew where I am taking you.

—General Turenne

CHAPTER NINE: THE NOBLE CULTURE

Parts I and II argued for a particular reading of Nietzsche's philosophy. I argued that Nietzsche was an ardent critic of the traditional Enlightenment, yet that he continued that movement's project of subjectivity. Along with critiquing the Enlightenment's view of subjectivity Nietzsche also exposed the dangers of various political ideologies in the nineteenth century—ideologies he saw as extensions of the Enlightenment. In the previous chapter I examined the type of world Nietzsche saw his subjects or self-creators inhabiting; mainly a world of becoming that cannot uphold any universal or absolute ideas. In the following chapter I will discuss what kind of politics, if any, the Nietzschean subject can engage themselves in. Important here will be my emphasis on Nietzsche's political thinking. Just as he does not offer a systematic moral theory in place of the ones he critiqued, he also does not offer a systematic political philosophy after critiquing nineteenth century political ideologies. This is why I characterize his politics as "political thinking." In staying consistent with his overall philosophy, Nietzsche presents ideas as to what he considers the only viable way to approach politics in a world of becoming. As a result, some of Nietzsche's political thinking is both indefensible and ridiculous in today's world. The core of his political thinking centres around the idea of creating the conditions for the future cultivation of "higher" individuals. But a paradox seems to emerge between his notion of "self-creators" and these "higher" individuals creating or legislating for others. Through examining this paradox, this leads to Nietzsche's view of the order of rank [*Rangordnung*], which politically translates into a hierarchy. But, as I contend below, his hierarchy is to be

understood as a relationship based on status, not power. In this way I believe Nietzsche's paradox can be better understood.

Nietzsche observed that in the past a person achieved greatness through strength and struggle. Nowadays, though, a person who wishes to strive for this type of greatness is harnessed and kept down by his or her fellow human beings. The "harness" that keeps great people chained down is, according to Nietzsche, religion; especially the Judeo-Christian tradition. This is yet another line of reasoning that leads to Nietzsche's proclamation that God is dead. For only after God is dead and the world is plunged into nihilism (and the devaluation of values), can the great or noble human being re-emerge and once again claim his or her "original values" (through the revaluation of values).¹ Furthermore, through the revaluation of values Nietzsche believes the future has promise.

Whereas *Zur Genealogie der Moral* details Nietzsche's analysis of the source and nature of the crisis of Western civilization, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* details his prescription for the future. In the *Genealogie*, Nietzsche discusses both the origins and consequences of the "slave revolt in morality," and offers a political explanation for the origin of all morals. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, especially the chapter "*wir Gelehrten*," describes what the "philosophers of the future" will be like. Such philosophers will create new values for themselves. They will have to be more than interpreters and systematizers of accepted values of the day. The philosophers of the future will apply "the knife vivisectionally to the chest . . . of the *virtues of the time*," thereby exposing those values which tend to inhibit the enhancement of humanity. These philosophers will also take on the greatest of tasks and the gravest of responsibilities by figuring out "value

¹ see chapter five above for more on this point.

and rank after determining how much and how many single things one can carry upon himself.” In the end, the “New Philosophers” will be those who strive for and promote greatness, which entails “being noble, wanting to be by oneself, being able to be different, standing alone, and having to live on one’s own.”² The new philosophers along with meeting the challenge of self-creation are those who strive to promote the cultivation of the “higher man.”

Tracy Strong notes that Nietzsche’s political views generally fall into two categories. The first category includes Nietzsche’s thoughts about the Greeks: “Here [Nietzsche] finds a unity of philosophy and politics.” The second category concerns contemporary Europe, “where he finds this unity dissolved.”³ Through the revaluation of values human beings can go beyond the good and evil values that both presently prevail and were imposed upon them. Human beings, through overcoming conventional morality, can become the philosophers of the future. Such philosophers “*are commanders and legislators . . . Their ‘knowing’ is creating, their creating is a legislation.*”⁴ The message from the *Genealogie* is that politics and morality are tied together, and since morality has gone off course, so has politics. The overcoming of morality, therefore, plays an important role towards a better political future. In this chapter I will examine what Nietzsche means by “higher politics” [*grosse Politik*]. Important here will be Nietzsche’s view of Greek society and how he utilizes the Greek’s notion of politics to formulate his doctrine of the order of rank. I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of Nietzsche’s hierarchy and argue that he understood “hierarchy” as a relationship of encompassment.

² JGB 212; NSA V, p. 145 (30-31); p. 146 (13-14); and p. 147 (09-11).

³ Strong, p. 188.

⁴ JGB 211; NSA V, p. 145 (08, 14-15).

By understanding hierarchy as such, many of the apparent inconsistencies disappear from Nietzsche's political thinking.⁵

Schutte explains that in 1886 Nietzsche decided "to unify the meaning of all his works through the theme of the overcoming of morality."⁶ I would qualify Schutte's statement by saying that Nietzsche's fundamental focus was the overcoming of modern decadence, including the decadence of conventional morality. In any case, this theme became significant in Nietzsche's works after 1886.⁷ This, though, is not to imply that Nietzsche disregarded his works prior to 1886. In his notebooks he explains that his earlier books were preparing the way for the destruction of morality:

The Dawn. Morals as a sum of prejudices. *The Gay Science*. Scorn over European morality. *Zarathustra*. View of an overcoming of morals. How might a human being raise existence, beyond living?⁸

Zarathustra presents the theme of self-overcoming [*Selbstüberwindung*] modeled after the *Übermensch*. But in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Nietzsche was more interested in developing the foundation for a new grounding/perspective of values based on the idea of an order of rank in both human beings and in society.

⁵ An important point to keep in mind is that by my arguing Nietzsche's political thinking is consistent with his overall critical philosophy, I am not condoning this type of political order. My argument is mainly that Nietzsche had in mind a hierarchy based on status, not power, and this helps to eliminate many inconsistencies inherent in his thinking. But by no means am I supporting his contention of establishing such a hierarchy in today's world.

⁶ Schutte, p. 109

⁷ These works include *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, *Götzen-Dämmerung*, *Der Antichrist*, and *Ecce homo*.

⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[124]; NSA XII, p. 123-124 (24-06).

A. The Self-Overcoming of Morality

The self-overcoming of morality developed out of Nietzsche's critique of the foundation of Western morality. Morality, to Nietzsche, was founded on lies (i.e., the metaphysical and religious foundations of conventional morality) which split reality into opposites. Those lies, though, led to the event of God's death, which resulted in nihilism and a complete state of chaos. "[A]t least the horizon appears free to us again."⁹ But Zarathustra tells his disciples to embrace this chaos: "I say to you: one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star. I say to you: you still have chaos in yourself."¹⁰ So this self-destruction, or self-overcoming, of morality represents the acceptance of God's death and the consequence of the coming upheaval, the revaluation of values. Nietzsche believed, however, that this self-overcoming could lead to a revaluation of values grounded in a new affirmation of existence.¹¹

In Part II above I examined those aspects of Nietzsche's thinking which will lead human beings to both reclaim this world and become self-creators. Through the event of God's death, exceptional individuals, or "higher men," will reclaim their godlike powers that were placed out of their reach. From embodying the power that was once attributed to God, the "higher man" will now make values for themselves.¹² Here we begin to see the foundation of Nietzsche's political thinking: These "higher men" are what Nietzsche in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* calls the 'philosophers of the future.' The "higher man" will "cure" society of any and all beliefs in absolutes, in dualism, and in a universal moral

⁹ FW 343; NSA III, p. 574 (19-20). See chapters five and six above.

¹⁰ Z Vorrede 5; NSA IV, p. 19 (18-20).

¹¹ see Z II 2 (NSA IV, pp. 146-149).

¹² See chapter seven above.

code. The “higher man” accomplishes this through the order of rank, which I discuss below. But first I wish to explore why Nietzsche advocated and praised Greek culture. From this discussion it will become clear what Nietzsche wished to accomplish through the order of rank.

B. Nietzsche and Greek Culture

Nietzsche believed that the focus of politics has changed since Greek times and the change has not been for the better. The Greeks, for Nietzsche, represented a unity.

The real *philosophers of Greece* are those before Socrates: with Socrates something changes.

They are all noble persons, setting themselves away from people and tradition . . . They anticipate the manner of all the greatest conceptions of things: they set themselves against it, they bring themselves into a system.¹³

Modern man, though, has lost this unifying force that characterized the Greeks. This unifying force is, in fact, why Nietzsche praised Greek culture. The Greeks were unique in that they developed and lived their lives as individuals, yet they were all unified by culture. Those traits that helped the Greeks “grow” as individuals were, according to Nietzsche, strength, struggle, and contest (or *agon*), but these traits have all but disappeared in modern life. What Nietzsche saw in Greek culture (and missing in modern culture) was the Greek’s ability to affirm life in spite of all its terrors. Greek civilization rested on a degree of violence, and the Greeks acknowledged this. In an essay published posthumously, Nietzsche writes:

When one speaks of *humanity*, the idea is fundamental that this is something which *separates* and distinguishes human beings from nature. In reality, however, there is no such separation: “natural” quail-

¹³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[100]; *NSA* XIII, p. 278 (04-07, 09-10).

ties and those called truly "human" are inseparably grown together. Human beings, in their highest and noblest capacities, is wholly nature and embodies this uncanny dual character. Those of his abilities which are terrifying and considered inhuman may even be the fertile soil alone out of which all humanity can grow in impulse, deed, and work.

Thus the Greeks, the most humane human beings of ancient times, have a trait of cruelty, a tigerish lust to annihilate: a trait that is also very distinct in that grotesquely enlarged mirror image of the Hellenes . . .¹⁴

This passage has a number of important ideas. This essay was written the same year *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was published (in 1872), yet it expresses many ideas that remain consistent throughout Nietzsche's career. In the above passage, Nietzsche discusses what is "truly human" in human beings. For Nietzsche, that which is "truly natural" takes on the meaning of holy. By "holy" Nietzsche is not referring to the supernatural as that which is the opposite of the natural, but rather to the fact that in nature opposites are inseparably grown together. For example, "Let us beware of saying that death is the opposite of life. The living is merely a type of the dead, and a very rare type."¹⁵ In his notebooks he clearly writes, "there are no opposites."¹⁶ So when Nietzsche says that human beings are "wholly nature," he means two things. For one, human beings, at their noblest and best, embrace opposites thereby uniting all the facets of their selves. The other meaning is that the noble human being creates, as does nature, out of the tension of opposites. Furthermore, only when human beings do this are they considered "truly human." Nietzsche is distinguishing between "truly human" (unified, whole being) and

¹⁴ *Homers Wettkampf*, NSA I, p. 783 (04-18).

¹⁵ *FW* 109; NSA III, p. 468 (28-31). By using the word 'holy,' Nietzsche is, I believe, playing around with words. As mentioned above, 'holy' here does not take on a supernatural meaning, but is a pun. Nietzsche is using 'holy' as a play on the word 'wholly,' which reflects his belief in the unity of the world.

¹⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 9[91]; NSA XII, p. 384 (19).

what modern culture and civilization call “human beings,” or “cultural man” (dualistic, fragmented being).

Another important idea in the above passage is the “terrifying noble qualities” of the Greeks. Here Nietzsche identifies “truly human” and “wholly nature” as inextricably connected and explains how, in reality, the two are not distinct—as modern man believes they are. For Nietzsche, “natural man” is a unity of conflicting impulses balanced by the unifying force of will to power. Using language from *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, human beings are dependent on the form-giving power of Apollo to order the Dionysian chaos into a unity. In its highest and noblest form, the Apollonian and Dionysian exist in balanced unity. This is what Nietzsche means when he says that “nature” and “man” have “inseparably grown together”—whenever Nietzsche talks about the “development of human beings,” he is also unavoidably talking about the ordering of chaotic impulses. The other important idea in the above passage is that when the terrible qualities of human beings are sublimated, or channeled, those qualities lead to the growth and enhancement of humanity (this is further discussed below).

Nietzsche therefore acknowledged and applauded the strength and nobility that characterized Greek culture. He praised their ability to develop as individuals while remaining unified as a culture. The Greeks, as a people, were “strong” enough to recognize the violence in society and thrived on it because they took that “violence,” or chaos of their instincts, and channeled it into more creative means. The result was the emergence of a culture of people that could sublimate their “inner chaos” and channel it towards the evolution of society. Nietzsche intended to do the same thing through his notion of the order of rank.

C. The Order of Rank

When discussing Nietzsche's doctrine of the order of rank [*die Rangordnung*] it is important to discuss his views on equality. Nietzsche allowed that human beings have a common human nature,¹⁷ but differences exist in such significant ways that all people are not equal. Those able to surpass others in various aspects should be recognized as "exceptional." Doctrines that teach human equality create a stultifying confinement on those potentially exceptional human beings.¹⁸ Human equality fixes all people to a low level of mediocrity and all-too-human limitations. Mediocrity is caused, in part, by human beings not understanding "the reverse side of things as a necessity."¹⁹ The mediocre see no reason to change the way things currently are.

The poison of the theory "equal rights for all"—it was Christianity that had spread it most fundamentally; out of the most secret nooks of bad instincts, Christianity has waged war to the death against all sense of respect and feeling of distance between man and man, that is to say, against the *prerequisite* of every growth of culture.²⁰

This passage illustrates what Nietzsche calls the "leveling effect" of equality. He is rejecting the notions of "equal rights for all" and "total equality among human beings" because such doctrines aim at leveling all people. By leveling, Nietzsche means reducing everybody to the lowest common denominator, or herd, so that the emergence of "higher" individuals becomes impossible.

¹⁷ This being that all people are marked by an inner chaos of conflicting instincts.

¹⁸ This is the heart of his criticism of democracy. See chapter four above.

¹⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[111]; *NSA* XII, p. 519 (16-17).

²⁰ *A* 43; *NSA* VI, p. 217-218 (30-04).

I teach: the herd seeks an upright type to preserve and defend itself according to both sides, against those who have degenerated from it . . . as well as against those who tower above it. The tendency of the herd is directed towards stagnation and preservation, there is nothing creative in it.

The pleasant feelings, poured into us by the good, benevolent, just man (in contrast to the tension and fear, which the great new man produces) are *our own* personal feelings of equality and security: the herd animal glorifies its herd nature and while doing so then feels comfortable.²¹

This is why Nietzsche rejects the doctrine of human equality—through it the herd is intent on preserving its own “lower” type:

Double Manner of Equality.—The mania for equality can express itself like this, that one either likes to pull down everyone else to oneself (through diminishing, spying on, tripping them up) or raising up everyone with oneself (through recognition, assistance, or delighting in guiding them to success).²²

Some people are endowed with certain capabilities that others lack. Such people represent potentially “higher” individuals. But under doctrines that promote human equality, those potentially “higher men” cannot cultivate and develop themselves. As a result, Nietzsche stresses the need for an order of rank. This order of rank is not just a descriptive term for one’s position in society, but refers to the “order,” or degree, of one’s spiritual discipline. What is being ordered are one’s instincts. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche alludes to the order of rank in the section “Health of the Soul” [*Gesundheit der Seele*]. Here he explains that the health of one’s soul depends on the health of one’s body, so what is healthy for your body depends “on your goal, your horizon, your

²¹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 27[17] and 27[18]; *NSA* XI, p. 279 (01-11).

²² *MAM* 300; *NSA* II, p. 240 (16-20).

strength, your impulse, your error and in particular on the ideals and phantasms in your soul.”²³ I mention this section to illustrate how the order of rank must be attained individually. This goes back to my discussion on equality. The doctrine of human equality says that everyone is the same, and this ultimately results in the elimination of the order of rank.

If human life, according to Nietzsche, is to flourish and develop, it is important to develop and maintain an order of rank. Through the order of rank, the qualities that enhance both individuals and society are preserved. As Nietzsche explains, “A doctrine is needed, strong enough to work at *breeding*: strength for the strong, paralyzing and fragile for the world-weary.”²⁴ By breeding, Nietzsche is referring to “a means of accumulating the enormous strength of mankind, so that the generations can build upon the work of their ancestors.”²⁵ In other words, Nietzsche here is referring to the cultivating forces in a society—not the biological engineering of a particular kind of person or race. Nietzsche, I believe, is concerned with creating the conditions now for the future development of “higher” individuals. The order of rank, consequently, plays a large role in determining whether or not there will exist any “higher” individuals in the future.

The concept “*stronger and weaker human being*” reduces itself to [the idea], that in the first case a lot of power is bequeathed—it is a sum total: in the other [case], *as yet little*—
—insufficient hereditary, fragmentation of what is inherited . . .²⁶

²³ FW 120; NSA III, p. 477 (08-10).

²⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 25[211]; NSA XI, p. 69 (07-09).

²⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 15[65]; NSA XIII, p. 450 (18-20).

²⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 15[78]; NSA XIII, p. 455 (10-13).

One function of the doctrine of the order of rank, therefore, is to “store up” forces that will be inherited by future generations. This will happen naturally because only those who are spiritually strong will occupy the highest caste in the order of rank.

The way to maintain the order of rank is to widen the “difference between strata” and intensify the “*pathos of distance*, which from it is confirmed the difference of status.”²⁷ Nietzsche stresses that a distance between the two classes must exist: “*Major Consideration*: Get distances, but create no opposites. Detach the *intermediate* forms and decrease their influence: chief means to preserving distances.”²⁸ But as I examine below, this does not translate into a relationship founded on domination. As I argue, the highest caste encompasses the lower castes in order to create the conditions by which to cultivate future “higher” individuals. What Nietzsche means is that the higher and lower castes are not opposites but are different by a matter of degree and status. Those with a higher level of spiritual discipline, or order of rank, will occupy a higher caste in Nietzsche’s hierarchy. Preserving distances creates the possibility for the cultivation of the “higher man.”

The always craving after newer expanding distances within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, further, more curious, comprehensive states; in brief, the answer to the type “human being,” the continual “self-overcoming of man,” to take a moral formula in a supra-moral sense . . . their predominance for the time being did not lie in physical strength, but in mental strength,—it being the *entire* human being (which also on every level means “the entire beast”—).²⁹

²⁷ JGB 257; NSA V, p. 205 (09-10).

²⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 10[63]; NSA XII, p. 494 (08-11).

²⁹ JGB 257; NSA V, p. 205-206 (15-20, 07-10).

Nietzsche sees the absolute equality among people as the overall “degeneration and diminution of the human being into the perfect herd animal.”³⁰

In *Der Antichrist* Nietzsche explains that it was Christianity which both pushed and established the doctrine of equality to the foreground.³¹ The equality of human beings was established by supposing that there was a metaphysical foundation in which all persons were considered equal. The metaphysical foundation was the belief in God. But as Zarathustra explains:

“You higher men, —thus blinks the mob—there are no higher men, we are all equal, man is man before God—we are all equal!”

Before God!—But now this God has died. But in front of the mob we do not want to be equal. You higher men, go away from the market!³²

With the death of God one must accept the inequality among human beings because human equality has a metaphysical-religious foundation. And when the scaffolding is eliminated, so too must everything that the scaffolding had supported.

The belief in an order of rank, and therefore in inequality, requires more than just a rejection of the metaphysical-religious foundations. What is also required is the abandonment of contemporary morality. Morality, like the doctrine of equality, has a leveling effect on human beings. Zarathustra argues that morality damages the creative drives of people because it seeks to cover-up and eliminate the “true” character of the world—as becoming. In *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Nietzsche argues:

³⁰ JGB 203; NSA V, p. 127 (32-33).

³¹ See A 43; NSA VI, p. 217 (30-31) where he notes, “The poison of the theory ‘equal rights for all’—it was Christianity that had spread it most fundamentally.”

³² Z IV 13 §1; NSA IV, p. 357 (15-20).

—I make a principle into a formula . . . The *unnatural morals*, what we call almost every moral standard taught up to now, have become worshipped and preached, turns *against* the instincts of life,—it is an almost secret, almost noisy and impudent *condemnation* of these instincts.³³

The moral tradition, according to Nietzsche, wants to make past values rule the future, and that is what prevents the spirit from developing into the child. This theme is first developed in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* when he discusses how all future values are rendered illicit or unwarranted when present or past values are believed to be absolute.

In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche argues that the moral establishment is held to be “good” while any other system of values that threatens this establishment is considered “evil.”³⁴ Nietzsche further develops this theme in *Zarathustra* in the chapter, “*Von alten und neuen Tafeln*.” In this chapter, Zarathustra urges human beings to move beyond the established moral values in society: “And I called them to knock down their teaching chairs and wherever any old conceit had sat.”³⁵ Those who remain fixed in their moral valuations reject and ignore the creators of values by labeling them “evil.” As a result, such individuals “block” humanity’s enhancement thereby stamping “being” onto existence. Even worse is that those who remain fixed in their opinions believe they have a special access to “Goodness” and “Truth,” and this, they think, is what justifies their labels of “evil” on others. Zarathustra therefore urges his followers to destroy the good and the just because they represent the decadent, nihilistic life.

Oh my brothers! Who among you lies as the
greatest danger to all of man’s future? Is it not the

³³ *GD* V 4; *NSA* VI, p. 85 (16, 21-25).

³⁴ See *FW* 4; *NSA* III, p. 376-377.

³⁵ *Z* III 12 §2; *NSA* IV, p. 247 (06-07).

good and the just?—

... “whom do they hate most?”

The *creator* they hate most: he breaks tablets and old values, the breaker—they call him a criminal.

The good—namely they are *unable* to create: they are always the beginning of the end.—

—they crucify him, who writes new values on new tablets, they sacrifice the future to themselves,— they crucify all man’s future!

the good—they have always been the beginning of the end.—³⁶

Besides describing how Nietzsche’s self-creators will be feared and hated, this passage also illustrates the overcoming of morality by the “higher man.” This overcoming begins with the elimination of “tablets and old values.”

The “higher man” finds his justification for overcoming morality in the doctrine of the order of rank. With the order of rank, Nietzsche distinguishes between two types of life: An ascending life and one of decay and weakness. Furthermore, these two types of life each have a specific rank. The former type of life, which is the minority, consists of a higher degree of spiritual strength than the latter group, the vast majority. In the general population of humankind, there can be found rare cases of individuals with great power of soul and body. But what is it that makes certain individuals “higher” than the majority of mankind? Nietzsche provides a clue in his notebooks: “The quantum of power determines over the rank that you are.”³⁷ Furthermore, Nietzsche identifies power with one’s inner rank:

How the human being must be to procure what in this revaluation is noble.

The order of rank as the order of power . . .

³⁶ Z III 12 §26; *NSA* IV, p. 265 (26-28) and p. 266 (19-29).

³⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 11[36]; *NSA* XIII, p. 20 (04-05).

The grandiose model: the human being in nature, the weakest, smartest creature makes himself the master, himself subjugating the stupider forces.³⁸

In another note Nietzsche characterizes the “higher man” as “*New barbarians*: cynics, experimenters, conquerors” who embody a “union of spiritual superiority with well-being and an abundance of strength.”³⁹ The “higher man,” in other words, achieves a kind of spiritual wholeness and completeness of their inner lives, and takes up the challenge of becoming self-creators. This reflects back to *Zarathustra*. The destruction Zarathustra urges is justified because through it, one is attempting to rid the earth of decadent life:

Oh my brothers, am I cruel?
But I say: what falls, one should also still push!
Everything of today—falls, decays: who wants
it held! But I—I *will* still push!

. . .
I am a prelude to better games, oh my brothers!
An example! *Follow* after my example!
And who you cannot teach to fly, then teach
them—to *fall faster*!—⁴⁰

Zarathustra is teaching and challenging people to the “better game” of self-creation. Furthermore, the “higher man,” being the embodiment of both the elimination of dualism and the unity of one’s instincts under the yoke of will to power, is justified in destroying those systems which represent nihilism.

With the order of rank there will be separate functions among the “higher” and “lower” types, and this politically translates into Nietzsche’s hierarchy. Here the highest caste will serve as spiritual legislators and “teach” the lower castes the importance of spiritual discipline (I return to this in section E below). Furthermore, the “higher man”

³⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[131]; *NSA* XII, p. 132 (19-21, 22-25)

³⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 35[28]; *NSA* XI, p. 520-521 (26-03).

⁴⁰ *Z* III 12 §20; *NSA* IV, p. 261-262 (28-02, 06-09).

knows that the only "use" of a society is "as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of creature is able to raise itself to its highest task and to a higher state of *being*."⁴¹ The "higher man" realizes that through a hierarchy, this is only the "means" toward the "ends" of promoting the conditions of growth.

The separation of the "higher man" and the "lower man" in the hierarchy is a necessary condition for the existence of a worthy culture:

In every healthy society, three physiological different types gravitate apart, reciprocating each other . . . The order of castes, the *order of rank*, merely formulates the highest law of life itself, the separation of the three types is necessary for the preservation of society, to make possible higher and higher types,—the *inequality* of right is the first condition for it, that is if there are any rights to give . . . A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base, it has first of all a strong and healthy consolidated mediocrity as its prerequisite.⁴²

Nietzsche's hierarchy is important in another aspect. Nietzsche is not only interested in the formulation of "higher men" for the present; he is also trying to establish the conditions which will allow for the development of the "higher man" in the future. A problem Nietzsche foresees is that the "higher types," which are the "richest and most complex forms" of human life, "become well attained, but they themselves do not last." They "perish easier at the ground" and are "rarely attained and kept on the surface with difficulty."⁴³ The "lower man" lasts because there is no effort involved in that kind of life; he or she accepts the current moral system and adheres to it. But the "higher man" has no

⁴¹ JGB 258; NSA V, p. 207 (01-03).

⁴² A 57; NSA VI, p. 242 (19-20); p. 243 (27-33); p. 244 (03-05). I discuss what these "three physiological types" are below.

⁴³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 14[133]; NSA XIII, p. 316 (29); p. 317 (04); p. 316 (29-30); and p. 317 (05 and 07-08) respectively.

such security. They overcome morality and establish their own values only to have to overcome their self-made values again. If they do not, they become no better than the “lower man.” As Nietzsche tells us in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, “The higher man’s choice living conditions are associated with multiplicity and difficulty.”⁴⁴ Such “higher” individuals accept Nietzsche’s challenge of self-creation and as a result must continually “live dangerously” and always overcome themselves.

D. Towards Nietzsche’s Hierarchy

Nietzsche expected his political thinking to affect not only the present but also to change the future. This, I believe, is the core of his political thinking. Nietzsche turned to the past, to ancient Greece, to critique modern politics and “looked to the distant future” for political hope. In either case, Nietzsche saw that now was the time for change:

Then when the truth enters into a fight with the lies of millennia, we shall have tremors, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys the likes which have never been dreamed of. The idea of politics is then completely undone into a war of the spirits, all of the power structures of the old society are exploded into the air—they all together rest on lies: there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth. It is beginning with me that the earth has *great politics*.—⁴⁵

The important idea in this passage is that politics becomes a “war of the spirits.” This refers to his order of rank and the inner strength and discipline that he wishes individuals to acquire. By creating a spiritual war he is distancing himself from the petty politics of the nineteenth century (as discussed in chapter four). What is more, by shifting the focus in this way, this naturally leads to a hierarchy. As examined above, Nietzsche developed

⁴⁴ JGB 62; NSA V, p. 81 (28-29).

⁴⁵ EH XIV 1; NSA VI, p. 366 (09-17).

his political beliefs by using his notion of the “overcoming of morality by the ‘higher man.’” Society is to use the “higher man” as a guide in formulating values that enhance its advancement. This view of the “higher man” merges politics and morality; it is “a morality with such opposite intentions which wants to cultivate human beings for the heights instead of for comfort and mediocrity—a morality with the intention of cultivating a ruling class.”⁴⁶ The self-creation the “higher man” is engaged in politically translates into the concentration of spiritual power in the hands of the few. By “spiritual power” Nietzsche is referring to the quanta of power the “higher man” acquires through intense spiritual discipline, not the amount of domination they hold over others. Furthermore, he who acquires such spiritual power uses this to command and legislate himself, not others.⁴⁷

If Nietzsche’s political beliefs are based on the overcoming of morality, what then does his critique of morality rest on? Nietzsche’s critique of morality is directed against the traditional enlightened notions of equality and of universal moral maxims. As discussed above, Nietzsche replaces all ethical theories with the notion of an order of rank. Through the order of rank the “higher” and “lower” types have separate values and functions in society. A healthy society, in the Nietzschean sense, “believes in a long ladder of the order of rank and differences in value among man and man.”⁴⁸ That there must be “distance” among the types of human beings leads Nietzsche to supporting a hierarchy based on a relationship of encompassment (this is the topic of the next section).

⁴⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 37[8]; NSA XI, p. 582 (02-05).

⁴⁷ As I examine in the next section, due to the nature of being self-creators the “higher man” unavoidably creates for others as well.

⁴⁸ *JGB* 257; NSA V, p. 205 (06-08).

The question now faces us: How does the creation of an order of rank become a political order? Just as the spiritually strong “higher man” is able to control and order his or her instincts resulting in a “well-ordered soul,” society is considered “well-ordered” when all its members function according to their degree of spiritual strength. This illustrates the importance Nietzsche placed on the inner life of human beings. Nietzsche was primarily concerned with “improving” humanity and therefore focused on the inner, or spiritual, life of human beings.⁴⁹ Leslie Thiele examines this theme in his work on Nietzsche. Thiele stresses the importance of Nietzsche’s psychology and how pivotal a well-ordered soul is in Nietzsche’s philosophy. When talking about the importance of a well-ordered soul in Nietzsche’s thought Thiele argues that, “Here Nietzsche revealed the speculative core of his philosophical enterprise . . . [and] he would clothe his philosophy in political attire. For the language that best facilitates the description and analysis of the soul is political.”⁵⁰ In other words, Thiele argues that Nietzsche formulated his notion of a well-ordered soul based on a political model. I, though, believe Nietzsche was doing the opposite—he first stresses the inner life of individuals through his doctrine of the order of rank, and this leads him to concluding that a political hierarchy is the only structure that could support such a view.⁵¹

⁴⁹ By “improving” here I mean that Nietzsche wants to expose the metaphysical/religious lies that have been poisoning individuals. Instead, Nietzsche wants human beings to re-embrace the earth and become what they are.

⁵⁰ Thiele (1990b), p. 52. See especially his chapters three and four.

⁵¹ At this point I wish to reiterate my position: Here I am arguing that Nietzsche’s political thinking and his overall philosophy are consistent. But I am not condoning or supporting any form of hierarchy—the aspect which I believe creates this consistency. Simply put, any form of hierarchy is unthinkable and has no place within our modern world.

By viewing this move as going from the individual to society, this both provides a consistency in Nietzsche's philosophy and makes his political thought stronger in the face of criticism. For example, Mark Warren critiques Nietzsche's political thought as being "internally inconsistent with his philosophy," and that Nietzsche "did not understand modern societies."⁵² More specifically, Warren argues that for Nietzsche, "All politically sustained hierarchies . . . are inconsistent with the intersubjective space of individuation."⁵³ Therefore, since Nietzsche was so concerned about the individual, why then did he take the route of hierarchical thinking instead of egalitarianism? In a word, Warren believes Nietzsche's philosophy leads him to egalitarian doctrines.

Warren serves as an excellent example as to how Nietzsche's order of rank strengthens and unifies his philosophy in the face of criticism. Nietzsche's overall philosophy aims at the improvement of all human beings, and as discussed above this is directed at man's spiritual enhancement. Seeing that Nietzsche viewed a well-ordered society as a physical manifestation of a well-ordered soul, or order of rank, this puts Nietzsche's political thinking into the realm of spiritual concerns—not power politics based on domination. Warren is correct that Nietzsche was concerned about the individual, but he did not see that the order of rank, which is necessary for the improvement of human beings, actually requires a hierarchy. Only by separating and encompassing the "higher" and the "lower" types can the "higher man" fully develop and then return to help the rest of society. Now I wish to examine Nietzsche's hierarchy and argue that it is not simply a relation between those who rule and those who are ruled.

⁵² Warren, p. 210.

⁵³ Warren, p. 223.

E. Nietzsche's Hierarchical Encompassment

Above I discussed Nietzsche's doctrine of the order of rank, which politically translates into Nietzsche's hierarchy. Those individuals with a higher level of spiritual power will occupy a higher position in the order of rank and will consequently be the creators who comprise the ruling caste.

Nietzsche is nowhere more problematic than when he talks about the political life of "higher" individuals. In chapter seven above I examined Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity as being concerned primarily with self-creation. The Nietzschean subject is a self-creator continually engaged in creating values for themselves and in self-overcoming. They are not concerned with the herd and their values. But in his notebooks and in *Jenseits* Nietzsche refers to these "higher men" as legislators of the future who will create a new table of laws/values for humanity. What is the relationship between the seemingly contradictory roles of the Nietzschean subject? Is this simply an inconsistency Nietzsche did not adequately think through? This seems to be a tremendous paradox within Nietzsche's thought. But by re-evaluating the common idea of "hierarchy" I believe the gap between self-creators and creating for others can be brought closer together.

Nietzsche's belief that a hierarchy is the fundamental structure of any genuine political society is perhaps one of the most widely critiqued aspects of his political thinking.⁵⁴ A hierarchy is not a marginal part of his political thinking but is a pivotal aspect of it. As many commentators interpret it, they believe that "hierarchy" and "inequality" are synonymous terms. But I take a similar argument as Alex McIntyre:

⁵⁴ Many commentators reduce Nietzsche's political thinking to the "petty politics" of brute domination. Supporters of this (what I believe to be false) interpretation include Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought*; Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*; and Ofelia Schutte, *Beyond Nihilism*.

Nietzsche's principle of inequality of status, as expressed in his hierarchy, has nothing in common with the principle of inequality of power, as expressed in class structure or social stratification.⁵⁵ Instead of being a political configuration, "hierarchy" in Nietzsche's political thinking is, I believe, a cultural order. Seen in this way, the common criticisms of Nietzsche as a supporter of domination, exploitation, and oppression are unfounded. For Nietzsche, a hierarchy is far more than a vertical relationship of domination between rulers and those ruled. Hierarchy is a horizontal relationship of encompassment in which the "lower" is encompassed within the "higher."⁵⁶ With this relationship I believe this embodies the Nietzschean spirit of "holism," or the interconnectedness of everything. As mentioned above, Warren believes Nietzsche's philosophy leads more to egalitarian doctrines than to a hierarchy. It is indeed true that egalitarian doctrines such as liberal democracy supports a radical individualism, but is also results in social relations being construed as oppressive restraints on the individual. Such institutions as the government and the justice system are seen as artificial and external. In this way "domination" and "oppression" are more central features of egalitarian relationships than to hierarchical ones.

Looking at hierarchy in this way (as encompassing) does, I believe, aid in working through this paradoxical relationship of the "higher" individuals being both self-creators and legislators for the herd. Nietzsche views the all-too-human as unable to achieve "true" subjectivity, yet he does believe that such "lower" human beings can attain

⁵⁵ McIntyre makes this argument in his *Sovereignty of Joy*, especially chapter four.

⁵⁶ I owe my re-thinking of "hierarchy" to Louis Dumont. In his study of hierarchy he defines the relation that characterizes a genuine hierarchy, as opposed to the relationships of class structure, as "a relation between larger and smaller, or more precisely between that which encompasses and that which is encompassed." See his *Homo Hierarchicus* (London: Paladin Press, 1972), p. 24.

something higher—but for this to occur they must be brought under the rule or guidance of something higher. In a word, I believe the core of Nietzsche's political thinking centres around creating the conditions to cultivate and promote the emergence of "higher" individuals. As we saw in Part II, it is in the nature of the (Nietzschean) subject to create beyond him or herself—to transcend oneself and create a higher existence. This is essentially Nietzsche's notion of self-overcoming. But due to the interconnectedness of everything in the world, or will to power, this self-overcoming works not only in the nature of the self but also of culture:

... [F]or culture is the child of each individual's self-knowledge and dissatisfaction with himself. Anyone who believes in culture is thereby saying: "I see above me something higher and more human than I am; let everyone help me to attain it, as I will help everyone who knows and suffers as I do . . ."⁵⁷

For Nietzsche philosophy coincides with culture in the sense of self-cultivation in its quest for a higher self, or self-overcoming. It is important to note that this does not mean Nietzsche believed philosophy coincided with the state. To understand this relationship, I will borrow a distinction Paul Ricoeur makes between "polity" and "politics." By "polity" Ricoeur means the ideal sphere in which practical "politicizing" takes place.⁵⁸ In this dissertation "polity" will be distinguished in the following way: "Polity" is the realization of culture, as Nietzsche understood it, and "politics" refers to the power politics that takes place within the polity. Furthermore, as McIntyre notes, "[T]he realization of the most creative will to power in human affairs which Nietzsche calls 'grand politics'

⁵⁷ *UB* III 6; *NSA* I, p. 385 (10-14).

⁵⁸ See Ricoeur's "The Political Paradox" in *History and Truth*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965).

takes place . . . in [the] polity.”⁵⁹ Nietzsche’s grand politics, in other words, is engaged in the struggle to create the conditions for a new culture. This also further defines the political role of “higher” individuals—the realm of politics and state power are not the focus of their rule but are necessary instruments for creating the conditions to cultivate future “higher” individuals.

The desire to cultivate something higher leads to Nietzsche’s concept of a hierarchy. The political activity that will be shaped in the polity in order to develop something higher will lead “higher” individuals to establish a new order of rank between “higher” and “lower” human beings. This will be a spiritual hierarchy (as discussed above) radically distinct from a political relationship of domination and oppression between the ruler and the ruled. “Higher” individuals will legislate above the entire hierarchy by assigning a purely subordinate, supporting status to certain individuals within the state. In other words, the “higher” individuals rule above and over the leaders in the actual hierarchy, or “guardians.” The “guardians” will be the political rulers guided by the spiritual rule of the “higher man.” With this distinction Nietzsche hoped to clarify how polity and philosophy coincide. To rule, the “higher man” need not become king, and the king(s) do not need to become philosophers. As McIntyre points out, “The philosopher is sovereign because he wields the greatest power on earth, the power to create a people’s ‘good’ and ‘evil,’ their ‘law-table of values.’”⁶⁰ According to Nietzsche, the “higher man” rules as a creative spiritual authority through “the stillest words.”

Do you not know *who* is most needed by all? He that commands great things. To do great things is difficult; but to command great things is more difficult . . .

⁵⁹ McIntyre, p. 81.

⁶⁰ McIntyre, p. 82.

It is the stillest words that bring on the storm.
Thoughts that come on doves' feet guide the world.⁶¹

The "higher man," therefore, rules through the spiritual power that creates an order of rank, thereby creating a new order of values. These new values, though, must not be thought of in the universal/absolute sense. Nietzsche does not intend to replace values with values: "[L]et the value of all things be posited newly by you. For that shall you be fighters! For that shall you be creators!"⁶² Nietzsche is still calling for self-creators, but such "higher" individuals do not exist just for themselves; they also unavoidably live for others. The "higher man" does not create an isolated, noble spirit, but an order of rank that includes both "higher" and "lower" souls. The order of rank, in other words, encompasses all human beings of all levels of spiritual discipline. Furthermore, it reflects poorly on one's own position in the spiritual order of rank if one is concerned only with the cultivation of "exceptions" or "higher" individuals. "It ranks you far beneath him," writes Nietzsche, "that you seek to establish the exceptions while he seeks to establish the rule."⁶³ Due to the nature of the hierarchy as encompassing and not dominating, the spiritual leaders are concerned with everyone in the hierarchy. They look to cultivate something "higher" through both establishing an order of rank and by serving as an example. "Physician, help thyself: thus you help your patient too. Let this be his best help that he may behold with his eyes the man who heals himself."⁶⁴

⁶¹ Z II 22; *NSA* IV, p. 189 (08-11 and 16-18).

⁶² Z I 22 §2; *NSA* IV, p. 100 (18-20).

⁶³ *VMS* 362; *NSA* II, p. 523 (13-15). See also *D* 442 and *JGB* 26.

⁶⁴ Z I 22 §2; *NSA* IV, p. 100 (24-26).

Important here is Nietzsche's notion of creation. The Nietzschean self-creator, or "higher man," does not create out of nothing. As I discussed above, "*Von den drei Verwandlungen*"⁶⁵ is more than a metaphor for self-overcoming. This section in *Zarathustra* also illustrates how one comes from a specific tradition and can "come to terms" with and overcome it. In other words, creation entails the "*selection and completion*"⁶⁶ of something that already exists. In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche tells us, "To esteem is to create . . . Through esteeming alone is there value . . . Hear this, you creators!"⁶⁷ Creators therefore take what already exists and from it produces something new. As Zarathustra claims, "I walk among men as among the fragments of the future . . . And this is all my creating and striving, that I create and carry together into One what is fragmented . . ." ⁶⁸ Zarathustra sees that modern man is fragmented by dualism and universal notions of good and evil, but he also sees that something "higher" can come from human beings. In order to cultivate such "higher" individuals, culture needs a new table of values hanging over people. But, as mentioned above, Nietzsche is not intending on presenting a "new" universal moral system—we are not going to get a "revised Ten Commandments." The "higher" individuals will create and present the baser souls with a "blue print" that will serve as a "selective and cultivating influence."⁶⁹ This new table of laws, as presented in *Zarathustra*, includes three levels; the praiseworthy, the good, and the holy:

Praiseworthy is whatever seems difficult to a people;
whatever seems indispensable and difficult is called

⁶⁵ See chapter seven above.

⁶⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 24[5]; NSA X, p. 645 (20).

⁶⁷ Z I 15; NSA IV, p. 75 (22, 24, and 25).

⁶⁸ Z II 20; NSA IV, p. 179 (18-21).

⁶⁹ JGB 61; NSA V, p. 79 (20-21).

good; and whatever liberates even out of the deepest need, the rarest, the most difficult—that they call holy.⁷⁰

This is essentially a hierarchy of achievement of what is hard, what is indispensable and hard, and then what is hardest, 'rarest,' and liberating. In this way I believe the "new table of values" is consistent with being a self-creator. What is praiseworthy or holy will vary among individuals. The "higher man" does not tell us what we ought to value, only that we need to value those things that are difficult and hard because this is the only way towards self-creation.

Nietzsche never intended nor desired his "higher man" to redeem human nature or politics of its "imperfections." The fragmented human being, though, could be cultivated into something "higher." As a result, the only solution was to aim at a spiritual hierarchy of both "higher" and "lower" types whereby the "higher man" rules as a spiritual legislator rather than as a direct political leader. So Nietzsche is not just aiming to create a noble, or "higher," type of human being, but he seeks to encompass all individuals within the framework of a "higher" culture. To accomplish this the "higher man," as the spiritual leader of the culture, must institute a hierarchical, spiritual order of rank that encompasses all human beings; a new table of values; and a polity which unifies these two features. The polity, therefore, is defined by the table of values that hangs over it because this represents its will to power, its self-overcoming, and this table is established by the creator, or "higher man." Contrary to the common interpretation of the Nietzschean lawgiver as a tyrant who believes that might is right, Zarathustra teaches that, "the clever, loveless Ego that seeks its own advantage in the advantage of the many . . . is not

⁷⁰ ZI 15; *NSA* IV, p. 74 (15-17).

the origin of the herd, but its going under.”⁷¹ In a word, the “true” Nietzschean self-creator/statesman is a creative, giving, and loving individual.

Truly genuine Nietzschean self-creators will, consequently, be “*commanders and legislators* . . . With a creative hand they reach for the future and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument . . . Their ‘knowing’ is *creating*, their creating is a legislation.”⁷² By their nature they create for both themselves and for the rest of humanity by hanging a new faith and table of values over a people. The “table,” furthermore, is realized only in and through an order of rank, a hierarchy. The principle feature of this hierarchy is that it is arranged according to status rather than power and is therefore not a class or social stratification based on domination.⁷³ By re-thinking the concept of hierarchy as based on status, the criteria that determines higher rank is self-mastery or autonomy.

This “status hierarchy” is translated into Nietzsche’s *grosse Politik* not by separating the “higher man” from those who control power, the “guardians,” but by giving the former a higher status. Nietzsche first distinguishes three types of human beings “which condition each other and gravitate differently physiologically,” and then he describes three castes which correspond to the physiological types. He does so because the “*order of castes*, the supreme, the dominating law, is only the sanctioning of a *natural order*, a natural law of the first rank.”⁷⁴ As to the three types, he identifies “the predominantly

⁷¹ Z I 15; NSA IV, p. 76 (03-05).

⁷² JGB 211; NSA V, p. 145 (08 and 12-15).

⁷³ Dumont makes this distinction between status ranking and social stratification central to his argument that “hierarchy” cannot be reduced to class structure. See his *Homo Hierarchicus*, especially pp. 114-118.

⁷⁴ A 57; NSA VI, p. 242 (19-20 and 15-17 respectively).

spiritual" type, "the predominantly muscular and temperamentally strong" type, and those "excellent neither in the one nor the other, the mediocre."⁷⁵ Nietzsche tells us little more than this about these physiological types and rushes to the political consequences by outlining the corresponding castes. The highest and most important caste for the enhancement of humanity and culture (i.e., the polity) is called "*the very few . . . the perfect caste.*" They are "the most spiritual human beings" and are rulers "not because they want to but because they *are*; they are not free to be second [in rank]."⁷⁶ In other words, the highest caste rules not on the basis of simply wishing or desiring to dominate. Whether the highest types want to rule or not is secondary to their reality as self-creators who, reluctantly or willingly, transform the cultural horizon of their people and in doing so exercise sovereignty. The entire meaning of Nietzsche's order of rank, or hierarchy, can be put into terms that the highest types rule not through their will but because of what they are. And what they are is revealed through their differentiation from those who actually hold political power. The second in rank, which corresponds to the muscular and temperamental physiological type, are

. . . the guardians of the law, those who see to order and security, the noble warriors, and above all the *king* as the highest formula or warrior, judge, and upholder of the law.⁷⁷

The "guardians" are the "executive arm of the most spiritual" and relieve the highest caste of the pettiness of having to actually govern. This is extremely revealing of both Nietzsche's notion of hierarchy and the role of the "higher man," and it refers back to the

⁷⁵ A 57; NSA VI, p. 242 (23, 23-24, and 30) and p. 243 (16-18) respectively.

⁷⁶ A 57; NSA VI, p. 242 (27-28 and 30) and p. 243 (16-18) respectively.

⁷⁷ A 57; NSA VI, p. 243 (18-22).

distinction Ricoeur makes between politics and polity. The rulers, those in the highest, most spiritual caste, legislate above the structural apparatus of the state. By doing so they subordinate politics to the polity.

What is more, while the highest caste is “predestined to command and in whom the reason and art of a governing race [has] become incarnate,” the most spiritual type prefers “the most subtle type of rule.”⁷⁸ As an example of this subtle form of rule, Nietzsche refers to the Brahmins who “gave themselves the power of nominating the kings of the people while they themselves kept and felt apart and outside, as men of higher and supra-moral tasks.”⁷⁹ In a word, Nietzsche’s “higher” individuals rule not on the basis of their will or desire, but because they are creators and legislators—they are predestined to command, and belong to a governing type that rules above and over the guardians/kings by establishing them as the executives of the most spiritual order. As Nietzsche notes, “The highest men live beyond the rulers, freed from all bonds; and in the rulers [i.e., the guardians] they have their instruments.”⁸⁰ Elsewhere he explains: “*Order of rank*: He who *determines* values and directs the will of millennia by giving direction of the highest natures is the *highest* man.”⁸¹

The guardians are those who serve to protect the aristocratic order while the rulers, the “higher men,” are like “philosopher-statesmen” whose rule benefits everyone, including the lower castes. The spiritual power of the rulers overflows, and as it does it cultivates and prepares the lower castes for greater heights. “For every high world one

⁷⁸ JGB 61; NSA V, p. 79 (26-27).

⁷⁹ JGB 61; NSA V, p. 80 (09-12).

⁸⁰ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 25[270]; NSA XI, p. 82 (09-10).

⁸¹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 25[355]; NSA XI, p. 106 (10-12).

must be born; or to speak more clearly, one must be *cultivated* for it.”⁸² So the “higher men” have the spiritual power of creativity in society and through their rule cultivate the “lower” individuals.

The highest caste of the hierarchy, at the top of the order of rank, is what Nietzsche calls “a new, tremendous . . . aristocracy,”⁸³ which is

built upon the most severe self-legislation . . . in which the will of the philosophical men of force and artist-tyrants will be made to endure for millennia:—a higher type of man, which themselves, thanks to their predominance of will, knowledge, riches, and influence, operate democratic Europe as their most pliant and flexible instrument, obtaining the destinies of the earth in hand, to fashion about the “human being” itself as artists.⁸⁴

When he talks about “severe self-legislation,” Nietzsche means that those in the highest caste obey no one’s commands but their own. The “higher man” of the ruling caste will be unlike any ruler that has yet been on earth, and Nietzsche devotes a fair amount of writing to describing what those qualities are. In his notebooks he writes that the “higher man” must be “*objective, hard, firm, [and] strong* . . . in the carrying through of an idea.” It is through bearing “the greatest responsibility” that leads to “the future of the highest human beings.”⁸⁵ Furthermore, the “higher man” must be cheerful and at the same time enjoy sitting in the abyss. Unlike the “lower man,” the “higher man” knows that only through suffering can greatness be achieved. They know that suffering leads to even higher elevations:

⁸² JGB 213; NSA V, p. 148 (27-28).

⁸³ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[57]; NSA XII, p. 87 (19-20).

⁸⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 2[57]; NSA XII, p. 87-88 (19-02).

⁸⁵ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1[56]; NSA XII, p. 24 (13-14, 21, and 20-21 respectively).

[A]bove the stream and filth of human lowlands there is a *higher, brighter humanity*, very small in number . . . One belongs to it . . . because one is *colder, brighter, more foreseeing, more solitary*; because one endures, prefers, demands solitude as happiness, as privilege, indeed as a condition of existence; because one lives among clouds and lightening as among one's own kind.⁸⁶

In *Jenseits* Nietzsche devotes a lengthy section to the characteristics of the "higher man." Here he describes the "higher man" as the type of life which "senses *itself* determining values" and consequently needs no approval, because he knows himself to be a self-creator. Through the self-creation of values the "noble man" is aware of his or her great abundance of spiritual power and "honors in himself that which is powerful" and honors whoever has "power over himself." The noble man, in fact, "has pleasure with practicing strictness and severity against itself and respects everything severe and harsh."⁸⁷ These are a few characteristics of what Nietzsche calls "noble morality." Nietzsche adds a further description in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Here he notes that:

The passion that attacks the noble is a peculiar one . . . [it involves] the use of a rare and singular standard, an almost madness: the feeling of heat in things, for which everybody else feels cold: a calculation of values, for which the scales have not yet been made up.⁸⁸

This excerpt illustrates how noble individuals will be the new creators of values. More important, though, is the "rare and singular standard" Nietzsche mentions above. This standard is "rare" because what were once thought to "preserve the spirit" were those characteristics that were "common, near, and indispensable." But, it turns out, this

⁸⁶ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 7[70]; NSA XII, p. 321-322 (18-20, 21-01).

⁸⁷ JGB 260; NSA V, p. 209 (25-26); p. 209 (29); p. 210 (02-03, 04-06, 31-32, and 32-34 respectively).

⁸⁸ FW 55; NSA III, p. 417-418 (31-32, 01-04).

“became slandered on the whole, in favour of the exceptions.” In other words, it is not what is common in a species or society that preserves it, but rather what is exceptional and rare: “Up to now it was thus rarity and ignorance to this rarity that made one noble.”⁸⁹

These new rulers are rare exceptions due to their spiritual strength, which enables them to organize and order their own inner chaos and shape new values out of their affirmations for both the world and themselves. The philosopher of the future, who is the embodiment of spiritual strength, will be strong enough to express his or her ordered and unified instincts. In the end, it is the event of God’s death that sets the stage for the emergence of “higher men.” Instead of seeking out a “new idol” upon which to found a new system of values, “higher” individuals rediscover their lost centre of gravity within the depths of their own being by using the ideal of the *Übermensch* as a metaphor/symbol for life. From the *Übermensch* the “higher man” realizes the importance that creativity plays in the formulation of values.

Nietzsche’s development of a hierarchical system allowed his “higher man” to rule without having to actually involve themselves in petty politics and govern. With his order of rank and his comparing it to the Indian caste system, it is clear Nietzsche intended to develop both a spiritual and political hierarchy of “higher” and “lower” souls. But what exactly are the implications and the connection between these two notions—of subordinating the “guardians” to the “higher man” for his notion of the order of rank? To answer, I believe it is necessary to return to a discussion of the nature of hierarchies. Earlier in this section I examined Nietzsche’s hierarchy as being a relationship based on

⁸⁹ *FW* 55; *NSA* III, p. 418 (11; 13-14; and 08-09 respectively).

encompassment. Instead of a relationship based on that of dominator and dominated, I believe Nietzsche's hierarchy is a spiritual relation of the encompassing and the encompassed. As Louis Dumont persuasively argues:

We must free ourselves from familiar ideas: we tend to put the essential at the centre and the rest at the periphery. Here, by contrast, because it is a question of hierarchy . . . that which encompasses is more important than that which is encompassed, just as a whole is more important than its parts.⁹⁰

To put into a Nietzschean context, the "higher" individuals rule not because they are at the centre or occupy the top of the hierarchy, but because they embrace and encompass the activities of everyone within their scope. As McIntyre notes, "[the higher types] are at the centre of a people because they represent the periphery, the encompassing horizon that defines their world."⁹¹

Elaborating in this theme of "encompassment," Dumont points out that the essential feature of the Indian caste is the subordination of power to spiritual status.⁹² In this system, the Brahmins, the spiritual caste, hold the highest status and little political power while the kings possess greater power and wealth, but occupy a lower status. "The distinguishing characteristic of the hierarchical principle," writes Dumont, "is not simply its affirmation of inequality, but this subordination of power to spiritual status."⁹³ This is precisely the feature that Nietzsche incorporates into his order of rank. The Indian caste system is significant for Nietzsche's order of rank in that hierarchy implies the sub-

⁹⁰ Dumont, p. 116.

⁹¹ McIntyre, p. 87.

⁹² See his *Homo Hierarchicus*, especially chapter three.

⁹³ Dumont, p. 115.

ordination of power to status, or the subordination of politics to polity. It is only on the basis of this elevation of spiritual status in the hierarchy that allows Nietzsche's "higher man" to rule without actually having to govern. This idea is expressed in *Zarathustra* when the title character meets up with two kings. The kings tell Zarathustra:

... we are on our way to find the higher man—
 —The man who is higher than we, though we
 are kings . . . For the highest man shall also be the high-
 est lord on earth.
 Man's fate knows no harsher misfortune that
 when those who have power on earth are not also the
 first men.⁹⁴

As McIntyre points out, it is extremely ironic that it is this very notion of the order of rank that Nietzsche "developed in order to subject power to the hegemony of philosophy that is so often mistaken for power-mongering and a lust for domination."⁹⁵

From Part II above it is clear that Nietzsche was more concerned with creators commanding themselves. But Nietzsche is not just concerned with the "higher" aspects of culture—he also wished to address the "lower" aspects. Nietzsche's philosophy, in other words, attempts to cultivate a higher mode of existence. Nietzsche wanted to create the conditions in which individuals are able to strive for the attainment of the "higher man." This, I believe, is the core of Nietzsche's political thinking. There are individuals in society who embody exceptional spiritual discipline and, therefore, occupy a higher level in the order of rank. These individuals are the "higher men." But the majority of humanity does not have such spiritual discipline. In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche tells us that those with a high level of spiritual discipline are able to "obey themselves," in that they

⁹⁴ Z IV 3 §1; *NSA* IV, p. 306 (16-23).

⁹⁵ McIntyre, p. 87.

are self-creators. But, as he continues, “[H]e who cannot obey himself is commanded. That is the nature of the living.”⁹⁶ This is the responsibility of the Nietzschean self-creator: By nature of their spiritual strength they are both “obeyers” of themselves and commanders for “lower” individuals. What is more, commanding is more difficult than obeying because

[H]e who commands must carry the burden of all who obey, and because this burden may easily crush him. An experiment and hazard appeared to me to be in all commanding; and whenever the living commands, it hazards itself. Indeed, even when it commands *itself*, it must still pay for its commanding. It must become the judge; the avenger; and the victim of its own law.⁹⁷

But what exactly persuades people to both obey and command? Why would “lower” individuals obey the “commands” of the “higher man”? Zarathustra answers: “Where I found the living, there I found will to power; and even in the will of those who serve I found the will to be master.” In other words, will to power as self-overcoming makes everyone strive to become more than what they are. “Indeed,” continues Zarathustra, “you call it a will to procreate or a drive to an end, to something higher . . . but all this is one, and one secret.”⁹⁸ This secret is, of course, that life and the world are will to power, and as such individuals will always struggle to become something “higher.” So, as Nietzsche sees it, there are two options: For one, we can do nothing and eliminate the emergence of the “higher man” from society. But as Nietzsche writes, “The greatest loss

⁹⁶ Z II 12; *NSA* IV, p. 147 (17-18).

⁹⁷ Z II 12; *NSA* IV, p. 147 (20-27).

⁹⁸ Z II 12; *NSA* IV, p. 147-148 (34-02) and p. 148 (19-21).

that humanity could meet is a non-completion of the highest type of life.”⁹⁹ The other option would be to create the conditions that would allow the development of the “higher man.” Nietzsche chooses the second option and, as a result, needs to address the “lower” elements in society. “Higher” individuals will know that obeying and commanding are part of life, so to cultivate future “higher men” they will command the rest of culture through encompassing them within the above discussed hierarchy. As a result, “higher” individuals, besides creating a new table of values, will also use the necessary fictions of the *Übermensch* and the eternal return in order to teach and pave the way towards the highest affirmation of life—*amor fati*. By doing so this will keep “lower” individuals from creating “other-worldly” values and gods, and will keep them faithful to the earth. Ignoring the “lower” individual is impossible, so Nietzsche creates the conditions in which the “lower man” can be cultivated.

This brings us full circle back to the paradox of Nietzsche’s political thinking of how “higher” individuals go from self-creation to creating for others. When the “higher men” create their “*own new tables of good*,” they “give to themselves laws,” thereby creating themselves in the process.¹⁰⁰ But the “higher man” will, by his very nature, desire to do more than create the self. As Zarathustra says, “But my fervent will to create impels me continually closer towards human beings; thus is the hammer impelled toward the stone.”¹⁰¹ As Detwiler argues, in Nietzsche’s view the philosopher does not “simply . . . ascend from the cave and perceive the sun; rather he is one who out of the depths of

⁹⁹ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 6[31]; NS4 VIII, p. 110 (13-14).

¹⁰⁰ *FW* 335; NS4 III, p. 563 (19 and 30 respectively).

¹⁰¹ Z II 2; NS4 IV, p. 111 (26-28).

his own creativity becomes a new sun for mankind.”¹⁰² Nietzsche argues in many places that true philosophers are also legislators in a society. As discussed above, in *Jenseits* Nietzsche writes, “*True philosophers however are commanders and legislators . . . their creation is a legislation.*”¹⁰³ Elsewhere, Nietzsche writes: “*The Legislators of the Future . . . I found at last that there are two types 1) those which serve to find out a greater fact 2) those who are legislators of such evaluations . . . the second however command.*”¹⁰⁴

This theme is connected to Nietzsche’s views on culture. Daniel Breazeale writes, “If there is any theme unquestionably audible in everything that Nietzsche wrote it is the theme of culture, the problem of civilization: What is it? . . . how can it be preserved?”¹⁰⁵ Culture, to Nietzsche, is not just a collection of rules and restraints but is the “harmony among life, thinking, appearance, and will.”¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche, like the ancient Greeks, saw culture as a unity of various factors. Art, politics, and philosophy, to name a few, are such factors in a culture, and these need to be unified. This aspect leads directly to Nietzsche’s order of rank. Unification starts with the individual and is then reflected onto culture. But Nietzsche sees modern culture as corrupt and fragmented. To “save” and preserve culture, some form of commanding is necessary. There needs to be a hierarchy in a culture (an order of rank) so that the creators, who have achieved a high level of spiritual discipline, can rightfully govern. Culture demands an order of rank

¹⁰² Detwiler, p. 29. See also Z II 19 (NSA IV, p. 172-176) and EH, “*Also sprach Zarathustra*,” 7 and 8 (NSA VI, p. 345-349).

¹⁰³ JGB 211; NSA V, p. 145 (07-08, 14-15).

¹⁰⁴ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 26[407]; NSA XI, p. 258-259 (14, 28-31, and 04). This theme runs throughout his notebooks from 1885.

¹⁰⁵ Daniel Breazeale. *Philosophy and Truth*. (New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1992), xxiii (from the introduction).

¹⁰⁶ UB II 10; NSA I, p. 334 (05-06).

because “the *culture* of a people is apparent in the *uniformed mastery* of the *drives* of *those people*.”¹⁰⁷ This brings together a number of themes. The person who achieves the highest rank through the mastery of his/her ordered instincts, the “true philosopher,” will externalize this order onto culture. This is the philosopher as a “cultural physician” or teacher:

The philosopher is a philosopher at once for himself, then after that for others. It is not possible to be a philosopher completely for oneself. For as a human being one is related to other human beings; and as a philosopher, so too must he be in this relationship as well. I mean: even if he strictly separates himself from others, if he is a hermit, he gives to others a lesson, an example, and is a philosopher for them. Let him behave however he wants: being a philosopher has a side which faces human beings.¹⁰⁸

This passage illustrates just how far-reaching Nietzsche’s monism goes. Unity starts with the inner spiritual life of human beings. The “higher man” unifies and orders his or her instincts and can give free reign to all of them because they know they all come under the common yoke of will to power, thus resulting in an order of rank. This unity then reflects onto society in the form of a hierarchy. Individuals will occupy a position in this hierarchy that reflects their level of spiritual discipline. The “higher” individuals in the “perfect caste” of the hierarchy are the “philosopher-statesmen,” or “true” rulers. These spiritual rulers, in turn, realize that a well-ordered soul and a well-ordered society reflect among individuals. All human beings are related to each other in one complete unity. Through their creating and consequent commanding, the “higher man” will encompass

¹⁰⁷ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 19[41]; NSA VII, p. 432 (17-19).

¹⁰⁸ *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 29[205]; NSA VIII, p. 712 (19-27).

the “lower” individuals and create the conditions whereby they can become something higher. In this way Nietzsche places and subordinates politics to that of culture.

The above passage also explains why Zarathustra decides to go back down among human beings. For ten years Zarathustra “enjoyed his spirit and his solitude,” but now he believes he has accumulated too much wisdom: “[L]ike a bee that has gathered too much honey” Zarathustra is prepared to “give away and distribute” his wisdom to those individuals ready to receive it.¹⁰⁹

* * * * *

In this chapter I have argued that Nietzsche’s political thinking is consistent with his overall philosophy. We can see that with the destruction of the Judeo-Christian foundations (as a result of God’s death), the role of “creator” is placed back onto individual human beings. Nietzsche, though, is not idealistic. He recognized that not everyone is capable of such a noble task. Creators are identifiable through their spiritual strength: Such individuals are able to give free reign to all of their conflicting passions and instincts knowing that they all come under the single yoke of will to power. What is more, the “higher man” will be able to order his or her soul so that the strongest and most noble instincts rule the body. This is what the “higher” individuals will teach—an order of rank. When he turns to his political thinking, the order of rank translates into a hierarchy. Through re-thinking the common notion of hierarchy, I believe this avoids the common error of reducing Nietzsche’s political thinking to that of power politics. Nietzsche’s hierarchy cannot be reduced, as it often is, to a class structure. He describes his order of rank as a division of “higher” and “lower” types that is radically different from a social

¹⁰⁹ *Z Vorrede 1; NSA IV, p. 11, (04-05; 16-17; and 19 respectively).*

structure of power between rulers and ruled. Nietzsche stresses this in two important ways. First he characterizes this hierarchy as a differentiation of three physiological types, not social classes. In this way hierarchy is not a relation of political and economic power, but a relation between that which encompasses and that which is encompassed. In this way his hierarchical structure underlies all social relations. In a word, culture or polity precedes and encompasses politics.

Secondly, Nietzsche distances himself from a class structure of power by placing the “higher,” spiritual types above and outside the “guardians/kings” of state power. By making this move, Nietzsche subordinates the state and its power holders under the status of the spiritual rulers, the “true” rulers.

Nietzsche not only develops a “new” notion of subjectivity distinct from the traditional Enlightenment, but he also exposes the “true” world in which these self-creators inhabit—a world marked by becoming. This is what leads Nietzsche to re-thinking political matters. Such ideologies as socialism and liberal democracy were developed by and through the worldview of the Enlightenment and are no longer applicable in the “true” world. The core of his political thinking instead focuses on creating the conditions that look towards the future cultivation of “higher” individuals. As McIntyre points out, “Thus, Nietzsche’s genuine philosopher/statesman is certainly a legislator and commander but he legislates not through abstract ideals and new ‘oughts,’ but through an education that is the cultivation and celebration of the actual.”¹¹⁰ Through creating a new table of values that stress autonomy and embracing what is difficult, the “higher man” *qua* legislator embraces the “lower” aspects of the polity. Furthermore they will utilize

¹¹⁰ McIntyre, p. 13.

such necessary fictions as the *Übermensch* and the eternal return to keep baser individuals faithful to the earth and to teach them the highest affirmation one can proclaim—

“Amor fati!”

CONCLUSION: NIETZSCHE AND THE PARADOX OF CONSISTENCY

In this thesis I have argued for a new reading of Nietzsche, not a new interpretation. By situating Nietzsche's project against the backdrop of the Enlightenment I have shown that the issue most important to Nietzsche was that of subjectivity—a feature he shared with the Enlightenment. This in fact is the shadow that the Enlightenment casts over Nietzsche. Spanning the course of his career, including both his published and unpublished works, Nietzsche partook in a sustained and comprehensive critique of the traditional Enlightenment. Quite often the focus of his critique was on the Enlightenment's notion of subjectivity. In the first part of this thesis I examined the ideals and figures of the traditional Enlightenment which I believe Nietzsche focused his attack on. Through critiquing the Enlightened view of subjectivity and developing his own "true" notion, Nietzsche was in fact involved in the very same project he was criticizing. I concentrated on Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant as the three essential figures of the Enlightenment and discussed first how they established reason as the foundation of the Enlightened subject, thereby making rationality the defining characteristic of the individual, and then how they placed this subject within a political and moral framework. But for Nietzsche there is no one feature or set of characteristics that can define an individual. There is no final "secret" to subjectivity and the very nature of Nietzsche's writings, fragmentary and metaphorical as they are, eliminates in advance any attempt at total critical control. In this thesis I have focused on Nietzsche's concern for the individual and his preoccupation with subjectivity, because in the end I believe his philosophical project makes a lot more sense if it is understood as a sustained response to this problem.

In his concern with the project of subjectivity, Nietzsche's philosophy fulfills and overcomes a tradition that began with Descartes and was deeply concerned with the sovereignty of individuals. In part I above I sought to uncover this "Enlightened" tradition of thinking by examining those aspects of Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant that Nietzsche most ardently critiqued. We may recall, for example, that the notion of subjectivity developed by Descartes became the basis of politics for Rousseau and the basis of morality for Kant. But here is one of the problems Nietzsche finds with this tradition. The Enlightenment, beginning with Descartes, strove to distance philosophy away from any kind of supernatural/superstitious grounding (i.e., God). Nietzsche notes that Descartes did a good job at this difficult task, but by grounding subjectivity on a strong notion of rationality, Descartes ultimately tainted his own project. Nietzsche's main critique here is that rationality replaced the role that God formerly held. What is more, this notion of subjectivity was maintained and carried throughout the traditional Enlightenment.

In the terms of this tradition, then, I have tried to show how Nietzsche's engagement with the problem of individual sovereignty remains illuminating. Rousseau situates the Cartesian subject in a political setting whereas Kant circumscribes autonomy with a specific account of "rational nature" that really only constrains and eliminates the individual as such. Nietzsche, on the other hand, develops an account of sovereignty only after coming to terms with this tradition and suggests both in general terms and in some detail how the individual can take charge of existence to become what he or she is. This was the topic of chapter seven—Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity. In opposition to Kant, Nietzsche refuses to legislate sovereignty or prescribe to it any universally binding precepts. Nietzsche understands that sovereignty is effectively destroyed once it is re-

duced to a set of rules. This is precisely why he often talks about subjectivity in such general and vague ways. In one aspect this presents a problem in that there seems to be no content as to what he means by "subjectivity." The most he seems to offer us is the vague challenge of becoming self-creators, but he offers us very little as to what this actually entails in the world.

On the other hand, due to his discussion remaining incomplete and vague, Nietzsche remains consistent within his own project. Wherever he offers an account of the sovereign individual in his writings it is always suggestive and fragmentary and works alongside his ongoing criticism of traditional ideals like Kantian autonomy or the traditional notion of free will. This is a troublesome aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy—he critiques the traditional Enlightenment for giving us universal blueprints on how we ought to live, so when he offers us general notions, such as becoming self-creators, he is actually remaining consistent with his critique that no universal prescriptions can be offered. This is Nietzsche's paradox: By being vague and general in some of his writings, he actually stays internally consistent.

From this point, though, some serious philosophical problems begin to emerge concerning Nietzsche's conception of subjectivity. By remaining consistent, and therefore vague, Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity becomes troublesome. On the one hand he seems to value sovereignty as an important ideal and as something that can be attained. In a word, the individual is said to be "free" and capable of complete self-creation. But he also notes that everything is the product of nature, or the process of Becoming. So if everything must be referred back to will to power as a play of forces that underlies everything (I discuss this in chapter seven), then in what sense could subjectivity be an

“achievement,” as opposed to a necessary outcome? This is one such problem that is raised but never satisfactorily answered on the theoretical level of his work.

The second part of this thesis ended with a discussion of Nietzsche's view of the world in which his “new” subjects live. It is a world of Becoming in which the traditional notions of “progress” or of a “final goal” are impossible. But it is a world in which individuals are capable of self-creation and becoming what they are. With such a *Weltanschauung* an unavoidable question presents itself: Nietzsche saw all the political ideologies of the nineteenth century, especially democracy and socialism, as being inherently flawed due to their being based on the inadequate Cartesian subject of the Enlightenment. So does Nietzsche believe that there is any kind of political activity that his “new” subjects can engage themselves in? In a typical Nietzschean move, he does believe this is possible, but not in any traditional way. Nietzsche engages in a very sustained meditation upon the importance of the individual. Within the broader context of his reflections upon “higher humanity,” his discussion of subjectivity is also an attempt to prepare the future and create the conditions needed to bring about the “true” notion of subjectivity that he describes. This is the aspect of Nietzsche's project that drifts into the area of politics and is the topic of chapter nine. Furthermore, I believe this is part of Nietzsche's brilliance. Even where his theoretical discussion of subjectivity remains unresolved and philosophically incomplete, there is still a sense in which he forces the reader to experience the possibility of subjectivity and to incorporate it as one of the most urgent requirements of life.

The core of Nietzsche's political thinking, I argue, is that he wishes to create the conditions for the future emergence of “higher” individuals. This is an understandable

aspect of his political thought. Nietzsche saw the politics of his day as petty and diseased and as a result called for change. But he also knew that change does not occur immediately, so he strove to create the conditions for a future enhancement. Nietzsche's sketch of what his political order of the future would look like is just that—a sketch. Just as the content of self-creation is left vague and empty, exactly what his high-spirited individuals would fight over and what form their struggle would take are also left undetermined. While this leaves him open to the same criticism of emptiness that is leveled at his notion of subjectivity, Nietzsche would respond in a similar way—that his task is not to prescribe in precise detail how his new philosopher-rulers should exercise power. Providing a detailed blueprint for political action would, in his view, be equivalent to showing disrespect for the sovereignty of his free spirits. This is precisely why I characterize Nietzsche as only offering some thoughts about politics and not having a political philosophy.

Whereas the specific content of Nietzsche's political thinking is severely lacking, the broad, or general, outlines of the form of his political ideas are very clear. Nietzsche believes that a caste system, or hierarchy, is essential for reviving and promoting the creative capacities of human beings. And once individuals have creativity they then have the "raw material" for self-creation. Here again we confront Nietzsche's paradox of consistency. My argument in chapter nine above (on Nietzsche's political thinking) is twofold: On the one hand Nietzsche's political thought is consistent with his overall critical philosophy, but on the other hand what he leaves us with is extremely troublesome, indefensible, and intolerable. Nietzsche's hierarchical thinking, even if thought of as based on status and not power, is unthinkable in today's world.

Ultimately Nietzsche's political thinking leaves us with what I believe is an unbridgeable gap. Nietzsche's consistency is found within his general and vague theoretical discussions. If he were to ever "fill in the gaps" and give us a more detailed account of, say, how philosopher-rulers actually govern, then he would fall into the tradition of providing human beings with a blueprint of how to live. Furthermore this would result in an inconsistency between his critical and political thought. But I believe his politics remain consistent with his critical philosophy, especially with his views on subjectivity, and the result is that Nietzsche unavoidably leaves us with inadequate and unacceptable political ideas.

Appendix I:
Chronology of Nietzsche's Works

- 1844 – Nietzsche is born in Röcken, Germany on October 15.
- 1872 – *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is published.
- 1873 – First two *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* are published.
- 1874 – Third *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* is published.
- 1876 – Fourth and last *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* is published.
- 1878 – First edition of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* is published.
- 1879 – *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* is published as the appendix of the first edition of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*.
- 1880 – *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* is published as the second appendix to *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*.
- 1881 – *Morgenröte* is published.
- 1882 – First edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is published.
- 1883 – Parts I and II of *Also sprach Zarathustra* are published separately.
- 1884 – Part III of *Also sprach Zarathustra* is published.
- 1885 – Part IV of *Also sprach Zarathustra* is written. Only forty copies are privately printed and only seven copies are distributed among close friends.
- 1886 – *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* is published. The second edition of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* is published with new prefaces. A new preface is added to *Die Geburt der Tragödie*.
- 1887 – *Zur Genealogie der Moral* is published. The second edition of *Morgenröte* is published with a new preface. The second edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is published with a newly added fifth book (aphorisms 343-383) and an appendix of poems.
- 1888 – *Der fall Wagner* is published. *Götzen-Dämmerung*, *Der Antichrist*, *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, and *Ecce homo* are written.

- 1889 – *Götzen-Dämmerung* is published. Early in January Nietzsche experiences a mental breakdown.
- 1892 – First public edition of Part IV of *Also sprach Zarathustra*.
- 1895 – *Der Antichrist* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* are published.
- 1900 – Nietzsche dies in Weimar on August 25.
- 1901 – First version of *Der Wille zur Macht*, collected from 400 of Nietzsche's notes, is compiled and published by Nietzsche's sister.
- 1904 – Nietzsche's sister integrates 200 pages of further material into a completely remodeled version of *Der Wille zur Macht* (which now consists of 1067 notes).
- 1908 – *Ecce homo* is published.

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