

Nietzsche between the Eternal Return to Humanity and the Voice of the Many

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Abstract. Thus Spoke Zarathustra expresses a revolt against the quest for “afterworlds.” Nietzsche is seen transferring rationality to the body, welcoming the many in a kingdom of the un-unified multiple, with a burst of enthusiasm at the figure of recurrence. At first, he values an acceptance of suffering through reconciliation with time, and puts the onus on the divine to refute the dismembering of the oneness of meaning and unity of the soul’s quest for joy in eternity. Then confronting Christianity, he sees its refusal to sacrifice anyone, at the cost of making all sick with a unique healer, and rejects it as incompatible with his ideal of plenitude. In the absence of an ontology of the person, the affirmation of the individual and his value, opposed to the antagonistic affirmation of the many put in front of the one God and destroyed by him, ends up dislocating the reality of the self. The Nietzschean option resisted any leveling down—this is its merit—yet the mystery of the Trinity needs to be brought into the reflection to respect Nietzsche’s own terms in defining the final problem which is also the one option: Dionysus or the Crucified?

« insaniebam salubriter et moriebar vitaliter, gnarus, quid mali essem, et ignarus, quid boni post paululum futurus essem »

—Augustine, *Confessions*

I.

A *World has Gone Down in Silence.* The Renaissance has been for many thinkers the utopian model in which a new spiritual universe found a cultural legitimacy under the Greek and Roman light, to such an extent that, if we exclude popular literature expressing in *cantari* (poems singing the great deeds of the knights) the criticism of lower social classes, Italian will be replaced for a time by Latin. In the spirit of the humanists, no one expresses the creative forces of man better than the artist. Princes consider those who shape human language as privileged interlocutors of the aristocratic power. During

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, placed at the vanguard of Europe, they will serve as a beacon until the cult of *virtù* will inevitably transform itself into a cult of personality.

This is a time when the ancients are rediscovered not only through artifacts and texts they left behind, but in their art of living, their ideal of a superior asceticism and their attempt to realize the higher possibilities of an idealized image of man. Those ideas still permeated the great classical culture inseparable from the education that Germans received not so long ago.¹

To understand Nietzsche's motivation in works such as *On the Genealogy of Morals* and even more in *Beyond Good and Evil*, which are philosophical running commentaries on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (hereafter cited as *Zarathustra*), one must have some intellectual sympathy with the distress of the soul we find for instance in a defender of old Europe such as Stefan Zweig, particularly in his work *Die Welt von Gestern* (1941). Living in a troublesome way the experience of the First World War and the exacerbation of nationalisms, Zweig will remain in the period between the two world wars a characteristic representative of European culture, writing among other things a moving biography of Nietzsche.²

What motivates Nietzsche in writing is essentially a cry of revolt, along with an individualistic crisis, where one can hear the vibrant force of the protest of a European aristocracy to which he lends his voice, while it sees the soil crumbling under its feet as the masses rise to prominence. We cannot separate the *Übermensch* from the Renaissance man with his "generous" and yet cruel temper, longing to discharge the impulse of all his faculties in an artistic ideal of plenitude.

II.

The Most Contemptible Sin. The content of *Beyond Good and Evil*, and the first theme of *Zarathustra*, will be illuminated by this background. The prologue

¹They are behind the controversy with U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf created by Nietzsche's first book, see L. Pearcey, *The Grammar of Our Civility* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), 31–41. It is important to insist on this rediscovery of a way of living, not to perpetuate the mistaken belief that everything of Antiquity, and especially the pagan gods, were rediscovered, since in fact they had never been forgotten, see J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. B. Sessions (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 319–20.

²*Der Kampf mit dem Dämon: Hölderlin-Kleist-Nietzsche* (Leipzig: Insel, 1925), 235–326. See L. Steiman, "The Worm in the Rose: Historical Destiny and Individual Action in Stefan Zweig's Vision of History," in *Stefan Zweig: The World of Yesterday's Humanist Today*, ed. M. Sonnenfeld (New York: SUNY Press, 1983), 144, for an appreciation of his humanist ideal's relation with tragedy and the eternity of values that defy human realization. Nietzsche wrote in the *Anti-Christ*, §4: "'Progress' is merely a modern idea, that is to say a false idea" (*Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978], 116).

of the work, besides the proclamation of the “death of God,” emphasizes that what is *now* the most terrible deed is to commit a sacrilege (*Frevel*) against the earth. This will turn into an exposure of the harm produced by the fabricators of “afterworlds” who, while looking for another being and another joy (*andres Sein und Glück*), have forgotten that what allowed for their convulsions and transports of ecstasy was still this world and their body.³ Nietzsche will speak in *Zarathustra* in favor of a new look on death itself, to be able in the end to honor the earth in remembrance of whom was peacefully laid to sleep in her bosom.⁴

The sense of peaceful *Grund* and ending of all things is balanced against the fact that the reality of nihilism is an occasion for Nietzsche to blame the masters of a degenerate *Bildung* when they content themselves with the affirmation that all is done and must go down to its repose (*zu Grunde zu gehen*), nothing being worthy of a different fate than to end up buried in the earth. Nietzsche will object that the world, of which so much evil has been said, has appeared to him as a *humanly* good thing (*ein menschlich gutes Ding*),⁵ and he will insert his criticism in a progression intended to show the tragic absence of humor of those who have wished misfortune to the souls still capable of laughing: they are the ones who have committed the greatest sin. This will culminate in a logic of *substitution* of a hypothesis which is useless and does not deserve to be pursued, to be replaced by the kingdom of Zarathustra which is none other than the earth (*das Erdenreich*), prepared not for children who await the kingdom of God, but for those who have finally earned the spirit of detachment.⁶

III.

The Excess of Wisdom of the Body. Zarathustra’s pointing upward while designating that kingdom where only children can enter, and the alternation with the earthly kingdom claimed by men, besides being a hermeneutical key, is itself inserted in a problematic uncovering of the disappearance of the mind-comforting references: to recover our belongingness to the earth is also

³F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. and intro. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), I, “Of the Afterworldsmen,” 60; Also *Sprach Zarathustra* in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 4, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Munich/Berlin: Taschenbuch/Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 37.

⁴I, “Of the Voluntary Death,” 99. (I will thus quote the English version of *Zarathustra*: book, followed by chapter title, and page); *KSA*, 95 (this will abbreviate the reference to the German text, hence *KSA* following one of *Zarathustra*’s chapters in English will refer to the page number in vol. 4 of the *Kritische Studienausgabe*).

⁵II, “Of the Land of Culture,” 143; “*Alles ist werth, dass es zu Grunde geht*,” *KSA*, 154; see III, “Of the Three Evils,” §1, 206; *KSA*, 236.

⁶IV, “The Ass Festival,” §§2–3, 325; *KSA*, 393.

to discover that we cannot climb beyond the mountains, reach for the faraway through compliance with Zarathustra's exhortation and furtherance of life as will to power without digging in the direction of the roots that tie us to the material and biological conditions of our existence. The rationality governing this message can only be understood in the light of the inversion that occurs around wisdom and its configuration to the body: while moralists such as Montaigne and Pascal had warned that our decisions deemed rational were made in conformity with a life-preserving instinct, Nietzsche topples reason and sensibility, but in a sense which can only be understood in the light of an evanescent *tertium quid*: the body has in itself more reason (*Vernunft*) than the best of wisdoms (*Weisheit*).⁷ Here Nietzsche will set us sailing (one of his favorite metaphors) towards what is at times called the "innocence" of becoming, and the question will be to ask ourselves whether this is a quest for a confirmation of the activity that made our lives possible with its ideal regulation, where we would taste the mindless peace of animal physiology.⁸ This functioning without an evaluation, if it is at times Nietzsche's vision of ecstasy, is not contemplated as something existing anywhere in the empirical realm. Nietzsche does not depreciate the plurality somehow grasped by our sensitive part as unworthy of consideration, but rather makes such a more complex object a *better* instrument for understanding a simpler one. It is both monstrous and the "*Wunder der Wunder*" that this plurality be a unity.⁹

Nietzsche will therefore rely heavily on the concept of hierarchy, but with resistance and fight of the submitted elements, seeing every attempt at ordering as inevitably suffering a "deposition" in the end. This is two-fold: it opens up to an interpretation of the organism as a permanent fight among the parts (*Kampf der Teile*), on a level that stays very close to Nietzsche's passionate enquiries in the biological literature of his time, and it also corresponds on a metaphysical plane—never distinguished from the previous for a monist denying the "afterworlds"—to a plenitude of intelligibility which would feed by its *excess* the never-ending failure of interpretations, assuming an identity of judgment which would be *in reality itself* but as ineffable and never graspable by us. It will be resolved in the end in a philosophy of mask-wearing or *simulacra*.

⁷I, "Of the Despisers of the Body," 62; *KSA*, 40.

⁸See *On the Genealogy of Morals*, I, §11 in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1969), 40–1; also II, §7, 67 (hereafter *Genealogy*).

⁹*Nachgelassene Fragmente* §37[4] (1885) in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Munich/Berlin: Taschenbuch/W. de Gruyter, 1980), vol. 11, 577 (hereafter for the posthumous fragments: fragment number, year, then volume and page numbers in *KSA*). We see in *Daybreak*, §116, that Nietzsche transfers to this *tertium quid*, to the "interior world" which is also the moral one or in other words the "new continent," that which was said until then of the "afterworld" of Platonic Ideas. See *Genealogy*, preface, §7.

IV.

Christianity Refuted by its Genesis. The Christian who opens up this highly stylized work and expects to find there a final blow to any rational attempt to argue for God's existence and reality will be rather surprised, since he is not going to find any intellectually compelling proof or contrived argumentation attempting to demonstrate that there is no God. This is taken for granted, and one could say that Nietzsche elevated *ad hominem* argumentation to the status of an art.¹⁰ It is an "ambiance" in which God would necessarily clash with the becoming of man since he would pre-contain his traits. Christians are considered as propagators of a story of bad taste, an insult to a modality of rationality in which freedom from impediments at self-aggrandizement is raised to the status of highest value. Christians have sometimes, and not in their lesser-value representatives, tried to counter this attack by showing that such a genetic fallacy begs the question and is in need of its own grounding in truth.¹¹ Yet Nietzsche does not attack them in order to get rid of them, not any more than he did for the Jews, and contrary to a common assumption, he does not at first consider them guilty of living short of their moral ideal.¹² Rather, he wants to get to the root of their practice and its significance. He finds their praise of suffering compensated by the purification of the soul unacceptable and paradoxical in a perverted way, because we cannot account for it or recognize that the pathway of its genesis contains a "rumination" which has had the effect of transferring some bodily aspects into spiritual (and for him metaphorical) ones. Here Nietzsche reads the problem with the assumption, as we find in the *Genealogy*, that it is always the realm of the body that has initiated metaphorical uses; such as we find in haggling which has given rise to "value" as applied to human beings.¹³

¹⁰"Proof" being used here as it gets spoken of in popular parlance, not to be conflated with more rigorous uses as one would find in the philosophy of mathematics. That Nietzsche favored this particular mode of argumentation is stated explicitly in *The Gay Science*, §132. A striking example is in *Human, All too Human*, §113. As R. C. Solomon puts it, "Nietzsche's *ad hominem* arguments did not so much refute the doctrines of religion and morality as undermine them, by exposing the sometimes pathetic motives and emotions that motivated them." "Nietzsche *ad hominem*: Perspectivism, personality, and *ressentiment*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. B. Magnus and K. M. Higgins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 181; see also T. H. Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Affirmative Morality: An Ethics of Virtue," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 26 (2003): 64–78, at 68.

¹¹See e.g., H. de Lubac, *The Discovery of God*, trans. A. Dru (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), chap. 1, 15–34.

¹²See Y. Ledure's apt discussion of De Lubac's influential statement on this point contained in *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, which is clearly a misreading, in *Lectures "chrétiennes" de Nietzsche* (Paris: Cerf, 1984), 74–6.

¹³It is not so easy to determine the true bearing of the accusation against the contemptors of the body, since it is a Manichean element, encountered in a lot of the mystery religions and

Only one option is left open for those who consider the body as the greatest of marvels, and know that the metempsychosis taught by the myths that preceded Socrates' philosophizing was the only rational answer to counter the very reversal of *ex nihilo nihil fit* as an incontrovertible axiom—perhaps the most rational of all principles for the Greeks. If indeed being as nothingness, under the form of a perpetual striving to overcome downfall and chaos, is to be resisted in its nihilistic consequences, and if one is also to bar access to a theological creation-centered account of things by which the Church Fathers still observed that axiom, then one needs to show the inevitable character of life as endlessly self-transforming power.

V.

Destruction of the Dogma of Creation. In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche designates the secret desire to have a witness to unrecognized suffering as the motive behind the invention of God: someone has to see us all the time and make us debtors for *everything*. This has been invented to counter the absence of meaning to suffering.¹⁴ As a matter of necessity and in order to live, we had to get rid of this God: “the god who saw everything, *even man*: this god had to die!”¹⁵ Nietzsche will thereafter busy himself with the destruction of the possibility of a Creator God who made all things through a single command of his will, showing how he would be in the way of an affirmation of force and vital energy. To celebrate his “fatherhood” when one has seen the plagues and catastrophes to which human existence is submitted would make this being look like one who does not even have the know-how of a human father. Nietzsche, even if he claims to reject

Gnostic sects, and Christianity actually affirmed the body as worthy of being the dwelling place of God's own *λογος*. Nietzsche has cornered himself in an alternative ever since *The Birth of the Tragedy* by which he had to choose between the bursting affirmation of an instinctual drive which he could only oppose to an Apollonian ideal of measure, light, and order. In this dilemma, the Christians would not fit in the lofty Apollonian category, recalling how contemptful were some remarks about their baseness by pagans such as Celsus in the end of the second century. It has even been suggested that one could reconstruct the Jewish Old Testament anthropology entirely without the concept of the “soul” of Greek provenance, see on this O. Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* (London: Epworth Press, 1962). On this, see *Human, All too Human*, §114. Are the Christians therefore Dionysian? The pagans of the Roman era referred to their gatherings as orgies with the eating of babies' flesh, since they seemed to rely on something akin to Nietzsche's own forced dichotomy in order to judge. If theirs is a transposed will to power, then they would be on the side of life and therefore could be healed. See the observation on the Jews and the fate of Europe in *Daybreak*, §205.

¹⁴See *Genealogy*, II, §7, 68.

¹⁵IV, “The Ugliest Man,” 279; “*Der Gott der Alles sah, auch den Menschen: dieser Gott musste sterben!*” *KSA*, 331.

it,¹⁶ is here conversant with Mahāyāna Buddhist pity and reverence for all there is, especially for all that has been wasted on this earth. He will protest, in the name of the moral sense, and await its justification.

Nietzsche thinks that a God in need of inflicting sufferings to force conversion and hence increase his glory, is an obstacle that hampers the blossoming of man, transforming him into a slave as soon as an impulse towards a great deed takes hold of him: it is a fault against good taste (*Geschmack*) that a potter would take revenge against his pots and creations because they turned out badly (*dass sie ihm schlecht geriethen*).

In the message of the prophet of the *Übermensch*, God is reduced to a supposition (*Muthmaassung*) and those, in turn, if inevitable must be thinkable through.¹⁷ In light of the same doctrine, the *Übermensch* cannot be excepted from that category of supposition. Zarathustra will indeed constantly encounter a despairing opposition to his message; it will end up being a failure. The “new tables” which he came to offer in the midst of an attack on old morality do not present anything new until late in the work and, what is more, they are deciphered in an ironic and self-defeating fourth part. Zarathustra belongs to the “Hyperboreans,”¹⁸ from the mythological realm of the North therefore descending himself from an “afterworld,” and we may be altogether wrong in thinking of his message as a doctrine to be adopted at the expense and denial of others. In the *Nachlaß*, Nietzsche pointed out the irrelevance of this “old atheist.”¹⁹ It is far from clear that Nietzsche wants us to opt here for a position as better than any other one. He has two opinions on just about every subject and, as was pointed out in the inversion of the rational and the sensible in need of a *tertium quid*, he practices this art of retrieving in reason an inner tension, when it divides and splits itself in extremes.²⁰ He continues Montaigne, seeing like the Bordelais conventions and relativities in laws and customs. This method calls for a strategy in reading him, such as the one dubbed “*diacritique*” by Pierre Boudot,²¹ which retrieves in reason a means of coping with the void

¹⁶See *The Birth of the Tragedy* in *The Birth of the Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), §7; *The Gay Science*, §§99; 347.

¹⁷II, “On the Blissful Islands,” 110; *KSA*, 110.

¹⁸“Beyond the North, beyond the ice, beyond death—our life, our happiness.” *The Anti-Christ*, §1, 115. See S. Rosen, *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche’s Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 73.

¹⁹See §17[5] (1888), vol. 13, 526.

²⁰“Whatever is profound loves mask” *Beyond Good and Evil*, §40, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), 50. As Derrida and Stalen have argued, future scholarship will have to account better for the fact that Nietzsche uses different voices in conversation, see R. Hayman, *Nietzsche* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 9.

²¹See *Lontologie de Nietzsche* (Paris: P.U.F., 1971), 7–8. *Diacritique* is based on the assumption that dialectics tends to promote semantically closed notions, and it attempts to avoid this limita-

in finding values as reasons for our actions, while it also recognizes in them a dangerous instrument.

Nietzsche claims that a God would be an obstacle to the creative call of man to become super-human unless he could become one of the gods, and even more *that* God (*lieber selber Gott sein*).²² From this he will conclude that there is no God, inverting almost word for word Descartes' own take on "absolute knowledge" in the third *Meditation*, since instead of having "I know that I can continually become better, hence there is an idea of Perfect which imposes itself to my thought," with Nietzsche we will get "I feel that I ought to be more than human if there was anything beyond manhood; I still suffer from human finiteness; hence there is not anything beyond the human."²³

Since the world is not made according to obedience to a transcendent intention, we must through chance deliver all things from the "servitude under purpose."²⁴ It will be done through gathering the always threatened fragments, enigmas, and accidents; they create a figure but the world as forces in tension will always destroy it. Zarathustra warns us not to seek anything else beyond them.²⁵ That is Zarathustra's own burden, trying as he does to kill in the mind of his listeners the very core of the spirit of revenge, which is twofold: the antipathy towards time and the "*Es war*"; and the expectation of suffering to follow from a form of punishment. Eternity here is not denied but transposed.

When the will achieves self-mastery, she can redeem that which has been and re-create it, to the point of saying: "But I willed it thus! So shall I will it—"

tion by discarding anthropomorphic repercussions which reduce meaning, in order to envision it in light of the different layers out of which the nucleus of reality is composed.

²²IV, "Retired from Service," 274; *KSA*, 324–5.

²³II, "On the Blissful Islands," 110; "*wenn es Götter gäbe, wie hielte ich's aus, kein Gott zu sein! Also giebt es keine Götter*," *KSA*, 110. This has the same structure as the "proof" of eternal return from science found in *Nachlaß* §14[188] (1888), vol. 13, 374–6, here recast: "if the world had an end, it would have reached it from eternal times; it has not reached any end; therefore it has no end." Concerning the very coherence of the propositions this is only possible, let alone any evaluation of their truth, through a "re-paganization" of philosophy, where the idea of an actual infinite imposed from outside, a permanently given reservoir of thrust to go forward, is made philosophically untenable for a reason that has everything to do with an ontological option: only the realm of the finite comprehended and measured by the *VOUS* is worth considering for a philosopher. This in turn seems odd when one remembers the hymnic nature of the Will in this work, a permanent capacity as it were for repeated transgression.

²⁴III, "Before Sunrise," 186; "*Knechtschaft unter dem Zwecke*," *KSA*, 209; Gandillac in his beautiful French translation has "enslavement to the end," *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 221; as we saw, it is a blasphemy for Nietzsche to impose from outside a goal onto the world.

²⁵II, "Of Redemption," 160; *KSA*, 178–9. The "spirit of heaviness" is what has created those chimera which prevent the conquest of the world on the part of man, things such as constraint, finality, or intention; see III, "Of Old and New Law-Tables," §2, 215; *KSA*, 248.

taking courageously on oneself the sting of freedom and falling under the iron scepter of fate.²⁶ Whoever reaches this state of felicity and reconciliation with oneself will experience the heavenly necessity (*himmlischen Noth*) which absorbs the accidents in a dance with the stars. It may be that not all is said and done when it comes to obeying a law. If we could avoid falling into resentment against the law, for Nietzsche the product of Paul's troubled psyche,²⁷ all that is denied by our blindness could create a different form of necessity, which would be in the same relationship to it as the contingent is to our present other-worldly necessity.

As we will come to see, Aristotle's understanding of time as a series of "now" points is treated as though any one could be made interchangeable with the whole, so that to detach or abstract any fragment from the crucial teaching on time as a forever rolling wheel would lead us to expect for instance that the crippled be healed, something impossible since it would be conducive to a judgment on the world's production as a failure in front of a different standard of perfection.²⁸ Such a conception of time is truly extraordinary. It invites resisting a revolt against the past if one is crippled, not because one's inner self cannot perish with the body (think of Christ's saying in Matthew 10:28), but because time will make all instants recur, along with the ones containing joy. This means that the crippled is to be forever brought back to such a state and is exhorted to rejoice in it! It would be hard to miss the extreme Calvinistic flavor of this world of the eternally sacrificed. Did Nietzsche have in mind an anti-creation, countering the order given to the Hebrews in the desert not to take anything else than the *manna* which they were asked to rely on *for this day*?

Zarathustra will only then be able to invite the accidents and contingencies to come to him, since they are innocent like little children.²⁹ One must adopt an almost geometric and topological representation to understand. Nietzsche does indeed reject any meta-level cohesion, since he wants to be consistently monistic, but those centers of force are not mechanical and passive; they contain a unit or "atom" of eternal recurrence, like the "Being" of Parmenides sprayed into the many by Leucippus. When Nietzsche will look *below* the protoplasm and seek entities not affected by strife and woundedness, the originary cicatrization of

²⁶III, "Of Old and New Law-Tables," §3, 216; *KSA*, 249; see also II, "Of Redemption," 163; *KSA*, 179–80.

²⁷"The law was the cross to which he himself felt nailed: how he hated it!" *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, §68, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, intro. M. Tanner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 40. This is needless to say a passionate and theologically very unsound interpretation of Paul's stance in front of the Law.

²⁸As W. Cantwell Smith profoundly noted, there is a logical similarity between the question of religious expression as inherently plural and the problem of evil; see *The Faith of Other Men* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 132–3.

²⁹III, "On the Mount of Olives," 194; *KSA*, 221.

irritation by assimilation, it will be to find there intimations of a world of stillness underlying the fabric of the universe.³⁰ In this context, “below” is also “beyond.” This introduces an intimation of the innocence, along with becoming, of every instant, where the artistic figure of perfection and harmony would descend and embrace the mantle of becoming. This is perhaps the greatest anticipation of a cataphatic theology present in any contemporary work, since the “*Wunder der Wunder*” is all the more wonderful if it does not represent a diminished copy of an archetype were it would be already written. It will however need to express itself in polytheistic and neo-pagan terms for reasons that we will attempt to clarify, one of them being that the world of the late nineteenth century in which Nietzsche writes is still religious in its need to defile, to reject violently and in an adolescent fashion the theistic world-view.³¹

VI.

The Divine to Come. Can we expect a new figure of the divine to come out of this aesthetically based rejection? For Nietzsche, the task will be to give back to man that which was stolen from him. He will not hesitate to draw the traits of a renewed divinity. Confessing that he has a gods-forming instinct,³² thus giving us the tone on which his whole endeavor must be understood—alien to serious German academism—and after saying that the one who climbs on mountains despises tragic seriousness, he affirms that he “should believe only in a god who understood how to dance.”³³ Beyond the statement from Zarathustra that he would only expect of his disciples the most difficult thing which is beauty,³⁴ what do these sayings mean? Nietzsche says that the sentiment of pity, which he despises when it is taught to human beings, may be after all that which killed God who had too much of it for men.³⁵

We can question the “lightness” advocated by Nietzsche, as the sense of humor called upon seems in fact to have been, without exaggerating the pun,

³⁰See §26[37] (1884), vol. 11, 157; §§35[53] and 35[59] (1885), vol. 11, 536–7; §§1[28] and 1[105] (1885–6), vol. 12, 16–7 and 35–6; B. Stiegler points this out, and sees him as being here inconsistent in *Nietzsche et la biologie* (Paris: P.U.F., 2001), 83–4 and 109. Yet we must notice the fact that he makes his *Übermensch* into a “higher” being, such as the Hyperborean Zarathustra, with the constant effort to *avoid* its decrease in power, a point underscored by Rosen, *The Mask of the Enlightenment*, 50–4, which shows how perfection is “compressed” in the origin and commands a frenzied attempt to save its averaging out in the multiple with its entropic effect.

³¹I agree with Y. Leduc on this point, see “Nietzsche et le polythéisme. Une approche plurielle du divin,” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 61 (1977): 533–48, at 534–6.

³²See *Nachlaß* §17[5] (1888), vol. 13, 525–6.

³³I, “Of Reading and Writing,” 68; *KSA*, 49.

³⁴II, “Of the Sublime Men,” 141; *KSA*, 151–2.

³⁵II, “Of the Compassionate,” 114; *KSA*, 79; see also *Genealogy*, III, §17, 130.

“tragically” missing in him. The humor which we find in *Zarathustra* has something fabricated about it. We could even speak of sarcasm, of the humor of someone who places himself in a position of superiority.³⁶ It would be worth noting with Stanislas Breton that Nietzsche may have lacked in the end a component of humor applied to the fate of the “powers” of this world, as though they would not have their own demise.³⁷ In fact, he struggled in an almost manic degree to prevent their downfall. Ever since *The Birth of the Tragedy*, as Kaufmann observed in the preface to his translation, Nietzsche got caught in a false dilemma.³⁸ He is too intelligent not to have noticed it, and this is why he did not extend it to his later thought in the form of a strictly binary option; he first saw that the Dionysian instinct was that of the dismembered god in the universality of the cosmos, since there is a perpetual Apollonian renaissance of measure, order, and of the concept which unifies even if it is always refuted and itself dismembered again.³⁹ In a second period of his mature thought, Dionysus comes to a certain balance against the figure of Ariadne, interpreted by Deleuze as the “affirmation of affirmation” or the becoming active,⁴⁰ whereas a third period to which we will come back forces an option between Dionysus and the Crucified.

The thought of Nietzsche, especially in the last chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*, magnifies the acceptance of suffering as an ennobling trial. The god who could only speak the highest λόγος through a dance on all things has been prevented from so doing, and his ears have been blasted as though with a mournful horn.⁴¹ At the source of his being was the bursting of new possibilities here symbolized by the spirit of dance (this endless novelty also inspired the title of the 1881 work *Morgenröthe*, via an aphorism of *Rig Veda*). His disciples have not borne any fruit, they have not walked in the path of the creative thrust, since only those who have faith in faith (*glaubte an Glauben*) can still do a deed.⁴² If

³⁶It has been argued, quite rightly it seems, that Nietzsche never offers a justification of the ironic “midwifery” he is practicing other than to deem inferior in understanding whoever cannot hold together the contradictory meanings he gives to almost every subject; see J. Westfall, “Ironic Midwives: Socratic Maieutics in Nietzsche and Kierkegaard,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 35–6 (2009): 627–48, at 633–4.

³⁷See *The Word and the Cross*, trans. J. Porter (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 40–1. The expression of his contempt for the New Testament might have something to do with it; see *Genealogy*, III, §22.

³⁸See *The Birth of the Tragedy*, 9.

³⁹See e.g., *The Birth of the Tragedy*, §21. Nietzsche seems to have an innate need to upset, and to perhaps subscribe to ancient heresies; consider for instance Augustine’s attempted refutation of the Manichees who believed that *Jesu patibilis* was suffering in the death of every tree and plant, literally woven to the fabric of the cosmos, in *Contra Faustum*, xx, i.

⁴⁰“Mystère d’Ariane,” *Philosophie* 17 (1987): 67–72, at 71.

⁴¹II, “The Funeral Horn,” 135; *KSA*, 144. Recall the gospel verse: “we have piped unto you and you have not danced” (Matt 11:17).

⁴²II, “Of the Land of Culture,” 143; *KSA*, 154.

new tables of the law were given to us, they would say: "You shall *make amends* to your children for being the children of your fathers: *thus* you shall redeem all that is past!"⁴³

The great maxim that Zarathustra leaves behind and which opens up the fourth book is: "become who you are" (*Werde, der, wer du bist!*).⁴⁴ It is modified from Pindar's saying. The saying on the distant land of the Hyperboreans was also inspired by him. Should we understand that one's true Self, if it was to exist, could only lay outside of a changing world? We see however, at the same moment, that Zarathustra stands firm on the rock with his two feet. When one proclaims the Heraclitean dissolution of all stable points of contact,⁴⁵ the question remains whether this dissolution in Dionysian ecstasy authorizes the attainment of such stability as we find in that *λογος* of change.

If Zarathustra danced in front of the magician, he would refuse to say: "here dances the last gay man" (*hier tanzt der letzte frohe Mensch*).⁴⁶ And we are being asked: but how could happiness (*Glück*) be found amidst hidden cavemen? Nietzsche rejects a sacrifice of the self mediated by a change in one's life status intended at recalling the presence of another world. He has already referred to his philosophy as an "inverted Platonism," a statement that cannot be understood without the reversibility of being and time as developed by Pierre Boudot.⁴⁷ The prophet of the *Übermensch* and eternal return will not be heard and no one will receive his message: he will have therefore to *sacrifice* himself for the life of his subjects. Keeping in mind that the love for man became the death of God, the old Pope meeting with Zarathustra ends up confessing that there is some god who has converted him into godlessness, and he adds: "Is it not your piety itself that no longer allows you to believe in a god?"⁴⁸ This is not to be understood as a compliment, since to be "pious" in Nietzsche's language is to cling to the affirmation of truth, even when it becomes a lie and goes against the power of life.⁴⁹

⁴³III, "Of Old and New Law-Tables" §12, 221; *KSA*, 255; see also II, "Of the Land of Culture," 144; *KSA*, 155.

⁴⁴IV, "The Honey Offering," 252; *KSA*, 297; see also *The Gay Science*, §270.

⁴⁵Especially in III, "Of Old and New Law-Tables," §8, 218–9; *KSA*, 252.

⁴⁶IV, "The Cry of Distress," 256; *KSA*, 302.

⁴⁷See *Nietzsche, la momie et le musicien* (Mont-de-Marsan: L'atelier des brisants, 2002), 42.

⁴⁸III, "Retired from Service," 274; "*Ist es nicht deine Frömmigkeit selber, die dich nicht mehr an einen Gott glauben lässt?*" *KSA*, 325.

⁴⁹On the urge for truth as the obligation to "lie according to a fixed convention," see "On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense," trans. M. A. Mügge, in F. Nietzsche, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. R. Grimm and C. Molina y Vedia (New York: Continuum, 1995), 92. On impulse to truth as an impulse to death, see *The Gay Science*, §344, the section title of which is "How we are still pious."

What are we to make of this godlessness? Angèle Kremer-Marietti observed that Nietzsche believed in the bodily existence of God, and we do find an entry in the *Nachlaß* to the effect that if God existed, he could not have any other appearance than a human one.⁵⁰ If God existed, he would have to eternally make himself man. This is one way in which the meaning of the eternal return could be retrieved: not a God who exists for himself and his glory, but for his eternal return to man, in other words the Stoic anticipation of a divine character extended to every trait of the world. Zarathustra exhorts men to create a world in *their* image.⁵¹

This introspective outlook of a thinker celebrating the living body (*Leib*) in opposition to the mechanical and interchangeable body in the sense of physics (*Körper*), acted upon without reacting by assimilation, does not end there. He also refuses to look in the soul for that which ought to come from the human situation in the midst of universal becoming. This defines an aesthetic vision more fundamental than ontology or cosmology. And what could be its object? It is an interiorization of time, motion, pulsation. When recalling the most life-giving moments of his youth, Nietzsche wrote in his diaries: “As a child, I saw God in his glory.”⁵² It is remarkable that the brief notation of an experience of God’s glowing beauty is immediately followed by the mention of a study on the concept of the devil as needed for God to take cognizance of himself, and by recalling the sound of the organ at Pforta. This experience of seeing exceeds the eye’s capacities; it is musical and it probably conditions the quoted allusions in *Zarathustra* concerning goodness and beauty expected from the hero, in a possible reminiscence of the old harmony of καλος καγαθος.

To understand, one would benefit from contrasting the eternal return, the vision of Lake Silvaplana, with the great doctor whose own vision also rested on a quest for cosmic unity beyond any anthropomorphic reliance on category. In his vision at Ostia, Augustine experienced and saw just as well that all things were cosmically dancing in harmony: they were caught in a temporal melody.⁵³ Their order was imparted, but was it only from above? Instead of climbing the ladder of essences in a similar way, Nietzsche, unable to believe in a God who would possess our idea without as we just said *returning it* to us, will be led to descend in the depths of the earth, into the bosom of the feminine cosmically

⁵⁰See *Thèmes et structures dans l'œuvre de Nietzsche* (Paris: Lettres modernes, 1957), 237; *Nachlaß* §35[76] (1885), vol. 11, 543.

⁵¹II, “On the Blissful Islands,” 110; *KSA*, 110.

⁵²See among the “memorabilia” *Nachlaß* §28[7] (1878), vol. 8, 505: “*Als Kind Gott im Glanze gesehn.—Erste philosophische Schrift über die Entstehung des Teufels (Gott denkt sich selbst, dies kann er nur durch Vorstellung seines Gegensatzes).*”

⁵³Contrast the Ostia vision in the *Confessions*, book ix, 10, 23–5 to book xi, 28, 38 and 31, 41.

understood. He will meditate on the joy which longs for the “profound eternity.” In a posthumous fragment, Zarathustra is said to die embracing the earth.⁵⁴

At the time of writing *The Gay Science*, which is precious since it surrounds *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, its fifth book coming directly after it, Nietzsche was more than ever under the spell of Emerson. Besides what he tells us, we can speculate on what caused his interest in the American author of *Nature*, but it is important to see how the modern construction of the Self has been conditioned, through Augustine and the post-Kantian Romantic struggle to recover “intellectual intuition,” by the understanding of the Self as immersed in God and even identical at its bottom with him.⁵⁵ Emerson’s “History” (from the *Essays*) provided the epigraph of *The Gay Science*.⁵⁶ Among the modern sources of the Self, the Lockean inner consciousness, dependent upon impressions as part of an attempt to recover empiricism, offers itself as only one of the ways, the other main one being the Emersonian immersion of the free individual in God.

What this means is that Nietzsche might be after a *λογος* which would give itself to an indefinite number of participants, making it possible to topple reason and goal-pursuit with sensitivity in an ever unpredictable fashion. In front of one of the major dilemmas of metaphysics, Nietzsche, for all his contempt for a “Platonism of the masses,” still upholds a vision which would predicate of the individual all that can be said of the whole, in opposition to a magnanimous and prudent “political animal,” in need of submission to the wisdom of those who know better.⁵⁷ The “One” of the Neoplatonic tradition, not being part of this world nor strictly speaking its Creator, gathers everything instead of dividing such as we find in the biblical perspective’s emphasis on the unicity of the “elect and the holy.” The property of unicity, as Stanislas Breton observed in a profound work of philosophical theology, can come only after the proper understanding of a concept, and the concept as such is indefinite in its extension; the One can affirm itself only by covering and surmounting the never-fading shadow of the plural:⁵⁸ we would not be far from Nietzsche’s thought by adding that it ought to be indefinitely apprehended as finite without a pre-established direction and therefore

⁵⁴Quoted by Boudot, *L’ontologie de Nietzsche*, 33. Compare with: “und zur Erde will ich wieder werden, dass ich in Der Ruhe habe, die mich gebar,” in I, “Of Voluntary Death,” 99; *KSA*, 95.

⁵⁵See P. Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 124 and 186, n. 53.

⁵⁶See P. Keane, *Emerson, Romanticism, and Intuitive Reason* (Columbia/London: University of Missouri Press, 2005), 169–72, hereafter *Romanticism*; fervently used at the moment of the redaction of *Zarathustra*, Emerson will be abandoned as too error-ridden, see S. Michaud, “Nietzsche, la culture française et l’Europe,” *Romantisme* 23–81 (1993): 67–83, 79.

⁵⁷Aristotle is said to have located the Ideas in the realm of the familiar and the insignificant in *Gay Science*, §355.

⁵⁸See *Unicité et monothéisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1981), 20–4, partly relying on Spinoza’s fiftieth letter.

cease functioning as a concept. There is in Nietzsche a Platonic *synopsis*, a perspective on all perspectives. How could this work however? How can the singular be intelligible without conceptual abstraction, and also without the Idea as a source for the illumination of the mind considered to abide in the mind of God?

Let us reserve the question here and observe that, from his poignant letter to his mother following his loss of faith all the way to the thought of his maturity, the most profound statement of Nietzsche's aesthetic epistemology, or "joyful science," may be found in *Twilight of the Idols*, where he tells us that what he has been trying to prevent is his being fooled and that the only way to do this is to look for reason in reality, instead of in "reason" or in "morality."⁵⁹ Nietzsche will only accept the reasons for our doing from reality and not from our knowledge of it. All he seems to find however are the shipwrecks of the will to power.

VII.

"*Alle Grunden zu Gehen.*" The closest we can come to understanding such a vision might well reside in Augustine's delayed recognition in his *Confessions* that the source of his illness and suffering was equally his very healing, which we put in *incipit*.⁶⁰ Nietzsche will also recognize, responding in advance to those who have dismissed his sayings as merely those of a sick and desperate man, that we need a hermeneutics of illness and of the afflicted body.⁶¹ From earlier readings of speculative biologists such as Roux, Virchow, and Nägeli, he always kept a conviction that wounds were the sign of vitality, that the afflicted body was not so much without a hierarchy of the parts as it was being disproven in its election of a unifying principle. A different way to put it would be to say that the evils serve life and are redeemed in increasing its power. Some things are for us bad (how else could we understand the often prescriptive character of this philosophy, Zarathustra's very message, crossed out by the same difficulty as Spinoza's),⁶² but nothing is evil. Hence the wheel of being that will bring

⁵⁹"What I Owe to the Ancients," *Twilight of the Idols*, §2, 106–7. "*Thukydides und, vielleicht, der principe Macchiavelli's sind mir selber am meisten verwandt durch den unbedingten Willen, sich Nichts vorzumachen und die Vernunft in der Realität zu sehn,—nicht in der 'Vernunft', noch weniger in der 'Moral'*" (KSA, vol. 6, 156).

⁶⁰*Confessions*, book viii, 8, 19.

⁶¹I have in mind, e.g., B. Russell's phrases about a megalomaniac hiding his timidity and vulnerability under a masquerade, or a superman which is a product of fear on the part of a day-dreamer, in his *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 692–3; also the musings of G. Papini about which see Ledure, *Lectures "chrétiennes" de Nietzsche*, 43–7; this hermeneutics is found in *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am so Wise," §6, but more generally it could be construed as Nietzsche's grand project.

⁶²In his *History of Philosophy*, vol. 4 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), 254–7, F. C. Copleston had observed the difficulties in a wholly deterministic philosophy reconciling itself with fate that

everything back, hence the primordial trust put in the will;⁶³ hence the horror at the idea of a God that needs all the evils of this world to become; hence the sentiment of horror at a being punishing eternally, a Jewish and Christian cosmic and eternal transposition of *ressentiment*.

If we were to ask why Nietzsche so forcefully adopted the “will to power” as a unifying inspiration (something we know from his notebooks more than the published works),⁶⁴ we would need to revisit a theme that is present in the *Birth of the Tragedy*, and the best way to do it is to consider what he asks himself in his preface of 1886 devoted to a criticism of his own work: “Is it perhaps possible to suffer precisely from overfullness?”⁶⁵ From early on, the body was understood as unified and yet always oscillating, never knowing when a bursting tidal wave would collapse this fragile sea-shore dam. Indeed, the image of the raging ox bringing inescapable change is a central one in the third book of *Zarathustra*. Since this is part of the “new tables,” one could safely say that they contain, quite literally, *nothing*. And indeed, what makes the body last? What is behind the “great health”?⁶⁶ It is a certain integration of the parts which we know not how to bring about. It makes us marvel, yet by forever retreating away. Having read Kant, Nietzsche has retained the idea of the centrality of causal chains, and then with further reading of Boscovich and Lange he was prone to think of the individual as a line of force in expansion. Having discovered in Spinoza his predecessor in monism and in an ontology of this-worldly cosmic power and joy,⁶⁷ he claims to be one with him in five things: the denial of the freedom of the will; of teleology; of the moral world order; of the unegoistic; and of evil. It is striking that in the very same text he confides that without clear skies in the strictly meteorological sense, he is unable to do anything worthwhile.⁶⁸ One gets the image of a body like a thin membrane affected by all that happens. It

turns out being prescriptive; see also his article “Foreground and Background in Nietzsche,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 21–3 (March 1968): 506–23, at 517 and 519.

⁶³As pointed out in Hollingdale’s excellent preface to his translation of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 28–9.

⁶⁴See L. Williams, “Will to Power in Nietzsche’s Published Works and the *Nachlass*,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57 (July 1996): 447–63, at 448–9.

⁶⁵“Attempt at a Self-Criticism,” in *The Birth of the Tragedy* and *The Case of Wagner*, 17.

⁶⁶On the “great health,” referring to a policy of artificial selection practiced by “metapsychologists” who would know better than mere “natural” selection preserving mediocrity, see especially *Genealogy*, III, §24; *The Gay Science*, §382; *The Anti-Christ*, §20; *Ecce Homo*, “Why I write such good books,” §2.

⁶⁷In the postcard to Overbeck, from July 30, 1881, §135 in *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari, 2nd ed. (Munich/Berlin: Taschenbuch/W. de Gruyter, 2003), vol. 12, 111 (hereafter *Briefe*).

⁶⁸*Ecce Homo*, “Why I am so Clever,” §2, 240–1; and the postcard mentioned in the previous footnote.

also reminds one of the Föhn wind which Europeans feared would upset one's health and inspiration very suddenly.

What sense can we make of this closeness of a desire for power and such an avowal of fragility? In the *Nachlaß*, Nietzsche tells us that he contemplated replacing epistemology with a theory of the affects and their hierarchy, up to such levels as spirituality.⁶⁹ This would enable us to get rid of metaphysics and religion, but how could we fail to see two things, firstly that it is their mere name that would be overthrown since what is meant is a complete grasp of all that they are supposed to *react* to, as if (to make an analogy with quantum theory) one got rid of the *principium individuationis* in the form of a corpuscle and kept trace of every last wave, an impossible task since they would bear those containing the destruction of the apparatus; and, secondly, there seems to be in the denial of evil the intimation that one's power can only be increased by knowing since, to take that example, the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden becomes something good but not for me, in other words a poison undermining my power, so that in letting Adam know of its detrimental nature, God was actually increasing his power. This was Spinoza's interpretation,⁷⁰ and this most extreme moral intellectualism seems appropriate here since it illustrates both the element of "salvation from knowledge," which Nietzsche, with all his effort to revive the passion and the instinct of the Hellenes, could not eradicate, and furthermore it shows at play Nietzsche's early concept of "inpsychization," the fact that not all is good for one of us, so that our power will forever remain threatened and contradictory.

One might ask: why are things hurting me? Shouldn't the world be that still and blissful repose in joy as found in the contemplation of a New England summer day which Nietzsche so admired in the words of Emerson? What of that shining golden rod of the fishermen that makes one weep?⁷¹ Either one is really then substituting one's mind for that of God, denying in the face of common sense that some things bring us down, or one has committed a fault in disregarding that the will does elect what is without an essence and treats it as though it had one. Spinoza's constant rejection of the reality of evil is unconvincing. What we may need is not a psychology of the religious illusion, as Nietzsche was wont to provide *ad nauseam*, but a similar psychology of the illusion of a philosophy turned into salvation.

⁶⁹§9[8] (1887), vol. 12, 342–3.

⁷⁰Letter 19 of Jan. 5, 1665, to Willem de Blyenbergh in *Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. E. Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 358–9. The philologist Mazzino Montinari, who had access to every last archive document, argued that the central doctrine of Nietzsche was indeed the will to power, but that it was a desire of redeeming by knowing.

⁷¹See Keane, *Romanticism*, 108–9 quoting the letter of April 7, 1866, to Carl von Gersdorf; III, "Of Old and New Law-Tables," §3, 216; *KSA*, 249.

VIII.

The Threatened Aggregation of the Centers of Force. For Nietzsche the values previously associated to an afterworld in which he has ceased to believe must now find their source and energy in a *unique* power, which has made this universe subsist and which keeps alive the perpetuating force of the species. His is not an advocacy of abstract ideals if they disregard the subject *in concreto*. Zarathustra will therefore warn that it is not that *from which* we are free that matters (*Frei wovon?*), but that *for which* (*Frei wozu?*)⁷² This will support the statement that life can and must always surpass itself. Nietzsche hammered this point with what Gide referred to as an “admirable monotony,” the *leitmotiv* of which is: “I am that which must overcome itself again and again.”⁷³ If the forceful imposition of one’s law through might is not what he had in mind, and if Kaufmann was right in saying that one of the most concise statements of his whole thought is found at the end of the chapter on the “Sublime Men” in the second book,⁷⁴ which would make his ideal fundamentally aesthetic, then why would grace be altogether rejected in any other form than imposing beauty on one’s life through art? How unappealing if art is also ultimately a lie, just like truth.

How are we in this context to understand that the secret of the soul is that when the hero has abandoned her, the Super-Hero (*Über-Held*) approaches her in a dream? There is no doubt that Nietzsche considered that those who have hastened the coming of freedom by implementing racist and nationalist programs of cleansing were more than wrong, actually stupid.⁷⁵ If we draw an analogy from the collectivity to the individual, of which Hollingdale observed that Nietzsche considered it like a miniature “State,”⁷⁶ it is not possible to take this from the other end and act as though the collective self-consciousness could be an *ersatz* for the building-up of the individual subject called to raise his will to universal proportions.

If this philosophy is that of an isolated individual, if it lacks tragically a dimension of personhood, there is still a sense in which one’s sufferings will benefit the whole liberation of all the possibilities of a world to come. Zarathustra is angry at those who merely suffer, and he blames them for having suffered only

⁷²I, “Of the Way of the Creator,” 89; KSA, 81.

⁷³II, “On Self-Overcoming,” 138; “*ich bin das, was sich immer selber überwinden muss*,” KSA, 148; for Gide’s statement, see F. Challaye, *Nietzsche* (Paris: Mellottée, 1933), 55.

⁷⁴“And I desire beauty from no one as much as I desire it from you, you man of power: may your goodness be your ultimate self-overpowering.” 141 (Hollingdale’s trans.); see Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking, 1972), 193, n. 13.

⁷⁵The statements are many, a remarkable one being found in *Human, all too Human*, I, §475, KSA vol. 2, 309–10.

⁷⁶R. J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche: The Man and his Philosophy*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 159.

for themselves and not for man.⁷⁷ This dimension has been occluded, as both Marcel and Mounier contended. We have been presented a Nietzsche proclaiming the death of God, and many have fastened his message to that negative emptiness, without mapping the connection to the *Übermensch* in any other way than brutal militaristic images.⁷⁸

Even though this will prove problem-ridden, there is a sense in which the Nietzschean “genius of the species,” his own name for the divine, can only be conquered—the noble souls never settling for anything else than that which they can get⁷⁹—and that in turn is what makes “becoming” innocent, the will having reconciled itself with all that was. This paradox is properly his own, since it amounts to a refusal of the mysticism inherent in Stoic, Spinozist, and more generally quietist passivity.⁸⁰

T. K. Seung has stressed the grounding of the Goethean and Wagnerian projects in Spinoza, not without adding as a worthwhile hypothesis that *Zarathustra*, following an exaltation of the Faustian Self playing his will against fate, would in the end defend a doctrine of life’s power that is Spinozist and a final religious re-empowerment of nature.⁸¹ While he recognized the need of a central power to govern the State, Spinoza’s tendency was to minimize it and call onto individuals never to await from their life in common the acquisition of the true enlightened Self. When considering the privileges of the Hebrew people, his own, and their claim to an election from God, Spinoza warned that those would have been no less real if they had been extended to all the peoples just

⁷⁷IV, “Of the Higher Man,” §6, 372; *KSA*, 359.

⁷⁸As R. Girard noted, “They [admirers of that text] always substitute their own concept of God’s death for the more mysterious murder of Nietzsche.” “Dionysus versus the Crucified,” *Modern Language Notes* 99.4 (1984): 828–35, at 831. The Russian reception of Nietzsche’s ideas would be an exception, as the fascinating inquiries of B. Glatzer Rosenthal have shown in a series of publications. See her introduction in *Nietzsche in Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), summarized on 38–43; even then, very little outside of the artistic or the warrior-type super-hero has been emphasized.

⁷⁹III, “Of Old and New Law-Tables,” §5, 263; “*sie wollen Nichts umsonst haben, am wenigsten das Leben*,” *KSA*, 246; “We Germans are Hegelians even if there had never been any Hegel, insofar as we (unlike all Latins) instinctively attribute a deeper meaning and greater value to becoming and development than to what ‘is,’” *The Gay Science*, §357, trans. Kaufmann, 306.

⁸⁰K. Riezler has rightly pointed out that the ultimately self-destructive quest for a justification of this world would have been completely alien to a Greek of the classical age; “Discussion by Kurt Riezler,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 6 (1945): 294–306, at 296–7; see also Rosen, *The Mask of the Enlightenment*, 47 about the standard of interpretation.

⁸¹*Nietzsche’s Epic of the Soul* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005), 324–5, where we can also notice the risky interpretive option of this author as in e.g.: “Thus his love of the ugly dwarf as his ultimate self becomes complete and absolute in the eternal ring of love. But there is *no need for him to say it* because his love of the whole world is obviously his love of his cosmic self in the eternal domain” (my emphasis).

as much. He added that he had only contempt for a people that would rejoice that its greatness, or holiness, could only sustain its extraordinary character if it was missing in others and so therefore by contrast to theirs.⁸²

IX.

Poisoning of the Body or Collective Lynching? Nietzsche tells us in passages that are difficult to use and interpret, that as a child he could not think of a God without a devil as his contrary. The concept of God had to give since (here I supply the premise to this enthymeme) raising a being to universal goodness would have meant that the will of any subordinate entities would have been immediately suppressed. It is far from certain that Nietzsche discarded the idea altogether, since one could say that he retrieved this “demonic” ontology as the logic of this earth and Zarathustra’s kingdom, a demonism which is not to be equated to Satanism and a delight in blasphemy proper. Nietzsche kept admiring whatever he attacked and criticized (a case in point would be the Catholic priesthood), and he characteristically never wasted time on useless subjects. What is more, he never wanted to destroy the Christians, to the point where his most raging unpublished statements to the effect that he hated Christianity with a mortal hatred,⁸³ are to be understood as meaning that he would rather die than be wrong; they mean the same sort of self-immolation that Paul of Tarsus confided he was ready to undergo for his fellow Jews to come back and be grafted on the olive tree (Romans 11:23-27). In a sense, Nietzsche kept all along a vivid sense of the requirement of “justification” of this world and of one’s merit; he was theologically Pelagian, and his acts of Stoic surrendering are theatrical, like the humor mentioned earlier.

Nietzsche goes out of his way in the *Genealogy* to substantiate his theory of *ressentiment* as a wicked and secret desire of the Self to be avenged by some transcendent God, and takes to task Tertullian and Aquinas for saying, as he reads them, that God’s glory requires that he eternally punishes his enemies, while “his” here means “theirs.”⁸⁴ From this we should expect that no one ever be justified in transposing a sickly will to power on a cosmic force bearing the weight of vengeance on behalf of the mob. This criticism seems however rather incompatible with the resistance of the *Übermensch* to any invasion of his privileges. While explaining the consequences of the will to power, Nietzsche claimed in §43 of *Beyond Good and Evil* that the good radically meant what promotes

⁸²See *Theologico-Political Treatise* in *Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, vol. 1, trans. R. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951), 43.

⁸³*Nachlaß* §14[123] (1888), vol. 13, 304: “perhorrescire ich das Christenthum mit einem tödtlichen Haß.”

⁸⁴*Genealogy*, I, §15.

the force of life to carry over and, in an eternal contradictory fashion, to bring down every fleeting figure of achievement (the same observation would hold for §43 of *The Anti-Christ*). This meant that the sharing in the good, with everyone participating, was discarded as quintessential *décadence*. It is difficult here not to see a blatant contradiction of what I just mentioned, namely the horrified reaction in front of a being that would avenge the secret gall in one's subconscious by a transfer to some principle of the Good being on one's side.

To pretend with Kaufmann that this is a way to state, like Hegel, that no one is to have in isolation a share of the truth because they would claim it outside a vision of totality seems far-fetched.⁸⁵ Recall how Zarathustra is disgusted at times with his own message, since it contains the very thought that the eternal recurrence would mean that the mob would also eternally come back! Marcel here offered a very different reading, seeing this as the collapse of the very idea of value and an unconditional impediment to any sustained reflection on axiology.⁸⁶

This last remark poses head on the problem of Christianity. In one of his last writings, Nietzsche decided to give a final blow to the whole story of Christianity and, in keeping with his earlier notebook cogitations on artificial selection and the "great health," he made them responsible for poisoning the social body. Playing strongly on the medicinal metaphor, Nietzsche will show us in the foreword to *The Antichrist* the free individual as a tall tree away from the sounds of the mob, and he will distill his own experience of the retreat in solitude and altitude.

This is bound to inspire suspicion toward one who has told us that multiplicity ought to be good, that all perspectives must be tried. If Plato has been blamed for the discrediting of the world, this cathartic escape from the world can only smack of the same fundamental gesture. Some historical factors will help one understand. This is the era of the introduction of Pasteurization, of the fear of the invisible pathogen agent inoculating the body. If all life is scar and assimilation, it seems that this "strain" which turns everything into sickness must be avoided at all cost.⁸⁷ There are two ways to look at it: firstly Nietzsche suffers in his body and he wants, faithful to his conviction about the theory of affects, to avoid being a martyr for the collapse of all that he has taught, if he was to see the triumph of the collective body represented by Christian values lived outside the realm where they are declared conditions of life's degradation. How else to explain his declarations of good personal health when, in Nice, the city had been struck by an earthquake and, far from mourning it, he wandered all night

⁸⁵Nietzsche: *Philosopher, Psychologist, Anti-Christ*, 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), chap. 2, §2. See *contra*, F. Copleston, "Foreground and Background in Nietzsche," 514.

⁸⁶See *Problematic Man*, trans. B. Thompson (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967), 35–9.

⁸⁷*The Anti-Christ*, §51 with reference to Greek overfullness.

amidst the rubble with a seeming excitement in the extent of the damage?⁸⁸ As I said, this will either bring him down, or he will refuse it to the end. No middle ground solution seems to be possible, nor is any definite victory of the good. Secondly, what I called earlier the “archetype of the contraries” would normally command a position that required of all health to fall back into putrescence and nourish a new synthesis which is to become parasitic upon the present state of things. This must probably be interpreted as signifying that this aspiration to the “beyond” never offers peace, repose, and security, that man remains *unheimlich*.⁸⁹ The roots of our existence, the affirmation of the goodness of the earth, seem to be transposed into a quest for, to take the very words of Zarathustra, “another joy and another being.” Why do they not end up seeking to plant one’s roots in heaven as in Plato, and this not in spite but *in virtue* of Nietzsche’s own already mentioned consideration of a realm of peace in the eternal stillness of that which is unaffected by wounds?

René Girard has pointed out to a possible analogy one could draw between the martyrdom of Dionysus and that of Jesus. He observed in the same vein that to make them both unjustly condemned, and therefore suffering innocents, would be altogether wrong, something Nietzsche knew as he refrained from going there.⁹⁰ Contrary to the violent founding myths of the natural soul of man, Jesus never initiated or preached in favor of a “holy lynching,” the needed sacrifice of victims to enable the strong ones to take over the earth and conquer it. Nietzsche rejects and attacks Christianity because it *parts ways* with suffering as a means and potential for someone else’s creation. The facile identification of Christianity with a religion divinizing suffering, too often done today by people who, contrarily to Nietzsche, have ceased engaging with intelligence its foundational texts, is not something Nietzsche would have ever considered.⁹¹ Even when he speaks of the “*religion de la souffrance humaine*,”⁹² he means to confront the incoherence in the religious practices of Christians rather than making Christ responsible for them. That biblicism sides with the victims makes it an overall element of weakening of the social body and is not, in Nietzschean terms, something to be praised:

⁸⁸See the content of the troubling letter of February 24, 1887, sent to R. von Seydlitz, in *Briefe*, §807, vol. 8, 31–2.

⁸⁹To the point where it has been interestingly suggested that Nietzsche could have been clinically a fugueur, see A. E. Hooke, “The Most Silent of Men: Nietzsche’s Other Madness,” *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 34 (2003): 99–125, at 110–20.

⁹⁰“Dionysus versus the Crucified,” 820–1. See also *Quand ces choses commenceront* (Paris: Arléa, 1996), 19, 22–3, and 198–9.

⁹¹When considering *Beyond Good and Evil*, §46, about the cross as “revaluation of all the values of antiquity,” (Kaufmann trans., 60) one can only agree with Girard that Nietzsche has been so busy in his *ad hominem* psychologizing that he missed the objective meaning and value of this most formidable of all inversions, although he externally considered it.

⁹²In *Beyond Good and Evil*, §21.

The violence of Cain is part of a long chain of murders that leads to the passion conceived as return of the same reenacted, this time, in the full light of a revelation that spells the doom of “the prince of this world,” or “the powers of this world,” or the “celestial powers.” All this refers to the end of the type of society grounded in the Dionysian attitude, in the docile acceptance of the scapegoat process and of its violence.⁹³

Girard sees that, for this reason, Nietzsche’s insight into Christianity is fundamentally accurate: it is the religion that *refuses* to sacrifice anyone to appease the blood-thirsting instinct of nature’s ever recurring chaos and dissolution of forms.⁹⁴ He considers Nietzsche as properly satanic in his lucid perception of this, following it as he does by its rejection and his siding with the aristocratic Caesars and oppressors of this world: “*Écrasez l’infâme*” directed to Christianity as the last words of *Ecce Homo* have it. What Girard however misses is, as we contended, that this might be demonism but not satanism. Nietzsche awaits redemption, he ends up thinking like a Christian that joy and salvation will in the end prevail: his could be seen as an ontology of violence only if we surreptitiously made his philosophy prescriptive. The meaning of this demonism is that the world is a permanent—and Nietzsche thinks fatal—accusation against the presumed goodness of God. This is the extraordinary grandeur of Nietzsche, in this sense one of the greatest theists ever as Schubart observed,⁹⁵ and a figure who should be dear to the heart of every Christian who has meditated the prefiguration of Christ in that other figure who commands a silent respect as much as Nietzsche, the old man Job.⁹⁶

Christianity makes everyone sick, something Nietzsche cannot bear and he seems to detect there a false universal. This is precisely why he misses the most formidable inversion whereby, if all are sick—something Augustine would be one with him in recognizing—this is because the θεραπευτής is unique. The *Übermensch* would have to be transformed in τὸν καινὸν ἀνθρώπον, in the terms of the New Testament (Ephesians 4:24), something the dismissal of “the last man” (*der letzte Mensch*) in *Zarathustra* would leave open as a possibility. This might lead one to wonder whether Nietzsche has not been inconsequential in excluding the concept of *Macht* from this “transmutation” he has applied to reason when it descends in sensitivity. Why would something be unconditionally exempted from this reversal? What do we gain by replacing Heraclitus’s λογος by σωμα?⁹⁷

⁹³“Dionysus versus the Crucified,” 824.

⁹⁴See the feverish meditation on Heraclitus’s fire in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, §7, trans. M. Cowan (Chicago: Regnery, 1962), 61–2.

⁹⁵See *Religion und Eros* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2001), 177–8.

⁹⁶See H.-R. Jaus, “Job’s Questions and Their Distant Reply: Goethe, Nietzsche, Heidegger,” trans. S. Larisch, *Comparative Literature* 34 (1982): 193–207, at 204–5.

⁹⁷This is the question B. Stiegler asks in her excellent article “Mettre le corps à la place de l’âme, qu’est-ce que cela change?,” *Philosophie* 82 (2004): 77–93, where she concludes that with

Why would the real force not be apprehended under the figure of the capacity to pursue absolutely all the possibilities of man without ever finding an end, not even that of a world gravitating on itself?⁹⁸ Nietzsche has decreed that not having any end is the end of all configurations, but how does he know this?

X.

The Eternal Return as a Logic of God Facing "Legions." If it is true, as Nietzsche's poignant presentation of our *common* quest for true freedom at the end of *Daybreak* has it, that other birds will be capable of flying farther than us—an image used by a first-century writer to embody Christ's suffering on behalf of all the other birds when he bloodily severed the net that prevented them from flying into the infinite⁹⁹—then making everyone sick is also to make them all strong *in potentia*, in the image of the greatest possible might that can transmute all things in a true and concrete universal. We notice here in Nietzsche the absence of a reflection on a realm beyond the tyranny of the individual, and what distinguishes him from Augustine is that which he has equally rejected in Emerson and the Neoplatonic quest for the Self, which sees in it a reflection of the One. This is related to the absence of any concept of the Person. It in turn amounts to no less than the tyranny of a universal turned into an idol to which everything is sacrificed, without any subsidiary.

In the end the individual and the universal, not communicating and without anything flowing between them, dismantle personhood and make life absurd. The great proponent of the free individual ends up dislocating his reality into some seed of the anonymous and oppressive world soul, since it is thought along the line of a hierarchy securing its volatile power. I said that the logic of Nietzsche's thought would require that he adopt an ontology of the plural participation in the *λογος*. His "aristocratic radicalism" (a term he approved of in correspondence)¹⁰⁰ makes all his project collapse on this point, since what we end up with is an over-excited, frenzied, and solitary individual imposing his will through might.

Theologically, what would "hold together" the principle of order and hierarchy—which alone allows for the possibility of an overcoming and a transgression—and the total participation of the multiple to a plenitude which would not discard or under-value it, is the doctrine of the Trinity. Nietzsche

Nietzsche it is the flesh that philosophizes rather than the soul, and explains on 84–5 that a sense of wonder at the unification of an unthinkable plurality is what distinguishes Nietzsche from Descartes' certainty in knowing oneself as an *ego*.

⁹⁸See *The Anti-Christ*, §43.

⁹⁹See G. Bessière, *Jésus l'insaisissable* (Paris: Cerf, 1974), 38.

¹⁰⁰See the letter to G. Brandes of December 2, 1887, in *Briefe*, §960, vol. 8, 206.

significantly refers to it as part of his earliest cogitations about God when he was twelve or thirteen years old,¹⁰¹ and never quite engages it after; he seems to react to a philosophical deism which would turn the world into a comedy already played ahead of time, and to a moralism which erects the void into stolen ontological density. What he seems to claim against the principle of merit, sometimes labeled “Jesuitism,”¹⁰² is the very principle of merit but understood in a sense where it truly would “cost.”

Nietzsche dismembers that which the Trinity holds together, and what is missing in him in the end is the concept of the Soul, in which Augustine saw an image of the eternal in the temporal. He has taken his problem in Kant, without seeing that the very position of the problem is there insoluble, dealing outside of any true *Erlebniss* with a form in its connection to a multiple. What are we to make of this multiple deemed pure chaos, when we remember that all the compositions that the form meets are already multiple but precisely never chaotic, which explains why matter in the Neoplatonists will become pure “night,” and according to an old tradition, the material will be “frozen spirit.” The soul and the universe belong to each other in Neoplatonism, to the point where the existence of one posits the other, which establishes here a seeming incompatibility between Nietzsche and the Western tradition from Plato to Husserl.

If there are no souls in the Nietzschean world, this is because they have been replaced by *simulacra* or masks. Nietzsche is without a real proper noun and, as Klossowski has argued, he does not exist, this being a precondition to his calling his plural self a plurality of gods. He is neither professor in Basel nor author of *Zarathustra*, hence he can never sign anything in his own name; he wears masks.¹⁰³ Whoever wears a mask is schizoid in the etymological sense: he is double. Indeed, Nietzsche is “legion,” saying that he wears all the names that have appeared in history.¹⁰⁴ When one is double, what prevents one from also being a double of this double, in other words multiple? What indeed prevents it, if not the norm of one’s own Self implicit in the “become what you are”? If we remember some sayings of Nietzsche, how can the norm of this world be said to gravitate around this world, as if it revolved around its very self? We will have

¹⁰¹See *Genealogy*, preface §3, 16–7. See also M. Montinari, *Reading Nietzsche*, trans. G. Whitlock (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 33–5; *Nachlaß* §26[390] (1884) and §38[19] (1885), vol. 11, 253 and 616.

¹⁰²See *Nachlaß* §24[4] (1883–8), vol. 10, 645; also §25[263] in vol. 11.

¹⁰³See his letter to E. Rhode of February 22, 1884, where he says: “*Mein Stil ist ein Tanz; ein Spiel der Symmetrien aller Art und ein Überspringen und Verspotten dieser Symmetrien.*” *Briefe*, §490, vol. 6, 479; also P. Klossowski, “Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody” in *Such a Deathly Desire*, trans. R. Ford (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2007), 116–7.

¹⁰⁴See the letter to Burkhardt of January 5, 1889, quoted and discussed by P. Klossowski in *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. D. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 242f.

to ask ourselves if, in the end, the reversal will not be itself overthrown. To have placed *Vernunft* in the body risks making it the case that all the interpretations which would overturn Nietzscheanism themselves be made as valuable as that which they deny. Nothing whatsoever can prevent this from happening. Why would the body be the first place of metaphorization, why would εἶδος not be that which was said of it by the mystics?

I must here mention Christ and the problem of his place in a world that seems to bring us down. Nietzsche will see in him, whom he calls “the Hebrew,” someone who died too quickly, and fell victim of the Jewish melancholy as a death sentence on what is good. If he had lived longer, Nietzsche contends, he would have probably turned his back on what we know as his teaching.¹⁰⁵ This moment of hesitation on his fate should help us reflect on the question of the unemployed possibilities which, in his case and in the realm of the body, could never be expressed. One must here disregard the suspicion of Christian theology, since Nietzsche wanted a confrontation and not a mere cowardly flight into inconsistency, and a crucifixion of either Dionysus or Christ by the discovery of the truth.

There is a sadness that accompanies the thought of the body that does not beget, Nietzsche’s own. In the preface to *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche has renamed truth a goddess *Baubô*, referring to the female sexual energy, and as usual the great aphorist leaves this without explanation.¹⁰⁶ At first, many Christians would think of Christ as the religious figure that repressed this energy. Yet, aesthetics for aesthetics, the Christian knows from the testimony of early tradition that his death was that of the “most beautiful among the children of men” (Psalm 45:2). If the form of his body comes from the union of the λογος of God to that of Mary as a figure of Eternal Wisdom, we can think of his body as the most beautiful, the most virile ever created. One must add that such a beauty could not however be apprehended on the level of plasticity and sculpture and of that which, in the realm of the naturally sacred, shows itself; in virtue of his own principle laid out in *The Birth of the Tragedy*, Nietzsche would have to grant this.

His body which, under Nietzsche’s assumption, one would expect that it beget, at first without even considering biological filiation, is crushed by the powers that rule this world imprisoned in their “perspective,” and this gives rise in the soul of the Christian to a tonality of infinite sadness. For the Neoplatonists

¹⁰⁵I, “Of the Voluntary Death,” 98–9; *KSA*, 95.

¹⁰⁶It likely means not only female sexual energy, but even genitals. See S. Kofman, “Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism” in *Nietzsche’s New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics*, ed. M. A. Gillespie and T. B. Strong (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 175–203. The impression we get is that of a nostalgia of “solar eroticism” as Onfray recently called hedonistic and Epicurean morality in *Théorie du corps amoureux. Pour une érotique solaire* (Paris: Grasset, 2000), taking a rather facile and over-used route in claiming Nietzsche as his master.

who influenced Pseudo-Dionysius, when a being had reached its own proper perfection, it begat; they had in mind the begetting of a form, because they saw matter as first an intelligible and dual limiting concept (38th tractate of the *Enneads*). It is as though the most beautiful work that the universe had produced was violently destroyed, could not bear its fruit, making Christ, in the words of Maurice Blondel, the “universal stigmatic marked by all our human miseries,”¹⁰⁷ through a Passion which he did not want but to which his obedience led him. It would be wrong to say that he condemns the world from the cross. He wants to bring life to the world, and he only spoke of his Father and of himself as continuing the unended work of creation. Nietzsche seemed to think otherwise, when he has his prophet say that all that joy wants is for things to recur, that all would eternally be the same, so that to have children would be of no avail.¹⁰⁸

The ontology of the Incarnate Word was that of creation in a more radical sense than that of Nietzsche, ready to call on violence to show force and strength in character, while the veritable force, as he came himself to see at the time of writing *Zarathustra*, is that which the body directly possesses and which it passively obtained, and then when one succeeds in bringing life’s primal energies to bear on a creative deed. Christ came to give a *body* to his church more than a soul, praising God to have made him priestly through the offering of his body (Hebrews 10:5; see Psalm 40:6–8).¹⁰⁹ So the greatest experience of ερωσ, as ancient liturgy had understood it and of which we can get a glimpse in an antiphon such as *Virgo Prudentissima* for the feast of the Assumption of Mary in the Gregorian liturgy, is that which flows between the λογος and the Eternal Feminine (*das Ewig Weibliche*). Goethe expressed his fascination and rapture in front of such an understanding of the Marian mystery.¹¹⁰ Why did Nietzsche never ponder on the fact that this praise of sexual love was turned into a cosmic liturgy in the biblical book “Song of Songs” which furnished the very words of that antiphon?¹¹¹ This *connubium* cannot bear all its fruits, fecundate in the Spirit

¹⁰⁷*The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. A. Dru and I. Trethowan (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 285.

¹⁰⁸IV, “The Intoxicated Song,” §9, 331; *KSA*, 401–2. In III, “The Seven Seals,” 244–7, he had already said that he does not want children from any woman lest it be Eternity herself. Nietzsche expressed his boredom at the idea of a heaven where angels lack malice and “virility,” see S. Kofman, “The Psychologist of the Eternal Feminine (Why I Write Such Good Books, 5),” trans. M. Dobie, *Yale French Studies* 87 (1995): 173–89, at 181.

¹⁰⁹In III, “Of the Apostates,” §2, 201; *KSA*, 229, Nietzsche relates the lack of proof for God to two things: that this God of the apostates who have become “pious” again makes everything rest on belief, but this statement occurs in a context where he has just been asked to show that he has a Son.

¹¹⁰See his *Diary of the Italian Journey*, October 9, 1786.

¹¹¹See J. Guitton, *Essay on Human Love*, trans. M. Chaning-Pearce (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 20–32; here we come to see the interpretive mistake of passages such as *Beyond*

all the children of God, because in the very realm of the body he is assassinated without having asked for it. He does not condemn the world, he is condemned by it; the world, as Hans Urs von Balthasar has poetically suggested, plants a spear in his heart.¹¹²

Nietzsche fails to give a soul to the world, as the contrast of his treatment of evil in nature to that of Schelling would show. Trapped in Kant's reconstruction of our knowing apparatus, he failed to see that with Spinoza he was not overcoming the Cartesian reduction of the world outside the soul to the mechanical. The claim that love could only be construed as either, in Guitton's typology, Plato's longing to be with the gods elsewhere or Tristan and Iseult's modern myth of immanence, is something that stands in the way as a false alternative. That not having children in the flesh is the condition for begetting them in a *connubium* with the Eternal feminine, is something Nietzsche chose to parody when he presents us Zarathustra enamored of Life herself in a reminiscence of Dionysus's marriage to Ariadne.¹¹³ The Word made flesh, at the heart of the Christian act of redemption, does not ever preach a doctrine of power in the Self; rather he gets children to his Father through the waters of the Spirit-imbued life. The principle of order, the creative principle does not impose from outside a finality which is servitude, since he lets the Spirit create a multiple that his mission will be to call back, in a temporal and melodic way, to adopt the pathway which leads all creatures back home: *Heimholung der Welt*.

"How could God not have an anti-God immediately in concurrence with him?" is what we saw the young Nietzsche objecting to his early consideration of God and the Trinity. Yet we are to ask in return: why would God need a dismembering and dis-ordering principle such as the Dionysian one if multiplicity has been declared blessed and understood as cooperating with him anterior to the creation of the world? Lutheran theology has been often delivered in a way that is so Christocentric that the figure of the Spirit was eclipsed: as breath and wind, it does things in silence and we know not how, something Nietzsche desperately looked for and yet disparaged by transferring an epistemological question onto a cosmic problem. He longed to find a *δαίμων*, an overfullness that would end up creating and perpetually renewing all configurations. He only saw it in existence in the Greek wine-god, failing to see that in their enthusiasm (*εξεστημεν* in 2 Corinthians 5:13) Christians were considered mildly intoxicated when the Spirit, as the voice of the ordered-multiple and hence as communion-building force, spoke through them (Ephesians 5:18).

Good and Evil, §229. "The Second Dance Song" in the third book of *Zarathustra*, could be a parody of *Song of Songs*.

¹¹²See *Heart of the World*, trans. E. Leiva (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1979), 41–2.

¹¹³In III, "The Second Dance Song," §2, 243; *KSA*, 284–5.

If he considered in some earlier writings that the ontology of mechanical forces in motion and the destruction of the soul as well as the afterworlds such as he found in Democritus was what he needed to build upon, and if Nietzsche can be said in this sense to have tried to get rid of the gods, he is far from having sent them back in their heavens like the first atomists did. Thus they may have paved the way for Lucretius's rejection of religion as an obstacle to the peace of the soul. This might in turn pose the problem of an assessment of Marx's economic philosophy, and it might also have had its bearing on Freud, but it is not the attitude of Nietzsche. The mask-wearing Professor of Basel, who has no self and who condemns all the myths that immobilize innocent becoming, ended up calling the gods back into the world of man. The energy which makes it possible to be one or many, to be a saint when in its extreme tension or a whore when dissolute, represented by the bow,¹¹⁴ an image of building-up and release of tension, might in the end be a truer take on all the possible states of human action and on what was meant by life as "will to power" than the pseudo-cosmologies built around this same idea.

If there was any intimation of the Person in Nietzsche, it would have to be that of the unrestricted multiple which would contain, in every one of its instances, the figure of the whole. This he cannot offer, since he gives us the world of Leibniz with its *conatus*-endowed essences striving to exist but without the Architect of the best possible world. What holds everything together is the Trinity, and it is compatible with the Nietzschean *δαίμων*, since Nietzsche values the unrestricted multiple, in the sense of this moment when the One would become visible as "legion." He has not found the way back from this odyssey other than by recounting the tragic dissolution of the Self in a world that cries for redemption not so much of time, but of that space where the body is.

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¹¹⁴"Tanzen wir gleich Troubadouren / Zwischen Heiligen und Huren, / Zwischen Gott und Welt den Tanz!" *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* in *KSA*, vol. 3, 651; in the *Nachlaß*, §11[212] (1888), vol. 13, 85, we read: "*La gloire, c'est rester un, et se prostituer d'une manière particulière*;" see also *Beyond Good and Evil*, §262, where the same image is applied to the species as opposed to the individual.