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In Search of Authenticity and Personality:
Nietzsche on the Purifications of Philosophy

Keith Ansell-Pearson

We, however, want to become the ones that we are: ones who are new, unique, incomparable, self-creating, self-legislating (*GS* 335).

I always think of the remaining *dissimilarity* and great possible *sovereignty* (*Souveränität*) of the individual: thus altruistic pleasures need to become more seldom, or attain the form of delight in others, like our current delight in nature (KSA 9, 11 [40]).¹

Throughout Nietzsche's writings we find discussion of various human maladies and sicknesses, such as the historical malady and decadence, along with various conceptions of a possible cure or therapy. Although his thinking undergoes an important and complex development between 1872 and 1888, his conception of the basic task, I would argue, remains essentially the same: one is to become what one is in which the chief spiritual exercise is to purify one's existence of chance and accidental elements and so become 'necessary': 'one is necessary, one is a piece of fate... for all that is to come and will be' (TI V: 6)² Nietzsche's conception of philosophy's therapeutic role is centred on the protection and promotion of authenticity.³ This explains his chief anxieties in his early writings, such as the rise of the 'weak personality' and the dangers of viewing ourselves in terms of a historical and ironical sensibility, as well as the persistent theme that runs throughout all his writings of the problem of the actor. This essay explores Nietzsche's preoccupation with authentic existence in each one of his three main intellectual periods. After an opening section on *therapeia* and *paideia* in Nietzsche, I focus first on writings from his early period, notably the untimelies on history and Schopenhauer; in the next main section I select Dawn from the middle period as a text that highlights Nietzsche's continued preoccupation with authenticity; and in the final main section I focus on the

late Nietzsche and note the continuities in his lifelong project of self-cultivation and emphasis on the goals of culture.

I: Philosophy, Therapeia and Paideia

Today notions of autonomy, sovereign individuality, and even personality have been placed under suspicion in many quarters of philosophy and in some quarters of Nietzsche-studies.⁴ Although a post-modern audience appears embarrassed by such notions, it remains the case that they inform Nietzsche's thinking about the tasks of philosophy at a very deep level. Sometimes it is flatly stated that Nietzsche denies the self without further investigation or any deep appreciation of his oeuvre (see Sorabji 2006 p. 17). Other arguments offered against construing Nietzsche as a thinker of sovereign agency and autonomy include construing him as a thinker of fate, which he clearly is, though I see no good reason why he cannot have both a doctrine of fate and of sovereignty. The two concepts run throughout Nietzsche's oeuvre. Moreover, Nietzsche thinks that for us moderns existence often assumes the site of a tragic equivocation, structured as it is by an antinomy of fate and freedom.⁵ The sovereign individual is depicted by Nietzsche as an agent that has an awareness (the conscience) of power and freedom; it is master of a 'free will' (the power to make an independent decision, BGE 208); it has an 'enduring, unbreakable will' and 'its own standard of value', and is 'strong enough to stand upright in the face of fate' (Schicksal) (note: it does not conquer fate which is impossible) (GM II. 2). In a notebook from 1873-4 he says that the aim of wisdom is 'to enable a human being to face all the blows of fate (Schicksalsschläge) with equal firmness, to arm him for all times' (KSA 7, 30 [25]).

Let me note two important points at the outset: (a) for Nietzsche it is not simply a question, in searching for one's authentic self, of pitting a raw or pure,

uncultivated self against culture and cultivation. The self is not, or not simply, the irrational other of civilisation. Neither is it simply the effected discontent or malcontent of the repressive discipline of civilisation. Rather, for Nietzsche we need to think of a struggle between different kinds of cultivation and education, between the falseness of our present cultivation and education which produce only the ‘cultivated philistine’ and genuine forms that would aim to promote ‘genius’ and inspired by ‘greatness’; (b) second, the self for Nietzsche denotes not an interiority; rather, it would be better to conceive it as bound up with actions and events, something that, as opposed to an inwardness, is ‘upwards and outwards’. This is not the self as we perhaps typically construe it as some core essence which is then actualised as it lives and moves forward in time. Neither is it the self Hume criticizes which vaporises as soon as we try to grasp it and get hold of it. There is a kind of ‘core’ for Nietzsche but this is simply the potential for a self. Nietzsche’s self is the product of both nature (*physis*) and culture.

In Nietzsche philosophy’s therapeutic function and role is tied to the need for a genuine paedeia or education. He argues against a certain idea of education and cultivation, one that produces the ‘cultivated philistine’, and in favour of one which centres on culture conceived as transfigured physis. Therapy is needed because of the falseness of the present age. The so-called ‘cultivated person’ is the enemy of cultivation because of his pernicious mendacity which denies the general malaise that characterises the present age and ‘thereby interferes with the work of physicians’ (UO III 4): ‘To be cultivated now means ‘not to let others notice how wretched and base one is’ (ibid 6). The cultural philistine is defined as ‘the quickly dated up-to-date babbler about the state, the church, and art’ who has an insatiable stomach but knows little of genuine hunger and thirst (UO II 10).

The fact that Nietzsche links philosophy's therapeia with paideia makes his position close to Plato's, and the influence of Plato is at its strongest in his early writings. Plato's decision to abandon a political career and pursue philosophy instead was motivated by the need to discover a cure, a therapeia, for immorality and social disintegration (Cushman 2002, p. 295). Like Plato, Nietzsche holds that philosophy should 'concentrate' the human being in order to stabilise its apprehension of reality (he is unsure whether philosophy can do this today (KSA 7, 29 [211]; see also Cushman on Plato, 2002, p. 56). Of course, Nietzsche differs markedly from Plato in not conceiving the goal as one of contemplation of the form or idea of the Good (which is not identical with reality but beyond it, the 'cause' of knowledge and truth and higher than both, The Republic 508a-509c); rather, the task is to 'hold on to the sublime' in the sense of having belief in the eternal return of 'possibilities of life' and committing oneself to the search for greatness in thought and life. Nietzsche notes that the concept of greatness is amorphous, being partly aesthetic and partly moral. For Nietzsche the great is that which departs from the normal and the familiar: 'We venerate what is great. To be sure, that is also the abnormal' (KSA 7, 19[80]). He is insistent that philosophy needs to resist the 'blind power of facts' and 'the tyranny of the real' (UO II 8) and focus its vision on the superior forms of human existence. For Nietzsche philosophy entails the legislation of greatness, conceived as a 'name-giving' that elevates (*erhebt*) the human being, and it has its origins in the legislation of morality (*Gesetzgebung der Moral*) (KSA 7, 19[83]). It is this conception of philosophy Nietzsche returns to in his late writings. In Beyond Good and Evil, for example, philosophy is defined as 'spiritual perception' (or vision) (BGE 252), which in Twilight of the Idols is clarified as 'the power (*Macht*) of philosophical vision

(*Blick*)' that is able to judge in all the most important matters and does not hide under the mask of objectivity (TI IX, 3).

II: The Historical Malady

In the untimely meditation on history Nietzsche addresses the sickness of his age and names it 'the historical malady'. The illness consists in an excess of history and a misguided historical cultivation. The modern age is in the grip of a historical fever. The cure consists in subjecting 'science' and the quest of knowledge to the supervision of a higher power which he calls 'the hygiene of life'. The task is to determine the value and goal of the knowing of science (*Wissenschaft*). Not every form of life or society that comes into existence can be considered worthy of existence, and yet the tendency of history is to make everything that does come into existence appear rational and purposive. History should speak of what is great and unique, of the exemplary model (KSA 7, 19 [10]).

The antidotes to the stifling of life by the historical are the 'ahistorical' and the 'suprahistorical'; these are viewed as poisons from the perspective of Wissenschaft. Nietzsche seeks to trump this viewpoint, however, when he proposes that it is a lack of science that allows them to be viewed as poisons and not as remedies, and this is because a branch of science still remains to be developed: 'a kind of higher hygiene that examines the effects of science on life and determines the permitted amount from the standpoint of the health of a people or of a culture' (UO II 10 & KSA 7, 29 [194]). The ahistorical designates forgetting and illusion and allows the self to be enclosed within a limited horizon. The suprahistorical has a soothing and diverting effect, encouraging us to divert our gaze from what is in the process of becoming. Together the two work to free us from the tyranny of the actual and to counter any idolatry of

success. Nietzsche acknowledges that we may suffer from the proposed antidotes, though he sees no good reason as to why this should call into question the correctness of the chosen therapy. We will suffer from them because there can be no guarantee of future health and cheerfulness. We can only appeal to the aspiration we might have for them.

Nietzsche borrows the notion of ‘weak personality’ from the Austrian dramatist and critic Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872) (see KSA 7, 29 [68]). It refers to a human being that has developed the habit of no longer taking real things seriously.⁶ What is real and existent makes only a slight impression on such a personality who becomes more and more negligent and indolent with respect to outward things. It is content so long as its memory is repeatedly stimulated anew, ‘as long as new things worthy of knowing, which can be neatly placed in the pigeonholes of that memory, keep streaming in (UO II 5). The human being becomes a strolling spectator of life living in the midst of a cosmopolitan carnival of gods, arts, and customs. Great wars and revolutions can hardly detain such a human for more than a fleeting moment. Moreover, war seems to only exist for the sake of history and the journalism that consumes it. We want only more history and never real events. Nietzsche expresses it morally (*moralisch*): we are no longer capable of holding onto the sublime (*das Erhabene festzuhalten*) because our deeds are merely sudden claps (*Schläge*) of thunder and not rolling thunder (ibid.). The chief danger of allowing ourselves to be ruled by a historical, ironical sensibility is that we have no sense of the possibility of our having our own distinct voice and destiny (see Gemes 2001, p. 347). If we are not strong or confident enough to take ourselves as the measure of the past, and no longer trust ourselves, then we turn to history for advice and eventually become actors out of timorousness and play a role, in fact, many roles (UO II 5; see also UO I 10).

Art and religion are important tools for Nietzsche by which we can take possession of ourselves and organize the ‘chaos’ within us, so discovering what our genuine needs are (UO II 10). The aim is to do this in a way which does not make us fear cultivation or respond to the summons to become the ones that we are in a brooding manner: religion ‘provides love for the human being’, art the ‘love for existence’ (KSA 7, 29 [192]).⁷ Whereas the ahistorical provides the vapour or atmosphere in which every great his event is born, the suprahistorical standpoint cures us of the (Hegelian) fashion of taking history too seriously. Nietzsche recognises, however, that the suprahistorical carries a danger, that of leading us away from action altogether and experiencing nausea at existence (as happens in Schopenhauer’s philosophy). The suprahistorical is the attitude which holds that the past and the present are one and the same, and this means that history teaches us nothing new but only gives us the appearance of difference. It thus requires a careful cultivation and needs to work in concert with the positive uses to which history can be put.

For Nietzsche the value of philosophy lies in its purifying tasks, such as cleansing muddled and superstitious ideas. To this extent it is a science, but to the extent that it is at the same time anti-scientific – for example in opposing scientific dogmatism (what today we would call scientism) – it is ‘religious-obscurantist’ (KSA 7, 24 [10]). Philosophy opposes the fixed value of ethical concepts and the hatred of the body. It shows us what is anthropomorphic: the translation of the world into the care or concern of the human being. Philosophy is harmful since it dissolves instinct, cultures, and customary moralities. In terms of the present, philosophy encounters the absence of a popular ethic, the absence of any sense of the importance of discriminating, a mania for history, and so on. In the case of the philosopher we have a physician – the physician of culture – who must heal himself (ibid. 29 [213]). This is

because, according to Nietzsche, the philosopher must first become a thinker for himself before he can educate others (see also Z ‘On the Bestowing Virtue’ for the same idea).

Schopenhauer provides the lesson needed here of achieving independence in relation to the present age (UO III 3). Nietzsche thinks this is an especially pressing task for the thinker today that is faced with the claims of a ‘new age’ (*Neuzeit*) (UO II 8).⁸ The problem with the present is that it is ‘importunate’ (*zudringlich*), being something that is always unintentionally overvalued. This is especially felt by the philosopher, says Nietzsche, whose peculiar task is to be the lawgiver of ‘the measure, mint, and weight of things’ (*ibid.*). The philosopher seeks to pronounce a judgment that is valid for the ‘entire fate of humanity’, that is ‘the highest fate’ (*Loos*) that can befall an individual human being or an entire people and not just the average fate (*ibid.*).

The task is to examine how things look with regard to the health and sickness of one’s age, but ‘who is physician enough to know this?’, Nietzsche asks. The problem for our age is the esteem accorded to the scholar since the scholar shows no awareness of the goal of genuine culture. In relation to science, philosophy draws attention to its barbarizing effects, that is, the fact that it so easily loses itself in the service of practical interests. The ‘laissez aller’ (let it go) attitude of modern science resembles the dogmas of political economy: it has a naïve faith in an absolutely beneficial result. In addition, it employs artistic powers in an effort to break the unlimited knowledge-drive and in order to produce a unity of knowledge. The primary concern of philosophy is with the question of the value of existence, with what is to be revered. ‘For science there is nothing great and nothing small – but for philosophy! The value of science is measured in terms of this statement’ (KSA 7,

19[33]). And then, he adds: ‘Holding onto what is sublime!’ For Nietzsche the sublime refers to the aesthetic cum moral concept of greatness, and the task of philosophy is to educate people to this concept. To hold on to it is to keep in one’s view the ‘spiritual mountain range’ that stretches across the centuries and thus to the ‘eternal fruitfulness of everything that is great’ (ibid.).

(i) Purification and Perfecting *Physis*

For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer is the most significant figure in modern philosophy because he sweeps away scholasticism. In addition, he reminds us ‘that the life of the individual cannot have its meaning in something historical, in his disappearance into some category...’ (KSA 7, 34 [32]) Schopenhauer has purified himself of the opinions and valuations of his age and made himself unfashionable (UO III 3). Schopenhauer’s greatness consists in the fact that he deals with ‘the picture of life as a whole in order to interpret it as a whole’, and he does so without letting himself become entangled in a web of conceptual scholasticisms (UO III 3). He can serve as a model (*Vorbild*) in spite of his scars and flaws. Nietzsche freely acknowledges the dangers of Schopenhauer’s philosophizing, which consist in his pessimism and his disgust with becoming.

Nietzsche notes that the powerful promoter of life longs for release from his own, exhausted age and for a culture (transfigured *physis*); but this longing can result in disaffection and disappointment, encouraging the philosopher to become the judge of life in the sense of condemning it as unworthy of our attachment. The Greek philosophers had life before them in ‘sumptuous perfection’; the same cannot be said of us moderns, where our sensibility is caught between the desire for freedom, beauty, and greatness of life and the drive for truth that asks only, ‘Of what value is existence

(*das Dasein*) at all?’ (ibid) In short, our danger is pessimism. Schopenhauer lacked belief in the future since it would bring only the eternal return of the same. For him, then, ‘eternal becoming is a deceitful puppet play over which human beings forget themselves’, and for whom the ‘heroism of truthfulness consists in one day ceasing to be its plaything’ (UO III 4). If everything that ‘is’ finds itself caught up in the process of becoming, and this becoming is ‘empty, deceitful, flat’, worthy only of our lofty contempt, then the riddle presented to the human being to solve can be solved only in being (ibid.).

Given that Nietzsche also aspires to be unfashionable, and given that meaning and value are not to be located for him in a process of history or evolution, how will he avoid the temptation of being and resist Schopenhauer’s solution to the problem of existence? We tend to conceive this in terms of Nietzsche expressing an affirmation of life, and such an affirmation is indeed signalled in Schopenhauer as Educator and as something metaphysical. This is used not in a pejorative sense by Nietzsche, rightly so, but indicates the fact that the affirmation which is profound is ‘of another, higher life’ and at the cost of the ‘destruction and violation of the laws of this life’: only in this way can the affirmation be untimely or unfashionable (UO III 4). Unlike Schopenhauer, then, Nietzsche has belief in the future and new life.

The notion of purification (*Reinigung*) runs throughout Nietzsche’s corpus and plays an important role in the unfashionable observations. Nietzsche is appealing to a desire to render ourselves pure and clean, and solitude is essential to this task. However, whilst solitude may be a sublime need (BGE 284), it is never promoted by Nietzsche as end in itself or a means of retreat (GM II 24). Schopenhauer purified and healed his own being, knowing that there are higher and purer things on earth to discover than what is offered to us by a fashionable life (UO III 3; see also GS 99). In

the fourth observation on Wagner Nietzsche construes music as the purification and transformation of nature into love, which is the enemy of convention and all ‘artificial alienation’ and unintelligibility between human beings (UO IV 5). In The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche draws attention to tragedy’s power to stimulate, purify, and discharge the life of a people and ‘as the essence of all prophylactic energies’, acting as a mediator between the strongest and most fateful qualities of a people (BT 21). Nietzsche knows well, of course, the importance placed on purification in Greek thought. In his lectures on the pre-Platonics he notes that figures such as Xenophanes and Empedocles aimed at a purification of humanity. Although it is not the sole use to which he puts it, in Nietzsche’s thinking the principal stress is on purification as means to self-legislation. In Plato katharsis brings about the deliverance of the soul from the deceptions of the realm of sense and attendant passions of the body (Cushman 2002, p. 56). In Nietzsche the aim is to purify ourselves of the stupidly or ineptly empirical in the name of the promise of future strong life. Nietzsche argues that the sense for ‘cleanliness’ (*Reinlichkeit*) should be kindled in a child to the point of passion, attending all its talents ‘like an aureole of purity’ that bears happiness within it and spreading happiness around it (AOM 288). In the discourse ‘On the Tree of the Mountainside’ in Thus Spoke Zarathustra Nietzsche argues that the liberated in spirit still needs to purify itself since much ‘prison and mustiness’ still resides in it. Purification is necessary for new perception or vision: ‘his eye must yet become pure’. He sets incredibly high standards for the attainment of nobility and the creation of what is new and a new virtue. He repeats the dangers he had drawn attention to in the observations. The chief danger is not that the free in spirit might become a ‘good man’, that is, one who wishes to preserve the old, but rather insolent and scornful,

losing his highest hope and in the process slandering all and any such hopes. Those who preach rejection of life have failed to become properly human.⁹

In GS 335 Nietzsche advises us as follows: ‘Let us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and valuations and to the *creation our own new tables of what is good...*’ In SE this works as the ‘law’ of the authentic self and higher life: ‘your true being does not lie deeply hidden within you, but rather immeasurably high above you, or at least above what you commonly take to be your ego’ (UO III 1). In SE it is the job of conscience to awaken the self to its task: “Be yourself! You are none of those things that you now do, think, and desire” (ibid.) In GS 335 it is the job of the ‘intellectual conscience’, the superior form of conscience to the moral conscience, what Nietzsche calls the conscience behind our conscience. Whatever the name of this conscience, the end is the same: to become what one ‘is’ where this refers to that which is ‘unique, singular, incomparable’. However, one is not simply a lawgiver for the sake only of oneself. For Nietzsche an affirmation of life without the promise of a new culture is empty and vain.

Nietzsche makes this clear in his discussion of the dangers of uniqueness (*Einzigkeit*) in section 3 of SE. If we suppose, as Nietzsche does, that each individual bears within itself a ‘productive uniqueness as the kernel of its being’, then this means that a strange aura – ‘the aura of the unusual’ – surrounds it (UO III 3) This uniqueness is taken to be unbearable by many people since attached to it is a chain of efforts and burdens. The individual finds that the desert and the cave are always within it, so that solitude is given to it as a fate (*Loos*). Several dangers now confront this individual. First, there is the danger of pure science, in which one allows oneself to be educated by an ‘inhuman abstraction’ (pure knowledge) and neglects the need for exemplars and models. Second, there is the danger of complexity: modern

humans are so complex and many-sided that they become dishonest whenever they speak and try to act in accordance with their assertions. The task is to become ‘simple and honest in thought and life’. Third, there is the danger of leading a ghostly life, obliged to live without courage or trust, in denial and doubt, agitated and discontented, always expecting to be disappointed: ‘No dog would go on living like this’. Finally, there is the danger of petrification: one is reduced to ruin by one’s uniqueness when it becomes an icy rock.

Nietzsche recognizes that it is necessary to indicate how the Schopenhauerean-inspired ‘ideal’ of the philosopher – the ideal that encourages purification and liberation from the fashions and idols of one’s time – can educate and a new set of duties derived from it. Failure to do this leaves us only with a vision that enraptures and intoxicates. The lofty goal of the philosopher must be brought near so that will educate us and draw us upward. The challenge is this: how can the loftiness and dignity of the Schopenhauerean human being transport us beyond ourselves but not, in so doing, take us outside a community of active people in which the coherence of duties and the stream of life would vanish? Nietzsche’s answer is the ‘fundamental thought of *culture*’ (UO III 5). The new duties cannot be those of the solitary individual and they must enable us to get beyond the hatred that is at the root of Schopenhauer’s pessimism, including the hatred of individuality and its limitations. Let me outline how he argues for this idea.

The fundamental task for Nietzsche is the perfection of nature. What unites individuals and can hold them together in a community is the idea of culture conceived as the transfiguration of physis. The perfection of nature through culture entails fostering the production of philosophers and artists (and saints) ‘*within us and around us*’. These three types or modes of being constitute a ‘sublime (*erhabensten*)

order' (ibid.). Why is this to perfect nature? The philosopher bestows upon nature the idea of a 'metaphysical purpose', whilst the artist enables nature to attain 'self-enlightenment' by presenting an image in which it can recognise itself and which in the normal course of things – what Nietzsche calls 'the tumultuousness (*Unruhe*) of its own becoming' - it never has the opportunity to do.

When thinking about individuals and the role they play in the circle of culture, Nietzsche's focus is on the longing for the 'whole'. Our longing cannot simply be for our personal redemption but needs to turn outward in order to rediscover in the world the desire for culture which demands of us not only inner experiences, or even an assessment of the external world that surrounds us, but 'ultimately and primarily action; that is, it demands he fights for culture and oppose those influences, habits, laws, and institutions in which he does not recognize his goal: the production of genius' (UO III 6). Whilst there may be an 'unconscious purposiveness' at work in nature, the production of redeeming human beings cannot be left to chance and accident, to what Nietzsche at this time calls 'the dark drive' (*jenes 'dunklen Drangs'*) but must be replaced with a 'conscious intention' (ibid.). This is on account of the fact that today we are ruled by a culture of power (Nietzsche refers to 'the cultured state (*Kulturstaat*)') that misuses and exploits culture for perverted ends. The public, civil, or social life of the present age amounts to nothing more than an equilibrium of self-interests. It does well what it does, namely, answering the question of how to achieve a mediocre existence that lacks any power of love, and it does this simply through the prudence of the self-interests involved. The present is an age that hates art and hates religion: it wants neither the beyond nor the transfiguration of the world of art (KSA 7, 19[69]). Science has become a source of nourishment for egoism and state and society have drafted it into their service in order to exploit it for their

purposes. In order to promote a new seriousness in the face of these lamentable developments Nietzsche states the need for a fundamental alteration of the world through 'images' that will make us shudder. The object of attack is 'the perversity of contemporary human nature' and its subjection to misguided notions such as "progress", "general education", "nationalism", "modern state", "cultural struggle" (UO III 7).

(ii) Nietzsche on the 'Self'

In Schopenhauer as Educator Nietzsche recognizes that authenticity requires a confrontation of the self with a task. He poses the question:

But how can we find ourselves again? How can the human being get to know himself? He is a dark and veiled thing; and if the hare has seven skins, the human being can shed seven skins seventy times and still not be able to say: 'This is really you, this is no longer outer shell'. Besides, it is an agonising, dangerous undertaking to dig down into yourself in this way, to force your way by the shortest route down the shaft of your own being. How easy it is to do damage to yourself that no doctor can heal' (UO III 1).

His concern is with how 'the fundamental law of oneself' can be disclosed to us and his solution is ingenuous: 'your true being does not lie hidden deeply within you, but rather immeasurably high above you, or at least above what you commonly take to be your ego' (ibid.).

There are steps to self-knowledge. An initial step is to ask oneself - what have I truly loved up to now? What has exalted my spirit? What has mastered it and blessed it? If I place before myself a series of such revered objects they may provide me, through their series and nature, with a set of clues into my 'true self' and its law. Although instructive and helpful, the challenge I place upon myself with these questions will only reveal part of what I need to know: namely, that there is

something revealed to me in life that belongs to a superior order of being. Let us call it 'sovereign' being, which refer to supreme peaks or achievements, and I have moments of perception when the things that are most worthy of value are judged. In a note of 1885 Nietzsche associates the name 'Dionysus' with this kind of judgement: 'One has only to pronounce the word "Dionysus" in the presence of the best latter-day names and things, in the presence of Goethe perhaps, or Beethoven, or Shakespeare, or Raphael – at once we feel that our best things and moments have been judged' (KSA 11, 41 [7]; WP 1051).

A stronger task consists in education since this is liberation, namely the removal of all weeds, rubble, and vermin that seeks to harm the plant's delicate shoots. Education is both imitation and perfection of nature: imitation where nature displays its maternal and merciful disposition; perfection when it prevents nature's cruel and merciless onslaughts and turns them to good, 'when it drapes a veil over the expression of nature's stepmotherly disposition and sad lack of understanding' (UO III 1). Although this is not the only way of finding and coming to oneself, Nietzsche thinks it is an effective way: educators that we can identify with reveal to us the 'primordial sense of basic stuff' of my being, something that is incapable of being educated or cultivated and which can only be liberated or set free (redeemed).

Every great philosophy makes a demand on us: "This is the picture of life; learn from it the meaning of your life". Conversely I can read my life and on the basis of it decipher the hieroglyphs of life in general. This twofold process is what Nietzsche sees in Schopenhauer as an educator: on the one hand, gaining insight into his own misery, need, and limitations which then acquaints him with consolations and antidotes (sacrifice of the ego, subjugation to the noblest intentions and deeds and to justice and compassion); on the other hand, enabling him to distinguish between

genuine and merely apparent happiness, which is not to be attained through wealth, honour, or erudition. I recognise and can freely declare to myself that my individual existence appears and feels worthless and none of the aforementioned can lift me out of my depression. Rather, there is a need for a ‘lofty and transfiguring overarching purpose’, and for Nietzsche this consists in attaining power (*Macht*) so as to come to the aid of *physis* and correct its stupidities and ineptitudes: ‘At first, of course, only for oneself; but through oneself, ultimately for all’ (UO III 3).

The individual is important for Nietzsche and accorded, in contrast to Schopenhauer’s metaphysics, a paramount role: ‘Individuals are the bridges upon which becoming is founded...In an individual, everything down to the smallest cell is individual...’ (KSA 7, 19[187]) This is what enables the individual to become what it is. However, this becoming also refers to what it is *not* and cannot be, since it requires expression in actions and events. Moreover, what the individual is, as its ‘true’ or authentic self, it empirically is not except as a potential. This is what Nietzsche means when he uses the word ‘genius’, which needs to be heard in the Greek sense of ‘*daimōn*’ conceived as an individual destiny and organic potentiality.¹⁰ When Nietzsche construes destiny in the way he does, I am confident he is influenced by Heraclitus, notably fragment 54: *ethos anthropoi daimōn* (‘character is destiny’ or ‘genius’).¹¹ Fate or destiny acquires sense or meaning not simply from what empirically or factually one is but from what one has the potential to become. Nietzsche’s conception of the self is that of the lawgiver who occupies a place in the ‘whole’ and for this reason is something fateful. For this other self to come into being it is necessary to engage in the task of purification.

Nietzsche comes up with a deeper explanation for this idea of a ‘metaphysical’ completion of nature, which centres on how we can think the human in its relation to

the animal. On the one hand, the human feeds productively on its own animality (for example, animal vigour and the power of forgetting); on other hand, it enjoys a supreme advantage over the animal in that it is able to understand its existence metaphysically. The animal by contrast is the site of ‘senseless suffering’ since it is subject to hunger and desires without having any insight into the nature of this mode of life:

To cling so blindly and madly to life, for no higher reward, far from knowing that one is punished or why one is punished in this way, but instead to thirst with the inanity of a horrible desire for precisely this punishment as though it were happiness – that is what it means to be an animal (UO III 5).

Although it is a speculative or supra-empirical claim to make, we can say that the human animal represents, at least potentially, the salvation of animal existence, in which life itself appears ‘in its metaphysical meaninglessness’ (ibid.).¹² Of course, in actuality it is difficult to know where the animal ceases and where the human begins, and many human beings do not transcend, for whatever reason, an animal existence. The salvation of the animal is also the salvation of the human animal. Nietzsche readily acknowledges that for the greatest part of our lives most of us live the way of the animal, desiring with more awareness what the animal craves out of blind instinct (we call this a life of ‘happiness’). The ‘sublime’ is the moment of perception or vision when we experience the elevation of the human beyond the merely animal, when life rises itself up through the conquering and overcoming of need and makes ‘the leap of joy’. As he puts it in SE:

...there are moments when we understand this; then the clouds break and we perceive how we, along with all of nature, are pressing onward toward the human being as toward something that stands high above us. (ibid)

By contrast, in ordinary time and becoming, or what Nietzsche calls the ‘tremendous mobility of human beings on the great earthly desert’, which consists in the waging of wars, a ceaseless gathering and dispersing, an imitation of one another, as well as a mutual outwitting and trampling underfoot, we find only ‘a continuation of animality’, as if we were being cheated out of our metaphysical disposition and made to regress to the unconsciousness of pure animal instinct (ibid.). It is a sublime vision of the human being, in the sense just outlined, that Nietzsche offers in contrast to other images of the human we find in modernity, such as the image that glorifies its descent into bestiality or the image that seeks to tell us that nothing more or other is at work in the human than a robotic automatism (UO III 4).

This transfiguring ‘moment’ is the kind of moment that Nietzsche wants us to value above all other moments. The need to facilitate the coming into being of the superior forms of existence, and against the blind power of the real, explains why Nietzsche stresses in a note of 1881 that we cannot rely on the blessings and bestowals of grace, but need to live in such a way that we will to live again and this into eternity. Our task should be present in every moment (KSA 9, 11[161]).

III: Nietzsche’s Search for Authenticity in *Dawn*

I now want to look at *Dawn* as an example of how Nietzsche approaches the question of an authentic existence in his middle period (1878-82). The emphasis, as we shall see, has shifted from a stress on the need for a new culture and the focus is now on individuals who practise self-cultivation at a distance from society and treat themselves as ‘experiments’. The philosophical therapy he is proposing in *Dawn* is thus reserved for those solitaries who have seceded from society and who are in search of a new people:

To build anew the laws of life and of behaviour – for this task our sciences of physiology, medicine, sociology, and solitude are not yet sure of themselves: and only from them can we take the foundation-stones for new ideals (if not the new ideals themselves). Thus we are living either a *preliminary* or *posterior* existence, depending on taste and talent, and it is best in this interregnum to be to every possible extent our own *reges* and to found little *experimental states*. We are experiments: let us also want to be such! (*D* 453)

Dawn strikes me, at least in part, as a distinctly Epicurean moment in Nietzsche's development. In the book Epicurus is portrayed as the enemy of the idea of punishments in Hell after death developed by numerous secret cults of in the Roman Empire and that was taken up by Christianity.¹³ For Nietzsche the triumph of Epicurus's teaching resounds most beautifully in the mouth of the sombre Roman Lucretius but comes too early. Christianity takes over the belief in 'subterranean terrors' under its special protection and this foray into heathendom enables it to carry the day over the popularity of the Mithras and Isis cults, winning to its side the rank of the timorous as the most zealous adherents of the new faith (Nietzsche notes that because of the extent of the Jews' attachment to life such an idea fell on barren ground). However, the teaching of Epicurus triumphs anew in the guise of modern science which has rejected 'any other representation of death and any life beyond it' (*D* 72; see also 150). Nietzsche is keen to encourage human beings to cultivate an attitude towards existence in which they accept their mortality and attain a new serenity about their dwelling on the earth, to conquer unjustified fears, and to reinstitute the role played by chance and chance events in the world and in human existence (*D* 13, 33, 36).¹⁴ Not only did Nietzsche at this time subscribe to much of the teaching of Epicurus on cosmology and philosophy, he was also inspired by Epicurus's conception of friendship and ideal of withdrawing from society and cultivating one's own garden.¹⁵ In a letter to Peter Gast of 1883 Nietzsche writes that

Epicurus, 'is the best negative argument in favour of my challenge to all rare spirits to isolate themselves from the mass of their fellows' (in Levy 1921, pp. 157-8). If philosophical therapeutics is centred on a concern with the healing of our own lives,¹⁶ then in Nietzsche's texts of his middle period, including Dawn, can be seen to be an heir to this ancient tradition. The difference is that he is developing a therapy for the sicknesses of the soul under peculiarly modern conditions of existence of social control and indoctrination.¹⁷ Under these conditions the emphasis is to be placed for Nietzsche on the need for solitude and self-healing.

Hitherto individuals have lived in fear and as conforming herd animals; they have concealed themselves in the communal generality of the concepts 'human being' and 'society'. Even our distinctive sense for truth is a sense for security and is a need we share with other animals: 'one doesn't want to let oneself be deceived, be led astray by one's actions' (*D* 26). In short, human existence has been constrained by its evolutionary conditions of adaptation: 'everything to which we give the name Socratic virtues is bestial' (ibid.). Today the prejudice holds sway in Europe that the sympathetic affects and compassion define the moral, such as actions deemed to be congenial, disinterested, of general utility, and so on. Although Nietzsche mentions Schopenhauer and Mill as famous teachers of this conception of morality, he holds that they merely echo doctrines that have been sprouting up in both fine and crude forms since the French Revolution (*D* 132). Central to modernity, as Nietzsche perceives it, is the idea that the ego must deny itself and adapt itself to the whole and as result the 'individual' is debilitated and cancelled: 'one never tires of enumerating and excoriating everything evil and malicious, prodigal, costly, and extravagant in the prior form of individual existence...compassion for the individual and passion for society here go hand in hand' (ibid.). Nietzsche contests the morality of self-sacrifice

and looks ahead to a different morality, one that is in keeping with the spirit of the book as a whole. In contrast to a narrow, petty bourgeois morality a higher and freer manner of thinking will now look beyond the immediate consequences our actions have for others and seek to further more distant aims. Under some circumstances this will be at the expense of the suffering of others, for example, by furthering genuine knowledge: does not 'free thinking' initially plunge people into doubt and distress? In seeking victory over ourselves we need 'to get beyond our compassion' (*D* 146; 3.138). The grief, despair, blunderings and fearful footsteps, and blunderings of individuals will form part of 'a new ploughshare' that will 'cleave the ground, rendering it fruitful for all...' (ibid.)

The morality that humanity has cultivated and dedicated itself to is one of 'enthusiastic devotion' and 'self-sacrifice' in which it looks down from sublime heights on the more sober morality of self-control (which is regarded as egotistical). Nietzsche suggests the reason why morality has been developed in this way is owing to the enjoyment of the state of intoxication which has stemmed from the thought that the person is at one with the powerful being to whom it consecrates itself; in this way 'the feeling of power' is enjoyed and is confirmed by a sacrifice of the self. For Nietzsche, of course, such an overcoming of the 'self' is impossible: 'In truth you only seem to sacrifice yourselves; instead, in your thoughts you transform yourselves into gods and take pleasure in yourselves as such' (*D* 215; see also *D* 269).

In an aphorism on 'pseudo-egotism' Nietzsche notes how most people live their life by doing nothing for their ego but live in accordance with the 'phantom ego' that has been formed in the opinions of those around them and is conveyed to them. The result is that we live in a fog of impersonal or half-personal opinions and arbitrary evaluations: 'one person always in the head of other and then again this head

in other heads: a curious world of phantasms that nonetheless knows how to don such a sensible appearance!’ (*D* 105) We live within the effect of general opinions about the ‘human being’, which is a ‘bloodless abstraction’ and ‘fiction’ (*ibid.*). Even the modern glorification of work and talk of its blessings can be interpreted as a fear of everything individual. The subjection to hard industriousness from early until late serves as ‘the best policeman’ since it keeps everyone in bounds and hinders the development of reason, desire, and the craving for independence. It uses vast amounts of nervous energy which could be given over to reflection, brooding, dreaming, loving and hating and working through our experiences: ‘...a society in which there is continuous hard work will have more security: and security is currently worshipped as the supreme divinity’ (*D* 173). Nietzsche claims that it is the moral fashion of a commercial society to value actions aimed at common security and to cultivate above all the sympathetic affections. At work here he thinks is a collective drive toward timidity which desires that life be rid of all the dangers it might have once held: ‘Are we not, with this prodigious intent to grate off all the rough and sharp edges of life, well on the way to turning humanity into sand!’ (*D* 174) In place of the ruling ethic of sympathy and self-sacrifice, which can assume the form of a ‘tyrannical encroachment’, Nietzsche invites individuals to engage in self-fashioning, cultivating a self that the other can behold with pleasure, a ‘lovely, peaceful, self-enclosed garden...with high walls to protect against the dangers and dust of the roadway, but with a hospitable gate as well’ (*ibid.*) Before an individual can practise benevolence towards others he has to be beneficently disposed towards himself, otherwise he is running from and hating himself, and seeking to rescue himself from himself in others (*D* 516).

Clearly, Nietzsche is not advocating the abolition of all possible types or forms of morality. Where morality centres on ‘continual self-command and self-overcoming...in great things and in the smallest’, Nietzsche is a champion of it (*WS* 45). His concern is that ‘morality’ in the forms it has assumed in the greater part of human history, right up to Kant’s moral law, has opened up an abundance of sources of displeasure and with every refinement of morals the human being has only become more discontented with itself, its neighbour, and its lot (*D* 106).¹⁸ The individual in search of happiness, and who wishes to become its own lawgiver, cannot be tended with prescriptions to the path to happiness simply because individual happiness springs from one’s own unknown laws and external prescriptions only serve to obstruct and hinder it: ‘The so-called “moral” precepts are, in truth, directed against individuals and are in no way aimed at promoting their happiness’ (*D* 108). Up to now, Nietzsche notes, the moral law has been supposed to stand above our personal likes and dislikes; we did not want to impose this law upon ourselves but preferred to take it from somewhere or have it commanded to us.

Christianity has brought into the world ‘a completely new and unlimited imperilment’, creating new securities, enjoyments, recreations, and evaluations. Although we moderns may be in the process of emancipating ourselves from such an imperilment we keep dragging into our existence the old habits associated with these securities and evaluations, even into our noblest arts and philosophies (*D* 57). Nietzsche holds that in wanting to return to the affects ‘in their utmost grandeur and strength’ – for example, as love of God, fear of God, fanatical faith in God, and so on - Christianity represents a popular protest against philosophy and he appeals to the ancient sages against it since they advocated the triumph of reason over the affects (*D* 58). Christianity has sought to transform the great passions and powers, such as Eros

and Aphrodite, which are capable of idealisation, into ‘infernal kobolds and phantoms of deceit’, arousing in the conscience of the believer tremendous torments at the slightest sexual excitation (*D* 76). The result is to fill human beings with a feeling of dread at the sight of their natural animal conditions of existence, making necessary and regularly recurring sensations into a source of inner misery to the point where inner misery becomes a necessary and regularly recurring phenomenon in human beings. This may even be a misery we keep secret and is more deeply rooted than we care to admit (Nietzsche mentions in this regard Shakespeare’s confession of Christian gloominess in the Sonnets). Christianity has contempt for the world and makes a new virtue of ignorance, namely ‘innocence’, the most frequent result of which is the feeling of guilt and despair: ‘a virtue which leads to Heaven via the detour through Hell’ (*D* 321; see also *D* 89).

Nietzsche notes, quite seriously, that Christianity has wanted to free human beings from the burden of the demands of sober morality by showing a shorter way to perfection, perhaps imitating philosophers who wanted a ‘royal road to truth’ that would avoid wearisome and tedious dialectics or the gathering of rigorously tested facts. In both cases a profound error is at work even though such an error has provided comfort to those caught exhausted and despairing in the wilderness of existence (*D* 59). Christianity has emerged from a ‘rustic rudeness’ by incorporating the spirit of countless people whose need is to take joy in submission, ‘all those subtle and crude enthusiasts of self-mortification and other-idolization’. As a result Christianity has evolved into a ‘very spirited religion’ that has made European humanity something sharp-witted and not only theologically cunning. The creation of a mode of life which tames the beast in man, which is the noble end of Christianity, has succeeded in keeping awake ‘the feeling of a superhuman mission’ in the soul and

in the body. Here one takes pride in obeying which, Nietzsche notes, is the distinguishing mark of all aristocrats. It is with their ‘surpassing beauty and refinement’ that the princes of the church prove to the people the church’s ‘truth’ and which is itself the result of a harmony between figure, spirit, and task. Nietzsche then asks whether this attempt at an aristocratic harmony must also go to grave with the end of religions: ‘can nothing higher be attained, or even imagined?’ (*D* 60) When Nietzsche invites in the next aphorism sensitive people who are still Christians from the heart to attempt for once the experiment of living without Christianity he is in search of an authentic mode of life: ‘they owe it to their faith in this way for once to sojourn “in the wilderness” – if only to win for themselves the right to a voice on the question whether Christianity is necessary. For the present they cling to their native soil and thence revile the world beyond it...’ (*D* 61) After such a wandering beyond his little corner of existence, a Christian may return home, not out of homesickness, but out of sound and honest judgement.

Nietzsche sees here a model for future human beings who will one day live in this way with respect to all evaluations of the past: ‘one must voluntarily live through them once again, and likewise their opposite – in order, in the final analysis, to have the right to let them fall through the sieve’ (*D* 62).

What, ultimately, is it that drives Nietzsche’s project in the texts of his middle period and as we encounter it in Dawn? I believe it is the search for an authentic mode of existence. Nietzsche notes that we typically adopt the evaluations which guide our actions out of fear and only pretend that they are our own; we then grow accustomed to the pretence that this ends up being our nature. To have one’s own evaluation of things is something exceedingly rare (*D* 104). It is necessary to contest the idea that there is a single moral-making morality; every code of ethics that affirms

itself in an exclusive manner ‘destroys too much valuable energy and costs humanity much too dearly’ (*D* 164). In the future, Nietzsche hopes, the inventive and fructifying person shall no longer be sacrificed and numerous new attempts at living life and creating community shall be undertaken. When this takes place we will find that an enormous load of guilty conscience has been purged from the world. Humanity has suffered for too long from teachers of morality who wanted too much all at once and sought to lay down precepts for everyone (*D* 194). In the future the care of truth will need to centre on the most personal questions and create time for them (‘what is it that I actually do? What is it precisely that I wish to accomplish thereby?’ (*D* 196) The small individual questions and experiments are no longer to be viewed with contempt and impatience (*D* 547). We will grow and become the ones that we are, however, only by experiencing dissatisfaction with ourselves and assuming the risk of experimenting in life, even to the point of living unwisely,¹⁹ freely taking the journey through our wastelands, quagmires, and icy glaciers. The ones who don’t take the risk of life ‘will never make the journey around the world (that you yourselves are!), but will remain trapped within yourselves like a knot on the log you were born to, a mere happenstance’ (*D* 343)

IV: Nietzsche’s Search for Personality in the Late Writings

After the period of the *Untimelies* Nietzsche’s thinking undergoes some important transformations. Nevertheless, in spite of these changes the matrix of concepts and concerns he has set up in his *Untimelies* continue to be deployed in his later writings. They become part of his mature conception of the ‘free spirit’, a notion he already puts to work in *SE* (references to this notion can be found as early as 1870 in his writings), and which involves a task he incarnates and that has no-saying and yes-

saying components. The ‘no’ predominates in the late Nietzsche but he is often asking his readers to discover their ‘hidden yes’. The problem for Nietzsche is centred on what he calls ‘the enigma of liberation’ (HH preface) and, once again, it is a question of making oneself pure or clean. More specifically, the task is one of purifying oneself of what is chance and accident so as to make of oneself a ‘piece of fate’, something ‘necessary’:

One is necessary, one is a piece of fate (*Verhängniss*), one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole... (TI VI, 8)

In the preface to the new 1886 edition of volume one of Human, all too Human,

Nietzsche writes:

This is how the free spirit gives himself an answer concerning the riddle of liberation and ends by generalizing his own case and this reaching a decision about his own experience: “What I went through, he tells himself, must be gone through by everyone in whom there is a task that wants to be embodied and ‘to come into the world’”... (HH P 7)

This task for Nietzsche contains a ‘secret power and necessity’, a vocation that one is destined to, without necessarily knowing this (he likens it to an unconscious pregnancy), in which it is the future that regulates one’s today. The free spirit is searching for a new problem, and a necessary part of this task is that one despises nothing, loses nothing, savours everything, and most important of all, purifies everything of its accidental elements. The central problem is now defined as one of ‘the order of rank’, and to arrive at this as his problem Nietzsche tells us he was compelled to renounce all romantic idealism, including forbidding himself all romantic music (HH 2 P 3).

The essential character of this task is already outlined and projected in SE, and this may explain why Nietzsche continued to direct his friends to it in his late years,

saying that he offered in the third and fourth Untimelies two pictures of the hardest self-discipline, of untimely types par excellence that are full of sovereign contempt. In 1882 he presents Lou Salomé with a copy of SE saying it contains his deepest sentiments; in a letter to Georg Brandes he says that the person who does not find himself addressed personally in this work will have little to do with him. In it Nietzsche speaks of the desire to be the ‘real helmsman’ of our existence so that it doesn’t resemble what it factually is, a mindless act of chance or coincidence (UO III 1). Moreover, in Wagner in Bayreuth Nietzsche notes that ‘greatness and an eye for necessity have always been closely allied’ (UO IV section 1). The idea that ‘joyous freedom’ resides in living each moment according to what is necessary, including and especially one’s own necessity, runs throughout the fourth and final meditation (see especially section 9). Becoming what one is, then, means for Nietzsche coming to be ‘necessary’, a piece of fate, and this can only mean bringing into the world something that is new, unique, singular, incomparable. It is not ‘necessary’ in the sense that bare life or the mere fact of the world demands it or makes it such. The ‘necessity’ seems to conform to no known law of natural existence. For Nietzsche it can only denote a task (Aufgabe): something taken up by a spirit engaged in a process of purification and that wants to become what it is by actualising its potential for productive uniqueness.

The other problems that occupy Nietzsche in his early writings, such as the problem of the actor (which in GS 361 he says is the problem that has troubled him for the longest time), also continue to be put to work in Nietzsche’s late writings. Let me note the key contrast Nietzsche makes since it appears to provide the critical element missing from this conception of the task of becoming what one is: one must become ‘authentic’ and this is what Wagner, for example, did not do in Nietzsche’s

eyes. When addressing the problem of the actor Nietzsche often has the case of Wagner in mind. Wagner is ‘theatrical’ to his core who wants his audience to delight in the ‘gesture hocus-pocus of the actor...’ (GS 368) What Nietzsche doesn’t like when he goes to the theatre (Wagner’s theatre) is that he has to leave himself at home, renouncing his own tongue and taste, and lying to himself in which the most personal conscience is vanquished by the levelling magic of the great number. Nietzsche ends his text The Case of Wagner by making three demands on art: that the theatre not be allowed to gain control over art; that actors do not seduce what is authentic (*Echten*); and that music does not become an art of lying (CW 12). What worries him is the ‘coincidence’ of the arrival of Wagner’s music and the arrival of the ‘Reich’: obedience and long legs (CW 11).

In his late writings Nietzsche works with the idea that the future order of rank by which valuations of life will be made will centre on how solitary or how gregarious one is, and neither viewpoint should be evaluated from the perspective of the other.²⁰ His most essential recommendation is that we allow for two divergent lines of evolution to take place, one in the direction of gregariousness, the other in the direction of solitariness. The latter is required so as to help make possible genuine individuality and personality: ‘Nothing is rarer than a personal action. A class, a rank, a race, an environment, an accident – anything is more likely to be expressed in a work or act than is a “personality”’ (KSA 12, 10 [59]; WP 886). Thus, Nietzsche is in favour of both modes of life: ‘To evolve further that which is typical, to make the gulf wider and wider’ (ibid.). The key task should be to ‘establish distances, but create no antitheses (*Gegensätze*)’ (KSA 12, 10 [63]; WP 891). Nietzsche is allowing for the evolution of different kinds of intelligence. The first mode of intelligence is one in that is industrious, modest, inquisitive to excess, and multifarious with ‘a

cosmopolitan chaos of affects and intelligence' (KSA 13, 11 [31]; WP 868). The second mode is that of a 'classical taste' with a will to simplification and visible happiness and that has the courage of psychological nakedness and a will to the terrible (that is, it is not afraid to confront the terrible and ambiguous aspects of existence) (ibid). He speak of a future 'sublime human being' (*sublime Mensch*) that has within it an abundance of difficult and rare things and that has been bred and preserved though several generations, and is delicate and fragile (KSA 12, 10 [11] & 11, 39 [7]; WP 888, 996). He sees education as the primary means by which this intelligence can be encouraged and aided: 'Until now, education (*Erziehung*) has had in view the needs of society, not the possible needs of the future' (KSA 12, 9 [153]; WP 898). Moreover, "purification of taste" can only be the result of a strengthening of the type. Our society today only represents culture (*Bildung*); the cultured human being (*Gebildete*) is lacking. The great synthetic human being is lacking...' (KSA 12, 9 [119]; WP 883)

Greatness of personality cannot depend on the approval and judgment of the many; if it does it will not come into existence:

'Moral evaluation', in so far as it is a social evaluation, measures human beings exclusively according to the effects they produce. A man with a taste of his own, enclosed and concealed by his solitude, incommunicable, reserved – an unfathomed man, this a man of a higher, at any rate a different species: how should you be able to evaluate him since you cannot know him, cannot compare him? (KSA 12, 9 [55]; WP 878)

Nietzsche favours the creation of two separate spheres so that the two modes of being can exist side by side without one dominating the other. In the former the needs of the herd for comfort and happiness are attended to; in the latter by contrast the new Stoics of the future, as they might be called, are free to practice their experimental mode of living and are deprived of the comforts and luxuries that the herd enjoy. For

Nietzsche the realization of genuine personality is something extremely rare and difficult to attain (it is almost something ‘antinatural’ he says, KSA 12, 10 [59]; WP 886); this is why he is in favour of protecting the strong from the weak. The solitary type of species has against it the instincts of the herd and the tradition of values and they themselves may be lacking in strong protective instincts and dependent on chance for so many things. In one note from 1887 he expresses the worry that the class struggle that aims at equality of rights will wage a war against the solitary personality. On the other hand, though, he wonders whether the solitary species can best maintain and develop himself most easily in democratic society simply because of the habits of order, honesty, justice, and trust it is based on (KSA 12, 10 [61]; WP 887). At the same time, however, he stipulates that changes need to be made in education, especially higher education since in its present form it is a means of ‘directing taste against the exceptions for the good of the mediocre’ (KSA 12, 9 [139]; WP 933). It is only when a culture (*Cultur*) has as its disposal ‘an excess of powers’ (*Kräften*) that it can also be ‘a hothouse for the luxury cultivation of the exception, the experiment, of danger, of the nuance...’ (ibid) What is needed, then, is a new ‘standard of strength’ in which there are spirits who are able to live under reverse evaluations from the norm (such the desire for contentment, for an easy life, for social acceptance and recognition, and so on) and who can ‘will them again eternally’: ‘State and society as foundation: world-economic point of view, education as breeding’ (KSA 12, 9 [1]; WP 903). Breeding for Nietzsche, ‘is a means of storing up the tremendous forces of mankind so that the generations can build upon the work of their forefathers and so provide, he thinks, some guarantee of perfection (KSA 15 [65]; WP 398).

In a note from 1880 Nietzsche recommends that an attempt be made to achieve through the individual a higher species than man: ‘My morality would be to take the general character of man more and more away from him...to make him to a degree non-understandable to others (and with it an object of experiences, astonishment, of instruction for them) (KSA 9, 6 [158]). In a note from 1881 Nietzsche expresses his admiration of the Chinese for cultivating trees that bear roses on one side and pears on the other – an exotic fruit that is the result of selective breeding indeed! (KSA 9 11 [276]) This theme continues in the later notes, such as one from 1887 where Nietzsche demands that individuals be allowed to freely work on themselves as artist-tyrants. He adds an important qualification: ‘Not merely a master-race, whose task would be limited to governing, but a race or people with its own sphere of life, with an excess of strength for beauty, bravery, culture (*Cultur*), manners to the highest peak of the spirit; an affirming race that may grant itself every great luxury...a hothouse for strange and exquisite plants’ (KSA 12, 9 [153]; WP 898). The concept for this non-average type of human being is ‘the superhuman’ (KSA 12, 10 [17]; WP 866).

In this conception Nietzsche envisages a 'secretion of the luxury surplus of mankind' being made possible by the machinery of mankind's interests and needs becoming integrated in more and more intricate terms. On the plane of human evolution there will take place he thinks a stationary adaptation once the common management of the earth has been attained and mankind will find its ultimate meaning as a machine placed in the service of this economy. Economic and technical development will result in such an intelligent symbiosis of human and machine that the need for command and domination will become superfluous. On another plane, however, evolution can be steered in a quite different direction, away from a

specialized utility and leading to the production of what he calls a 'synthetic, summarizing human'. The existence of the common stock of humanity into a machine is a precondition of the cultivation of this new higher type, and it is the production of the higher type that is able to give this maximum exploitation a meaning and legitimacy (KSA 12, 10 [17]; WP 866). Nietzsche is thus imagining two quite different evolutions taking place: on the one hand, 'minimal forces' and 'minimal values'; on the other hand, a reverse movement in which a 'higher form of being' flourishes. He is keen to combat the economic optimism which holds that the increasing expenditure of everyone must necessarily involve the increasing welfare of everyone. This is not so. Rather, the exploitation and expenditure of every human agent amounts to a collective loss since 'man is diminished'. For this not to happen the tremendous process of planetary exploitation needs to serve a new aim. Without this new goal or aim he thinks the economic and technological development of the human will amount to nothing more than a regressive phenomenon.

In his late writings, where the conception of the free spirit predominates, Nietzsche presents himself and his cure for the modern malady in terms of a variety of self-images that can be confusing: he will appear to be an Epicurean (GS 375), and he has presented humanity with such 'terrible images' that any Epicurean delight is out of the question and only Dionysian joy proves sufficient (KSA 11, 25 [95]; WP 1029). In the essay on history Nietzsche says that today no one dares to fulfil the philosophic law in himself, that is, to live philosophically as an ancient did who declared loyalty to Stoa and lived as a Stoic wherever he was and whatever he did (UO II 5). In his late writings he refers free spirits as 'we last Stoics'. Nietzsche is not, of course, a Stoic and does not advocate ataraxy (GM III.25). It is a peculiar and specific commitment to Stoicism that he has. The Stoic for Nietzsche prepares himself for the worst,

training himself to swallow stones and worms, slivers of glass and scorpions without nausea (GS 306). Nietzsche's conception of fate is not the Stoic one which prepares one for 'petrification': 'We are not so badly off that we have to be as badly off as Stoics' (GS 326). Stoicism enables one to conceal well what one lacks, donning a cloak of prudent silence, affability, and mildness, and this is the cloak of the idealist who, in reality, is an incurable self-despiser and deeply vain (GS 359). Might the philosopher's wisdom, including the Stoic's, be a screen behind which he hides from 'spirit'? (ibid)

So, why does Nietzsche refer to 'we last Stoics' (BGE 227)? The 'last Stoic' does not refer to the point Nietzsche makes in the essay on history lamenting the loss of a genuine commitment to philosophy but captures an important aspect of Nietzsche's conception of his task in his late writings, which is centred on the principal virtue that his later thinking draws upon, namely, integrity (*Redlichkeit*). He appeals to Stoicism in his late writings as a morality or ethical practice in which the instinct of health defends itself against incipient decadence. It is what he calls a 'brake-shoe morality' that is 'stoical, hard, tyrannical' (KSA 13, 15 [29]; WP 268). It denotes a union of will (a protracted will) and knowledge, 'respect for oneself' (KSA 13, 11 [297]; WP 342; see also 11 [375]; 427). The concern remains with the 'realms of the future' but self-control is required so as to prevent clumsiness and sloppiness with regards to the tasks that face the free spirit: 'We free spirits must take care that our integrity does not become our vanity, our ostentatious adornment, our limit, our stupidity!' (BGE 227)

Conclusion

In a note from 1886/7 Nietzsche stresses the importance of individuals: 'My idea: goals are lacking and these must be individuals! (*Einzelne*)' (KSA 12, 7 [6], p. 281;

WP 269). In another note he writes, ‘...what is diminishing? The will to one’s own responsibility – sign of the decline of autonomy (Autonomie)...fitness to defend oneself and bear arms, in the most intellectual matters as well – the force to command...the sense of reverence, of subordination, of being able to keep silent, great passion, the great task, tragedy, serenity’ (KSA 13, 11 [142]; WP 936)

Nietzsche places value on individuality, sovereignty, and personality for various reasons. For him individuals are the goal of both nature and culture and serve to redeem existence from metaphysical meaninglessness. On a more mundane and practical level he holds that an education or training in sovereignty can prepare individuals for the trials of life. He favours in fact a training in the ‘hard school of life’ (KSA 13, 14 [161]; WP 912) which supposes ‘the education of the will to power’ and devising tests for the main thing, namely, ‘whether one can will, whether one may promise’ (KSA 10 [165]; WP 916). Without this, he notes, a young person finishes school without a single question, without any curiosity even, concerning this supreme value-problem of its nature. In short, without this training of the will to power the subject does not know its power and what it may be capable of.

Let us be under no illusion that Nietzsche reveres autonomy (its promise and its possibilities fill him with awe) and that for him the direction of life to be desired is the route or path to greater sovereignty. Consider, for example, the following:

...Here the herd instincts were decisive: nothing is as contrary to this instinct as the sovereignty of the individual (Souveränität des Einzelnen). But if the ego is conceived as something in and for itself, then its value lies in self-negation (Selbst-Verneinung) (KSA ; 12, 10 [57], p. 487; WP 786).

For Nietzsche the sovereignty of the individual is never to be valued as something ‘in and for itself’: it is pregnant with the future and for this to be the case it requires a specific paideia (tragic, Dionysian, etc.). This is why he is keen to expose ‘the false

autonomy (*Verselbstständigung*) of the “individual” (*Individuum*), as atom’ (ibid.).

What is to be taken to task, then, is not ‘autonomy’ per se but ‘false autonomy’. The following continues this line of thinking and concerns the ideas of the French philosopher Alfred Fouillée:

The ‘growing autonomy (*Autonomie*) of the individual’: these Parisian philosophers such as Fouillée speak of this they ought to take a look at the race moutonnaire [race of sheep] to which they belong! Open your eyes, you sociologists of the future! The individual has grown strong under opposite conditions; what you describe is the most extreme weakening and impoverishment of mankind; you even desire it and employ to that end the whole mendacious apparatus of the old ideal! You are so constituted that you actually regard your herd-animal needs as an ideal! A complete lack of psychological integrity!’ (KSA 13, 11 [137]; WP 782)

Nietzsche’s thinking on the self, as is the case with so many other topics treated by him, has highly distinctive features. However, his thinking on it is not idiosyncratic and its chief lesson is one that can continue to inspire us today, supposing we are not completely decadent and beyond the need and desire for self-redemption. It is that what makes human agency something to be valued, and something human beings have to win again and again (there are so many internal and external forces that wish to make us docile), is the capacity to be the agents of their own history and becoming, to be self-authorizers and authentic signatures. What is important to Nietzsche is that one is a personality and not ‘a rendezvous of persons’, such as we find in the actor-type which is, in fact, a ‘will-less’ person with virtuosity in mimicry, transfiguration, assumption of almost any desired character’ (KSA 13, 16 [89]; WP 813). The task, as he repeats throughout his writings, is to become what one is and as a piece of fate, one more law, one more necessity for all that is to come and will be.

Texts of Nietzsche and Abbreviations Used

- AC The Anti-Christ, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968).
 AOM Assorted Opinions and Maxims in volume two of Human, all too Human.
 BGE Beyond Good and Evil, trans. and ed. Marion Faber (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1998).
 CW The Case of Wagner, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 1967).
 D Dawn: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality, trans. Brittain Smith (Stanford, Stanford University Press, forthcoming).
 EH Ecce Homo, trans. Duncan Large (Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press, 2007).
 GM On the Genealogy of Morality, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, second revised edition).
 GS The Gay Science, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 1974).
 HH Human, All too Human (in two volumes), trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1984). Includes Assorted Opinions and Maxims and The Wanderer and His Shadow.
 KSA Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden (München, Berlin & New York, dtv/de Gruyter, 1988).
 TI Twilight of the Idols, trans. Duncan Large (Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press, 1998).
 UO Untimely Meditations I-IV; Unfashionable Observations, trans. Richard T. Gray (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
 WP The Will to Power, trans. Walter Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale (New York, Random House, 1968).

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¹ I am grateful to Michael Ure for drawing this passage from the Nachlass of 1881 to my attention.

² Here Nietzsche uses the expression 'Der Einzelne ist ein Stück fatum', whilst a little later in the same text he uses the expression, 'Man...ist ein Stück Verhängniss' (TI VI: 8)

³ Recently there has been emerged in the literature a serious interest in Nietzsche as a philosophical therapist. See, for example, Hutter (2006) and Ure (2008).

⁴ For a sceptical treatment of the sovereign individual, which contests the claim that it represents Nietzsche's 'ideal', see Acampora 2006.

⁵ See Z 'On Old and New Tablets' section 9: 'Once people believed in soothsayers and astrologers, and therefore they believed: "All is fate (Schicksal): you shall, for you must!" Then again people mistrusted all soothsayers and astrologers: and therefore they believed: "All is freedom: you can, for you will!" O my brothers, about stars and the future there has hitherto been only surmise, and not knowledge...'

⁶ Nietzsche continues to deal with it in his late writings; see, for example, GS 365 and KSA 12, 10 [59] & 10 [145] (WP 886, WP 1009).

⁷ This should not be taken to mean Nietzsche does not entertain suspicions about art and religion at this time. In one sketch he notes that they stem from the desire to leap 'beyond this world by condemning it wholesale' and want only 'the peace of the One' (KSA 7, 29 [224]).

⁸ The composite concept *Neuzeit* was first used by the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-76) in 1870, that is, around the time Nietzsche produces his reflections on history in the second untimely meditation. It can denote the 'modern' or the contemporary *Zeit* in the sense 'of today', and it can also assert a qualitative claim, such as being new, even better, than what has gone before, so attributing to the new an epochal character. Nietzsche has registered these meanings and is taking to task the pretensions of the modern to be something new, better, and epochal.

⁹ This preoccupation with 'cleanliness' continues in N's writings write up to its premature end point, EH: 'I have an instinct for cleanliness that is utterly uncanny in its sensitivity...' ('Why I am so wise', 8); and, 'if you are not clean, how can you be profound?' (EH 'The Wagner Case', 3).

¹⁰ See the helpful note by William Arrowsmith, in his edition of *Unmodern Observations* (1990), 163-4 note 1. See also Schopenhauer's chapter on genius in 1966, volume two, pp. 376-99.

¹¹ See Nietzsche 2001, p. 73, where he cites Heraclitus's expression: 'We find it very characteristic also that Heraclitus does not acknowledge an ethic with imperatives. Indeed, the entire universal law (εἴμαρμένῃ, destiny) is everything, including the individual human being. The destiny of the individual is his inborn character: "Man's character is his daimon"'. I concur with the translator here, Greg

Whitlock, that in this context fate for Nietzsche comes from without, but destiny from within, so that ‘becoming what one is’ is to be interpreted in terms of destiny.

¹² My view is that the metaphysical deduction of the human being Nietzsche provides in SE is defensible. It should not be confused with the criticism of metaphysics he launches in HH 1 and 2 which is directed at the unconditioned and the thing in itself.

¹³ In *D* 202 Nietzsche encourages us to do with away with the concepts of ‘sin’ and ‘punishment’: ‘May these banished monsters henceforth live somewhere other than among human beings, if they want to go on living at all and do not perish of disgust with themselves!’ In *D* 208 entitled ‘Question of Conscience’ he states what he wishes to see changed: ‘We want to cease making causes into sinners and consequences into executioners’. In *D* 53 he notes that it is the most conscientious who suffer so dreadfully from the fears of Hell: ‘Thus life has been made gloomy precisely for those who had need of cheerfulness and pleasant pictures...’

¹⁴ On Epicurus on fear and chance see Hadot 1995, p. 87, p. 223, and p. 252.

¹⁵ Catherine Wilson neatly lays out the central tenets of the Epicurean system in her recent study. They include: the denial of supernatural agency engaged in the design and maintenance of the world; the view that self-moving, subvisible particles acting blindly bring about all growth, change, and decline; and the insistence that the goal of ethical self-discipline, which involves asceticism, is the minimization of mental and physical suffering’ (2008, p. 37). It is on this last point that Nietzsche will come to later criticize Epicureanism and describe Epicurus as a ‘typical decadent’. See AC 30. In the same text Epicurus is once again prized on account of his battle against ‘the subterranean cults, the whole of latent Christianity’, his fight against the ‘corruption of the soul’ through notions of guilt, punishment, and immortality’ (AC 58).

¹⁶ Hadot 1995, p. 87.

¹⁷ In a note from 1881 Nietzsche states that he considers the various moral schools of antiquity to be ‘experimental laboratories’ containing a number of recipes for worldly wisdom or the art of living and holds that these experiments now belong to us as our legitimate property: ‘we shall not hesitate to adopt a Stoic recipe just because we have profited in the past from Epicurean recipes’ (KSA 9, 15 [59]; cited in Hadot 2002, p. 277). Nietzsche’s relation to Epicurus becomes more complicated after the texts of his middle period. See, for example, *GS* 375 and *WP* 1029.

¹⁸ Nietzsche considers Kant an important figure because he stands outside the movement within modernity that places the stress on the sympathetic affects (*D* 132). The problem is that his conception of the rational moral law conceals a remnant of ascetic cruelty (*D* 338; see also *D* 187 & 207).

¹⁹ See *BGE* 205: ‘...the true philosopher...lives “unphilosophically” and “unwisely” and above all imprudently and feels the burdensome duty of a hundred tests and temptations in life – he is continually risking himself...’

²⁰ A concern with herd existence and gregariousness is not peculiar to Nietzsche but a feature of much late nineteenth-century thought and evident in the work of Spencer and also Francis Galton whose text of 1883, Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development, has a chapter devoted to the treatment of ‘Gregarious and Slavish Instincts’ (1907), pp. 47-57.