

Friendship as Shared Joy in Nietzsche

by

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**A Thesis
presented to
The University of Guelph**

**In partial fulfilment of requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Philosophy**

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

FRIENDSHIP AS SHARED JOY IN NIETZSCHE

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I argue in this thesis that central to Nietzsche's conception of friendship is *Mitfreude* or shared joy, and that understanding *Mitfreude* helps us to understand Nietzsche's ethics more generally. I explore Nietzsche's focus on shared joy as an explicit response to the prominence of suffering and compassion in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, portraying Nietzsche's turn towards joy as integral to his philosophical development away from that figure's influence. A morality that begins with suffering, Nietzsche suggests, bars us from any perspective on our human situation that would endow with significance our finite projects, and so disenables the ethical work of becoming what we are which relies on those projects. The capacity of friends to share in each other's joy is, for Nietzsche, a reminder of the possibility of systems of relationality different from that of modern morality. I discuss Nietzsche's interest in the agonal aspects of Greek culture, understanding relationships of contest, performance, and communal creation as expressions of the type of affirmative relationship to existence Nietzsche applauds. The type of relationality fostered in healthy friendships helps us towards what Nietzsche understands as a proper human self-understanding as a being that becomes. I draw on Nietzsche's account of friendship to show that in his moral thought Nietzsche maintains a place for other-regarding motives, but that, rather than the erasure of otherness Nietzsche diagnoses in Schopenhauer's compassion, Nietzsche seeks to treat the sufferings of others in their particularity.

For Blair, Christina, Cooper, Jess, John, Kristin, Mike, and Ryan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the warm, dedicated and incisive contributions of Professors Karen Houle, John Hacker-Wright and Christine Daigle. I would like to thank my parents, sisters and grandparents Ross Nichol and Jean Harris for their unwavering encouragement. An award from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada gave me the luxury of focusing on my research rather than my rent.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Friedrich Nietzsche

References are to aphorism number unless otherwise noted

- AC *The Antichrist*, from *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Penguin Books.
- AOM *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, Volume Two, Part One of *Human, All Too Human*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- BT *The Birth of Tragedy*, from *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- CW *The Case of Wagner*, from *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- D *Daybreak*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- EH *Ecce Homo*, from *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- GM *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Translated by Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swenson. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998.
- GS *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- HC *Homer's Contest*, from *Prefaces to Unwritten Works*. Edited and Translated by Michael W. Grenke. South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2005.
- HH *Human, All Too Human*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- HL *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, from *Untimely Meditations*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- HKG *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Edited by Hans Joachim Mette and Karl Schlechta. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1935. References are to page number.

- KGW *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967ff. References are to notebook number[aphorism number] notebook year.
- KSA *Kritische Studienausgabe*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980. References are to volume number: notebook number[aphorism number] notebook year.
- P *We Philologists*. Translated by J.M. Kennedy. London: T.N. Foulis, 1911.
- SB *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- SE *Schopenhauer as Educator, from Untimely Meditations*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- SL *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Edited and Translated by Christopher Middleton. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1969. References are to letter number.
- TI *Twilight of the Idols, from Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.
- WEN *Writings from the Early Notebooks*. Translated by Ladislaus Löb. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- WLN *Writings from the Late Notebooks*. Translated by Kate Sturge. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- WP *The Will to Power*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books, 1967. References are to aphorism number and notebook year.
- WS *The Wanderer and His Shadow*. Volume Two, Part Two of *Human, All too Human*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961. References are to book number, abbreviated section title, aphorism number if applicable.

Aristotle

- EE *Eudemian Ethics*. Translated by Anthony Kenny. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- MM *Magna Moralia*. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation. Jonathan Barnes, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- NE *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999.
- R *Rhetoric*. In *The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle*. Translated by W. Rhys Roberts. New York: Modern Library, 1954.

Immanuel Kant

- CPrR *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997
- GMM *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- MPV *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue: Part II of The Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by James Ellington. New York: Bobbs-Merill Company, 1964.

Arthur Schopenhauer

- FW *Essay on the Freedom of the Will*. Translated by K. Kolenda. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960.
- MR *Manuscript Remains: Early Manuscripts (1804-1818)*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. Oxford: Berg, 1988.
- OBM *On the Basis of Morality*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995. References are the section number
- PP *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
- WWR *The World as Will and Representation*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover, 1958. References are to volume number, section number

Introduction

There are perhaps by now a sufficient number of studies of Friedrich Nietzsche's view of friendship that authors will have to stop introducing them by remarking on their rarity or the ways in which they run counter to our intuitions about Nietzsche. Ruth Abbey, justifiably so in 1999, writes that "the idea that Nietzsche could contribute to an understanding of friendship seems odd, even misguided."¹ Richard Avramenko suggests that such a pursuit will at first seem "somewhat misguided."² Despite such misgivings, since the mid-1990s there has been, if not an avalanche, at least a steady engagement with Nietzsche's view of friendship. The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to that conversation. Substantively, I suggest that readers of Nietzsche do more to understand his remarks on friendship in the context of his ethical philosophy as a whole. Though Nietzsche's remarks on friendship are fragmented, the conception of friendship that underlies them is robust and coherent and figures in important ways in Nietzsche's ethical picture of our human situation.³ I argue that central to Nietzsche's conception of friendship is *Mitfreude*, shared joy, and that understanding *Mitfreude* helps us to understand Nietzsche's ethics more generally. Nietzsche seeks to articulate and defend an ethos, a stance towards our existence, and he discusses his ethos most often in terms of affirmation. I aim to establish that Nietzsche uses the type of relationality fostered by friendship as a model for the type of rapport he would have us cultivate with our world,

¹ Ruth Abbey, "Circles, Ladders and Stars: Nietzsche on friendship," *Critical Review of International*

² Richard Avramenko, "Zarathustra and His Asinine Friends: Nietzsche and Taste as the Groundless Ground of Friendship," in *Friendship & Politics: Essays in Political Thought*, eds. John von Heyking and Richard Avramenko (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), 287.

³ Nietzsche himself writes of his method, "do you think this work must be fragmentary because I give it to you (and have to give it to you) in fragments?" (AOM 128)

so that to cultivate healthy friendships is to cultivate a healthy, affirmative stance towards existence. Nietzsche's increasing focus on joy in his middle and then mature period help us to understand the development of his thought away from the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer's ethics of compassion, *Mitleid* or shared suffering. By contrast, Nietzsche links joy with desire, temptation, and experimentation and weaves each of these through his unique picture of a new type of affirming, yes-saying spirit. Joy figures in eternal recurrence, in self-overcoming, and in *amor fati* and so joy's central place in friendship gives us reason to investigate friendship's role in these central Nietzschean concepts, which is ultimately to investigate how Nietzsche sees others figuring in our individual ethical projects, an under-investigated aspect of Nietzsche's thinking.

We do often think of Nietzsche as a solitary, nomadic thinker. Even in his isolation, however, Nietzsche made claims on friends and paid-strangers alike, having them read, transcribe, and translate to him when his poor health prevented him from doing so himself.⁴ In the notebooks he kept as he travelled throughout Europe, we find interspersed among nomadic musings notes for warm letters to friends and travel plans to cross paths with them when he could. Nietzsche had expert knowledge of the network of train routes that crisscrossed Europe, and was constantly plotting his own movements and those of his friends so that they might meet while on their different paths. In 1882, planning a sort of platonic, intellectual life together with Lou Salomé and Paul Rée, Nietzsche writes to Salomé: "I want to be lonely no longer, but to learn again to be a human being" (SL 96). Nietzsche lived alone but his wanderings were punctuated by

⁴See Thomas Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 11-14.

encounters, and I try to understand his thought in the same way: as creating and fostering spaces and opportunities for others to play important roles in our lives.

It would perhaps be impossible to understand Nietzsche's own life apart from such encounters. He had troubled but continuing relationships with his mother and sister; intense but ultimately failed friendships with Richard Wagner and Rée; friendships that he wished could be more, famously with Salomé and perhaps also with Cosima Wagner; and longer, more durable personal and intellectual alliances with friends such as his colleague at the University of Basel, Jacob Burckhardt. These and other relationships and their effects make explicit appearances in the published works. Nietzsche was enamored enough with Wagner to devote one of the *Untimely Meditations* (1876) to him, and before that in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) Nietzsche had credited Wagner's music with the power to restore German culture. Yet clearly something had changed by the publication of *Human, All-too Human* (1878), and by the end of his productive life Nietzsche was devoting entire works, *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* and *The Case of Wagner* (1888), to discrediting his former idol. In *Human, All too Human*, Nietzsche lent support to Rée's work on the origins of morality, support he would withdraw in *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) and *Ecce Homo* (1888). In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-5) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), written in the shadow of his romantic falling out with Salomé, we find Nietzsche's most spirited and idiotic misogyny.

Alongside these explicit influences, I want to show that the relationality given form in Nietzsche's account of friendship can fruitfully guide our understanding of Nietzsche's ethical vision for human beings. Given that Nietzsche so closely links friendship with *Mitfreude*, it is surprising that we find in the literature on Nietzsche's

account of friendship little discussion of shared joy. Michael Ure's *Nietzsche's Therapy* is a recent exception, but in the main philosophers who have written on Nietzsche and friendship have not incorporated Nietzsche's focus on shared joy into their analysis in a meaningful way, and have not integrated Nietzsche's interest in friendship into a broader account of his philosophical development.⁵ This is true of Abbey, Avramenko, Coker, Derrida, Freibach-Heifetz, Miner, van Tongeren, and Zavata.⁶ While often systematic and insightful, much of the previous work on Nietzsche and friendship treats Nietzsche's interest in friendship in isolation from the rest of his thought. I draw on these previous discussions of Nietzsche and friendship to get onto the table what Nietzsche says about friendship itself, but I highlight Nietzsche's definition of friendship as shared joy as an organizing principle, a way to help us to understand Nietzsche's scattered remarks on friendship as importantly tied to each other and tied to his philosophy as a whole.

An overarching commitment of this dissertation is that throughout his philosophy, even granting its many twists and turns, Nietzsche is attempting to articulate a healthy human self-understanding, a project he often writes about in terms of becoming what we are. Nietzsche wants to know what sort of being human being is, and asks after the conditions of our flourishing. That means, for Nietzsche, understanding the conditions of

⁵ Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 218-225.

⁶ John Coker, "On Becoming Great Friends," *International Studies in Philosophy* 25 no.2 (1993): 113-127; John Coker, "Spectres of Friends and Friendship: A Reading from 'High Mountains, Aftersong'," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 16 (1998): 1-32; Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 1997); Diana Freibach-Heifetz, "Pure Air and Solitude and Bread and Medicine: Nietzsche's Conception of Friendship," *Philosophy Today* 49 (2005): 245-255; Robert C. Miner, "Nietzsche on Friendship," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 40 (2010): 47-69; Paul van Tongeren, "Politics, Friendship and Solitude in Nietzsche: (Confronting Derrida's reading of Nietzsche in 'Politics of Friendship'," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 19 no.3 (2000): 209-222; Benedetta Zavata, "Nietzsche and Emerson on Friendship and its Ethical-Political Implications," in *Nietzsche, Power, and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought*, eds. Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

and impediments to human flourishing through interrelated investigations of our history, psychology, physiology and moralities. In chapter one I begin with a discussion of the ways in which Nietzsche's thought should be understood as a series of distancing acts from the influence of Schopenhauer. Nietzsche's criticism of compassion as a basis for ethics, as found in Schopenhauer, is understood as an important driver in Nietzsche's turn towards an affirmative, yes-saying ethos. A morality that begins with suffering, Nietzsche suggests, bars us from any perspective on our human situation that would endow with significance our finite projects, and so disenables the ethical work of becoming what we are which relies on those projects. Compassion robs our finitude, the aspects of our situation susceptible to suffering, of meaning, and so disenables any self-understanding that would affirm the real, tangible conditions of our becoming. I discuss Nietzsche's focus on joy and shared joy as an explicit response to the suffering and shared suffering that sustained Schopenhauer's philosophy. Joy is itself an affirmation, a yes, and the shared joy of friendship can be understood as an integral element of Nietzsche's more general ethical turn away from the nihilistic devaluation of our finitude that compassion entails.

In chapter two, I discuss asceticism and experimentation as rival paradigms of human desire, and point to Nietzschean ideals such as *amor fati* as attempts to revivify the type of affirmative, experimental desire for existence Nietzsche applauds. Like the morality of compassion, ascetic practices serve to distance us from our finitude and so from a healthy understanding of what we are. I discuss Nietzsche's interest in the agonal aspects of Greek culture, understanding relationships of contest, performance, and communal creation as paradigmatic expressions of the type of affirmative relationship to

existence guided by the values of experimentation Nietzsche applauds, and move on to describe his concern with slave morality as a concern about nihilism, or the crisis of valuelessness that has followed from slave morality's success in extinguishing, through ascetic practices that inhibit a self-understanding as a being at risk, the type of affirmative desire for existence that Nietzsche is after.

Understanding ourselves is, for Nietzsche, understanding what it is to be a coherent whole, a person, given the multifarious, agential drives that do their work through us, two aspects of subjectivity John F. Whitmire Jr. distinguishes in Nietzsche as “functional unity” and “ontological multiplicity”.⁷ The unity of subjectivity, the experience we have of ourselves as unified over time and context, is for Nietzsche something that becomes, grows out of a more fundamental multiplicity of drives, affects, and lines of history. It is not at all clear, however, how we should understand the character of this becoming. In chapter three, I discuss literature that takes Nietzsche's figure of the sovereign individual to represent Nietzsche's ideal model here, and attempt to contribute to the opposing view that Nietzsche means to discredit the sovereign individual and the view of subjectivity elaborated there. In particular, the way the sovereign individual understands itself as set against a world, as having a right to make promises that makes the contingency of the world something to be battled against, will be set out as a sort of foil to the views I take to be Nietzsche's own. This foil is described as the type of self-understanding to which a rival view evinced in Nietzschean friendship is a response. Nietzsche writes: “to indulge the fable of ‘unity’, ‘soul’, ‘person’, this we have forbidden: with such hypotheses one only covers up the problem” (KSA 11: 37[4] 1885). I attempt to think through

⁷ John F. Whitmire Jr., “The Many and the One: The Ontological Multiplicity and Functional Unity of the Person in the Later Nietzsche,” *The Pluralist* 4, no. 1 (2009): 1-14.

Nietzsche's problem here, trying to understand what it could mean to cover it up, suggesting that Nietzsche's solution to the problem of how to conceive of the unity of personhood involves processes of becoming that are shared, so that we become whole through others.

Chapter four shows how friendships understood as shared joy figure in the fostering of the type of affirmative stance towards existence Nietzsche articulates. The type of relationality fostered in healthy friendships reinstates a sort of micro-agon that helps us to understand ourselves as ineluctably tied to the productive tension of becoming. I show that the type of strength Nietzsche applauds in individuals is one that makes a virtue of giving, of a Dionysian surrender to forces one doesn't control which I call a strong surrendering, and I show that the features of friendship that animate Nietzsche's account enable just such a stance towards existence. We are, Nietzsche suggests, beings who become through surrender to cultural and intersubjective forces of meaning-production, and one of the central ways we are given to so surrender ourselves is through friendship.

Affirming the world through joy points towards a self-understanding as a being that is its own overcoming. In chapter five, I try to open up my account of friendship in Nietzsche to show how it motivates a more general ethical picture in Nietzsche characterized by a cultivated willingness to open oneself to communal, productive forces of creation out of which meaningful individual lives arise. I activate the type of relationality Nietzsche finds in friendship as a model for how we might conceive of our ethical relation to the world and to others. I explore how friendship as an ethical relationship is understood too by Aristotle as figuring in the processes through which we

come to understand ourselves and our particular good. I show that the type of self-understanding Nietzsche champions differs from Aristotle's in ways that mark what is most distinctive about Nietzsche's account, wherein celebration of the sometimes broken trajectories of friendship is a reminder of his more general celebration of the value of finitude, its innocence in imperfection. I return to compassion to show that Nietzsche maintains a place for other-regarding motives, but that he seeks to treat the sufferings of others in their particularity.

It may be helpful at this point to set my broader approach to Nietzsche studies and what I take to be the risks and responsibilities of scholarly attention to his work, views I can only set out here and, hopefully, justify as the study progresses. I have said that I understand Nietzsche always to be circling back to the question of how we as human beings become ourselves, and that I stress the cultural and intersubjective elements of the answers he seeks to give means that I take Nietzsche's body of work to be a unified if constantly evolving search for the cultural foundations of human excellence. This is an uncontroversial view of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and perhaps the *Untimely Meditations*, but, I believe, also accurately describes Nietzsche's work to the end of his productive life.⁸ The problem of nihilism which pervades Nietzsche's mature period is precisely the problem of what is happening in a culture that lacks such foundation.⁹ I understand the revolving cast of concepts and intellectual influences that figure in Nietzsche's thought as

⁸ Michael Tanner writes, "what makes *BT* the indispensable start to Nietzsche's writing career, for those who want to understand the underlying unity of his concerns, is the manner in which he begins with a set of issues which seem to be remote from the present time, but gradually reveals that his underlying concern is with culture, its perennial conditions, and the enemies of their fulfillment." Michael Tanner, *Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 8.

⁹ See Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3-5.

evidence of Nietzsche's search for a vocabulary that could articulate his demand for a renewed communal striving for excellence. This revolving cast includes the promise of the scientific community, promise which consisted not in the indubitability of facts but in the intellectual virtues of honesty [*Redlichkeit*] and experimentation; and includes also eternal return, *amor fati*, will to power, and the overhuman.

That I take Nietzsche's thought to be importantly unified means that I quote broadly from his work. The risk of so quoting is that Nietzsche's thought is taken out of its historical context, and so throughout I attempt to mention and mitigate such concerns when they arise. Because Nietzsche turns so often to new concepts and approaches, my view is that his *Nachlass* material is important in understanding the development of his thinking. Whenever possible, I cite the *Nachlass* material from the critical editions and from *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, rather than from *The Will to Power*, for the latter and not the former suffer from editorial oversight, particularly from his sister, clearly not in keeping with Nietzsche's intentions. Beginning in the early 1880s Nietzsche in his letters begins to despair at his inability in his published work to adequately express his thinking, and so the *Nachlass* is valuable in providing supplementary signs of Nietzsche's meaning. Nietzsche in his published work cultivated a brevity that sometimes makes his meaning elusive. The more extended treatments of key concepts found in the *Nachlass* can help fill out our understanding here. Nietzsche's thought develops with such speed and multivocity that we artificially limit our appreciation for it if we confine ourselves to the published work. For example, it may change the character of our appreciation for *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874), to know that while writing it Nietzsche's notebooks are already quite critical of the figure, and likewise for *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* and

Nietzsche's view of Wagner. Additionally, in his notebooks, Nietzsche considers at length eternal return not just as an ethical ideal but as a hypothesis about the actual course of time, and this fact ought to affect our understanding of the concept as Nietzsche understood it (WP 1063-1066). Nietzsche, however, was meticulous in the editing and arrangement of the works he saw to publication, and so we must lend special weight to the precise character of his formulations as he saw fit to present them to his readers.

This dissertation aims to contribute to Nietzsche studies. I do, however, believe that the ethical picture of Nietzsche articulated here may interest and be of value in several other debates. Nietzsche's moral psychology, particularly his account of drives as numerous, competitive, agential forces within the human being that colour, perhaps constitute, our moral perception has interesting resources for virtue ethics and situationism in ethics and empirical psychology; Nietzsche's criticism of compassion as a basis for ethics could contribute positively to an understanding of the phenomenon of 'compassion fatigue' and could also serve as the ground of a criticism of ethics of care which attempt to ground ethics in our compassionate responses to others.¹⁰ His criticisms of reciprocity in friendship lend support to a questioning of egalitarianism as the best overarching value in political philosophy and perhaps also in feminism. The particular forms of intimacy Nietzsche explores and the agonism he marks as distinctive about them could serve to problematize certain accounts of intersubjective and political recognition, and could contribute to debates concerning partiality in ethics. These are of course very general gestures, but where appropriate throughout the thesis I point in these directions with what

¹⁰ See Norman Geras, *The Contract of Mutual Indifference: political philosophy after the Holocaust* (London: Verso Press, 1998); Michael Slote, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (London: Routledge, 2007).

I hope is enough substance to convince a motivated reader to involve Nietzsche in these conversations further afield in contemporary ethics and politics.

If this study is valuable, it will be because it shows that Nietzsche's overarching concern with outlining a new self-understanding as a being that becomes, one that is preferable for us because it better serves our flourishing as such beings, is a concern that, by his own lights, involves necessarily the input and influence of friends. We become what we are with others, and any view of Nietzsche that misses this point misses something crucial. This study aims to contribute to a view of Nietzsche as hospitable to our shared life with others by showing his scattered remarks on friendship as productively organized around a cultivated responsiveness to the cultural and intersubjective preconditions of individual excellence, a responsiveness Nietzsche articulates through joy.

Chapter One

To Share not Suffering but Joy

The works that form Nietzsche's middle period, *Human, All too Human*, *Daybreak*, and *The Gay Science*, mark the beginning of Nietzsche's mature philosophy. Although in many cases Nietzsche will move on from the positions put forward in these works, it is here that we first begin to hear Nietzsche's own voice as he distances himself from the personal and intellectual influences that figured so prominently in *The Birth of Tragedy* and the set of *Untimely Meditations*, namely the cultural promise of Richard Wagner and the pessimistic philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. As Nietzsche would write in his autobiography, "here I liberated myself from what in my nature did not belong to me" (EH Human 1). After a decade of admiration for Schopenhauer, Nietzsche now sought to expunge from his philosophy a view of the world as a place of suffering in need of redemption, and so he began to reject in Schopenhauer the focus on suffering and compassion as a basis for ethics. Writing of Nietzsche, her friend, Ida Overbeck relates that while writing *Human, All too Human*:

A bad chapter of Schopenhauer affected Nietzsche especially strongly, the idea that man is not constituted to share joy, and can be interested in another person's misfortune or well-being only temporarily by the detour of former participation in misfortune; that well-being on the contrary, is suited to arouse envy; wherefore he concluded also from other premises, that hardship is the

real positive condition of the human race, and that only pity can be the real well-spring of morality.¹¹

Increasingly disillusioned with Schopenhauer, Nietzsche in his middle period begins to seek some route to sharing life with others that doesn't travel through suffering, a project perhaps more apparent in the German where the social emotions are named in a way that more explicitly shows them as distinct modes of being with others. Pity/compassion is *Mitleiden*, suffering-with; sympathy/compassion is *Mitgefühl*, feeling-with; empathy is *Mitempfindung*, sensing-with. In *Human, All too Human*, Nietzsche begins to write instead of *Mitfreude*¹², joying-with:

Joying with. – The serpent that stings us means to hurt us and rejoices as it does so; the lowest animal can imagine the *pain* of others. But to imagine the joy of others and to rejoice at it is the highest privilege of the highest animals, and among them it is accessible only to the choicest exemplars – thus a rare *humanum*: so that there have been philosophers who have denied the existence of joying with. (AOM 62)

Alluding to Schopenhauer in the final line, Nietzsche marks as high, exemplary and rare the capacity to share in joy rather than suffering. Joy is Nietzsche's answer to the question of what in others we can and should share, what can and should ground our relationality. Importantly, from the beginning of this period Nietzsche thinks of joy alongside friendship, where the other's joy paradigmatically invites not envy but

¹¹ Ida Overbeck, *Errinerungen*, in *Conversations with Nietzsche: A Life in the Words of His Contemporaries*, ed. Sander L. Gilman, trans. David J. Parent (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 110.

¹² As with these other social emotions, translation between German and English is not without its tensions. *Mitfreude* is rendered by Hollingdale as both fellow rejoicing and joying with. Translators of Kant have rendered it as sympathetic joy. Because I understand *Mitfreude* as Nietzsche's answer to Schopenhauer's *Mitleid*, and I understand that debate as being about what in others we should seek to share, I prefer shared joy.

celebration, and so now gives more consistent and systematic attention to friendship than at any other place in his body of work. He writes now in a notebook that, alluding first to Schopenhauer's formulation, "an ethics of compassion must be complemented by an even higher ethics of friendship" (KGW 19[9] 1876). Nietzsche entrusts his turn from suffering towards joy not to a sovereign individual, not to a hermit or a nomad, but to a friend: "*Friend*. – Fellow rejoicing [*Mitfreude*], not fellow suffering [*Mitleiden*], makes the friend" (HH 499).

In this opening chapter, I discuss Nietzsche's reevaluation of suffering. I suggest that Nietzsche understands the condemnation of suffering as crucial to the nihilistic tendencies of slave morality, and so his turn away from Schopenhauer and suffering is integral to his finding his own voice.¹³ When he begins to speak for himself, Nietzsche writes of affirmation, a joy or desire for existence manifest in the shared joy of friendship. Understanding Nietzsche's account of friendship, then, must begin with an investigation of the condemnation of suffering to which Nietzsche's emphasis on shared joy is a response.

Nietzsche first read Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* in 1865, at 21, and quickly became enamored, feeling a special affinity for the man and his work. Writing of his first encounter with Schopenhauer, Nietzsche relates, "here I saw a mirror in which I caught sight of world, of life, and of my own mind in terrifying grandeur" (HKG, p. 298). Yet by the end of 1876, Nietzsche's letters reveal a break with Schopenhauer's thought, clear at least by *Human, All too Human* published in 1878.

¹³ Reginster writes in connection to these themes that "the condemnation of suffering is the normative core of nihilism." Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 227.

These dates, however, mark uncertain boundaries, for in his writings before 1876 Nietzsche is often critical of Schopenhauer and even after his turn, Nietzsche remains committed to important aspects of Schopenhauer's thought. For instance, as early as 1867 Nietzsche vehemently criticizes Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will (WEN pp.1-8). *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), though, is steeped in Schopenhauerian imagery. That work's distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian in Greek tragedy is presented in part through Schopenhauer's own conception of aesthetic experience (BT 2; compare Schopenhauer WWR I 3); Nietzsche's conception of music as the mirror of reality, as giving voice to the fundamental machinations of will, also closely tracks Schopenhauer (BT 6); and perhaps most basically, Nietzsche's chief concern here is shared by Schopenhauer, namely a conception of "individuation as the primal cause of evil, and of art as the joyous hope that the spell of individuation may be broken in augury of a restored oneness" (BT 10).

Yet despite these important influences, the seeds for Nietzsche's turn from Schopenhauer are also present already in *The Birth of Tragedy*. There the Dionysian impulse to cut through individuation is described in the very un-Schopenhauerian ways that will motivate Nietzsche's later criticisms of Schopenhauer: Dionysus celebrates. The spell of individuation when broken provides a 'joyous hope' for humanity (BT 10). For Schopenhauer, one is resigned to knowledge of the primal oneness, one retreats, one gains what solace one can from a world of will. For Nietzsche, though, there is already the search for an affirmative, redemptive relationship to becoming. As I will argue, it is this temperamental difference that will become crucial for Nietzsche when he later distances himself from Schopenhauer. Nietzsche will not deny the suffering that

Schopenhauer sees in every corner, but Nietzsche will seek too joy in the face of suffering, he will see suffering as ineluctably tied to becoming and becoming as productive, creative, and so will grant suffering value as a necessary part of a flourishing human life. Where Schopenhauer is one of those who “could *never get free* from their temperament” (D 497), and could only unconsciously dress it up as truth itself, Nietzsche sought to make his own philosophy a sort of conscious autobiography, writing that “I turned my will to health, to *life*, into a philosophy” (EH Wise 2). Nietzsche begins to find his own voice as he distances himself from Schopenhauer, but also as his health declines, his teaching career ends, and he begins a nomadic life nevertheless infused with the hope for friends and lovers to make his wandering less lonely. Nietzsche sought a way to make his own suffering have meaning, for it to be profound.¹⁴

Even after Nietzsche’s turn, though, important elements of Schopenhauer’s thought continue to impress upon Nietzsche. For instance, while Nietzsche will try harder to make his account an historical and genealogical one, he never gives up on the project of explaining moral systems by reference to the psychological needs of their proponents, an insight gleaned from Schopenhauer’s focus on the inalterable character that determines the saliences of one’s moral outlook. Furthermore, Nietzsche will famously grow increasingly suspicious of the place of the ‘subject’ in our moral thinking, a suspicion shared by Schopenhauer for whom the individuation of human subjects belonged to the world of representation and not to the noumenal world of will. Nietzsche will continue to follow Schopenhauer in understanding the myth of the unity of

¹⁴ Interestingly, when he was 13 Nietzsche wrote an essay on the problem of evil, ultimately deifying evil by making it the work of God. Schopenhauer, at 17, addressed the same problem, inferring from the ubiquity of evil that the world was the work of the devil. See David E. Cartwright, “Nietzsche’s Use and Abuse of Schopenhauer’s Moral Philosophy for Life,” in *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche’s Educator*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 128-129.

subjectivity as propping up a certain flawed moral system, although the two will understand those flaws differently.¹⁵

Although Nietzsche's relationship to Schopenhauer is complex, there certainly is an important break in the late 1870s. Cosima Wagner writes in her diary on 24 December 1876: "Nice letter from Prof. Nietzsche, though informing us that he now rejects Schopenhauer's teachings!"¹⁶ I aim to show that this break is best understood as following from an upward evaluation of suffering in Nietzsche that casts as unhealthy Schopenhauer's ethics of compassion (*Mitleids-Moral*), coupled with an insistence that whatever the value of suffering, joy and the sharing of it remain possible, that we can relate to each other otherwise than through suffering. On the first score, Nietzsche will write with Schopenhauer in mind: "You want, if possible (and no 'if possible' is crazier) *to abolish suffering*. And us? – it looks as though *we* would prefer it to be heightened and made even worse than it has ever been! Well-being as you understand it – that is no goal; it looks to us like and *end!* – a condition that immediately renders people ridiculous and despicable..." (BGE 225) In endeavouring to explain Nietzsche's turn from Schopenhauer as turning on rival accounts of the value of suffering, I need first to set out the aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy that are important here.

Schopenhauer saw himself as the heir of Kant's philosophy, absorbing much of Kant's theoretical thought while questioning the applicability of its insights to practical philosophy, arguing against Kant that ethics can only be descriptive and empirical, that

¹⁵ This drive to intertwine an account of the subject with the moral system that motivates it is perhaps what separates both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche from other philosophers who have made similar points about the robustness of the subject. For example, David Hume had similar things to say about the subjectivity but lacked the deflationary aspirations of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. In telling us that the self was not unitary, Hume was telling us not that there is no self but what the self is. See David Cooper, "Self and Morality in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche," in *Willing and Nothingness*, 200.

¹⁶ C. Wagner, *Cosima Wagner's Diaries, i: 1869-1877* (London: Collins, 1978), 938.

we can only investigate the nature of the actions we call moral to discover their common source. Without such a grounding in the empirical, Schopenhauer insists that Kant's ethics "floats in air like a web of the subtlest concepts devoid of all substance; it is based on nothing, and so can support nothing and move nothing" (OBM 6). In his metaphysical system, Schopenhauer will follow Kant in distinguishing a world of appearances from a world of things-in-themselves, but while Kant leaves the thing-in-itself to ineffability, Schopenhauer calls it will. The world in itself is will, and what will wills is the empirical world of appearance or representation. Human beings, rocks, gravity, are all manifestations of a single will, their differences belonging to the world of appearance and so falsely papering over the fundamental oneness of a world of will. The will is like a god in being the basis of empirical reality, a single principle that explains the varied features of our world, but is otherwise ungodly. Will is the driving beat of existence, blind, aimless striving without the possibility for satiety. David Berman encourages us to imagine an "omnipotent animal of insatiable hunger and lust for life."¹⁷ But since there is only will, we couldn't contrast this animal with a separate world for which it hungers: the world as will consumes itself like a many-headed animal devouring its many parts.

If will exhausts existence, and if will is essentially striving, then there could exist nothing to satisfy that striving, there is simply nothing besides the everything of the will. The basic condition of existence, then, is unsatisfied striving. "At all grades of its phenomenon from the lowest to the highest, the will dispenses entirely with an ultimate aim and object. It always strives, because striving is its sole nature, to which no attained goal can put an end. Such striving is therefore incapable of final satisfaction; it can be

¹⁷ David Berman, "Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: Honest Atheism, Dishonest Pessimism," in *Willing and Nothingness*, 183.

checked only by hindrance, but itself it goes for ever” (WWR I 56). While some striving may seem to gain satisfaction, this represents only a deceptive lull that readies even more striving. For human beings, the satisfaction gained from desire temporarily met follows from a more originary lack, so that even what comfort we can hope for relies upon a more basic negative situation that we cannot escape:

All satisfaction, or what is commonly called happiness, is really and essentially negative only, and never positive. It is not a gratification which comes to us originally and of itself but must always be the satisfaction of a wish. For desire, that is to say, want, is the precondition of every pleasure; but with the satisfaction, the desire and therefore the pleasure cease; and so the satisfaction or gratification can never be more than deliverance from a pain, from a want. (WWR I 58)

Schopenhauer will call suffering the state of unsatisfied desire. Since existence is unsatisfied desire, existence is suffering. “(e)ssentially *all life is suffering*” (WWR I 56). And here is the heart of Schopenhauer’s pessimism: life is suffering, so whatever is the value of suffering is *ipso facto* the value of life itself. Schopenhauer will argue that suffering should be abolished, and so life itself should be abolished. “Nothing else can be stated as the aim of our existence except the knowledge that it would be better for us not to exist” (WWR II 48).

This quotation points us from metaphysics towards Schopenhauer’s ethical system. Schopenhauer suggests that metaphysics and ethics should complement each other. Envisioning the work that will become *The World as Will and Representation*, he writes, “in my hands and perhaps my mind there is developed a work, a philosophy, which is to be ethics and metaphysics in one, for hitherto these were just as falsely

separated as was a human into body and soul” (MR, p. 59). Ethics is the ground of metaphysics because it is only insofar as human beings encounter a world of suffering and seek to understand their place in it that they begin to ask the questions of metaphysics, which is to say they begin to ask how such a world of suffering could be justified. A metaphysical system succeeds insofar as it explains, and so provides moral justification for the world. For Schopenhauer, that justification comes in the form of the will’s attainment of a form of self-knowledge. Although will is blind, it has created human intelligence able to behold existence as the workings of will, and to say ‘no’. Human existence brings with it the possibility of denying the will and so gaining reprieve from the suffering that constitutes life.

Schopenhauer discusses morality at two different registers, a “higher metaphysical-ethical standpoint” (PP I 313), and a lower account of “morality in the narrower sense” (WWR II 47). The former is a sort of ethos or stance towards existence, the latter a more traditional account of in what the moral worth of actions consists. The former includes aesthetic contemplation, which provides some human beings temporary respite from willing through beholding the primal oneness of will that underpins individuation. More fundamentally, Schopenhauer sees ascetic saints as capable of a more thoroughgoing renunciation of the will, of saying ‘no’ to the will through ascetic practices such as fasting and chastity (WWR I 68). The saint is able to turn her understanding that all is will into a lived offence to it, a life in the service of non-life, a will that doesn’t will.

Schopenhauer also puts forward a more narrow account of ethics as an attempt to explain the phenomenon of morality as it functions mainly and for the most part.

Schopenhauer claims compassion as the ground of morality. He follows Kant in insisting that actions done from self-interest can have no moral worth, that moral worth follows instead from motives that take the interests of others as our own, and argues that taking the interests of others as our own is accomplished only in compassion, which though strictly a concern for the other's wellbeing, for Schopenhauer can only mean the sharing of suffering. "Only insofar as an action has sprung from compassion [*Mitleid*] does it have moral value; and every action resulting from other motives has none" (OBM 16). Compassion rightly pushes through the phenomenal differences between moral subjects by taking the suffering of the other as one's own. If individuation is phenomenal, and at a more basic level everything is the expression of one will, then the ontic differences between human beings lose their moral importance. The identification by a good person of her interests with the projects and pains of others, "is a reminder of that respect in which we are all one and the same entity" (OBM 22).

Compassion, for Schopenhauer, is the practical expression of the theoretical knowledge that all is will, so long as we understand the 'co' of compassion and the '*Mit*' of *Mitleid* correctly. Good characters literally experience the pain of others as their own insofar as they understand the phenomenal differences that separate egos as following after a more basic unity (OBM 16). The pain is felt as belonging to the other even as we accord it the same prominence of place in our deliberations we do our own, and so the gulf that separates us is bridged (OBM 16). "As soon as compassion is aroused, the weal and woe of another are nearest to my heart in exactly the same way, although not always in the same degree, as otherwise only my own are. Hence the difference between him and me is no longer absolute" (OBM 16). Taking the other's suffering on as one's own is

possible only because we are in fact not separate beings, and so the experience of compassion is for Schopenhauer a kind of moral mystery, the truth of the unity of will breaking through phenomenal individuation like the sun breaking through clouds. Conversely, the egoist, in refusing to see himself in others, gets his metaphysics wrong by believing too much in individuation.¹⁸ “He perceives that the distinction between himself and others, which to the wicked man is so great a gulf, belongs only to a fleeting, deceptive phenomenon” (WWR I 66). The compassionate act insofar as they know, and that knowledge like the knowledge of the saint provides for Schopenhauer the possibility of salvation from will. “From the same source from which all goodness, affection, virtue and nobility of character spring, there ultimately arises what I call denial of the will-to-live” (WWR I 378). The denunciation of the other’s suffering follows from the denunciation of all suffering, and we denounce all suffering because we turn our back on the phenomenal world of ceaseless, hopeless and so meaningless striving. While Schopenhauer makes a virtue out of concern for suffering, his system makes it the case that it is never particular suffering that matters, never the suffering of a particular life, but just the ceaseless suffering of a world whose particulars do not matter in themselves. That suffering belongs to this or that individual is, for Schopenhauer, a morally unimportant illusion of the phenomenal world of individuation. I return to compassion in chapter five, arguing that Nietzsche’s focus on shared joy is in part a response to this particular aspect of Schopenhauer’s system. Nietzsche wants a relationality able to celebrate the particular suffering and joys of others through an affirmation of this world,

¹⁸ Cartwright, “Use and Abuse,” 127, writes: “Schopenhauer identifies the perspectives of bad characters with a commitment to the view that space and time are real, so that there is an absolute gulf perceived between beings which seems to justify their treatment of others as absolute non-egos...In the correct view of the world as it is itself, there are no distinct individuals.”

its inhabitants and their projects, and he points to friendship as a relationship organized around just such a relationality.

Returning to Schopenhauer, the compassionate, momentarily like the saint, are able to see through the individuation of the phenomenal, to see suffering not as deserved by agents in isolation, but as the nature of existence itself. Not agents who do particular wrongs, but a world that is itself carved from suffering, is responsible for the wretchedness of the world. Although the world suffers, it is also the tormentor, and so suffering exists in existence in exact proportion to existence's guilt, the animal eats only itself. "In this sense we can say that the world itself is the tribunal of the world. If we could lay all the misery of the world in one pan of the scales, and all the guilt in the other, the pointer would certainly show them to be in equilibrium" (WWR I 63). The world can be judged as a whole, and found guilty as a whole, and so has meaning, as a whole. "This very real world of ours with all its suns and galaxies, is--nothing" (WWR I 71).

Nietzsche too will call the world a whole, but will rail against Schopenhauer's insistence that the world could be judged, writing, "...there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare, condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare, condemn the whole...*But nothing exists apart from the whole!*" (TI Errors 8) Nietzsche will grow into himself in part through distancing himself from Schopenhauer's at-bottom theological attempt to behold the world from outside of it, to sit in judgment from a vantage point that transcends the merely human. Nietzsche seeks instead an affirmation that stresses the innocence of the world of becoming, and crucial to this is a revaluation of suffering and our response to it in compassion.

Nietzsche discusses compassion in every one of his published writings. His criticisms of Schopenhauer's morality of compassion can be divided into three basic types that divide Nietzsche's concerns, though roughly, both chronologically and thematically. First, Nietzsche charges that Schopenhauer misunderstands the psychological basis of compassion. In *Human, All too Human*, *Daybreak*, and *The Gay Science*, works in which Nietzsche's insights as psychologist are most prominent, Nietzsche complicates the story that Schopenhauer tells about the exercise of compassion by suggesting a rival account of what motivates the compassionate. For Schopenhauer, only unegoistic actions directed at the other's wellbeing have moral worth, only acts done out of compassion are so unegoistic, so only acts done out of compassion have moral worth. Nietzsche dismisses the distinction between egoism and non-egoism, suggesting that it follows from a misunderstanding of actions and agents. "Under strict examination the whole concept 'unegoistic action' vanishes into thin air" (HH 133). Nietzsche propounds a form of psychological egoism in which human agents are incapable of acting selflessly. Here he seeks to uncover the egoistic element in compassion.

Second, and subsequently, Nietzsche comes to describe compassion as symptom of cultural decline. In *Daybreak*, *The Gay Science*, and especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and beyond, Nietzsche suggests that compassion shows up as desirable only within the horizon of the lamentable movement of slave morality. He attacks the background commitments of slave morality that cast compassion as a valuable moral emotion, and so urges his readers to overcome compassion as a way of overcoming their slavishness.

Third, related to this second type of approach, Nietzsche, especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, seems to consider compassion as one among many perspectives that we might employ on humanity as a whole. Zarathustra suffers from compassion for humanity as a whole, and God dies of his compassion for humanity. Here compassion is less symptom than motivating principle or overarching thought that structures our approach to humanity as project. Nietzsche points away from a view of human beings that would seek only to explain away their suffering, pointing instead to an articulation of human history that would find a place for the productive, life- and world-making potential of suffering.

In discussing Nietzsche's view of *Mitleid*, the question of translation arises. The German is ambiguous among pity, compassion and sympathy; the latter two have the etymological benefit of showing that we are speaking of a shared feeling, while the former does a better job of capturing the suffering that figures in the phenomenon. Sympathy and compassion denote, in a strict sense, the sharing of any passion or pathos, while the phenomenon in question in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is clearly the sharing of suffering. Kaufmann and Hollingdale have generally preferred 'pity' when translating Nietzsche, as have most of Nietzsche's translators, while Schopenhauer's translators have generally preferred 'compassion' and sometimes 'sympathy'. T. Bailey Saunders is perhaps unique among Schopenhauer's translators in turning often to 'pity', while Clark and Swenson in their translation of Nietzsche's *Genealogy* render *Mitleid* as 'compassion'. Nietzsche himself remarks on the great ambiguity of *Mitleid*: "How coarsely does language assault with its one word so polyphonous a being!" (D 133)

The difficulty has led some writers to suggest that Nietzsche and Schopenhauer are talking about different emotions and so shouldn't be placed into dialogue with one another; that the gap of ambiguity in the German is large enough to place Nietzsche and Schopenhauer in different seas.¹⁹ Nietzsche criticizes pity, Schopenhauer valorizes an importantly distinct phenomenon, compassion. To my mind, this seems an overreaction. Nietzsche's discussions of *Mitleid* are often explicit responses to Schopenhauer, and so he at least understood his account of *Mitleid* as a rival to Schopenhauer's, and that pretension is enough of a *prima facie* reason to attempt to read the two together. A sympathetic reading of Nietzsche must attempt to read him as criticizing whatever Schopenhauer valorizes in *Mitleid*; to do otherwise begs the question against Nietzsche. Nietzsche's criticism of *Mitleid* is that it paradigmatically contains the pejorative aspects associated with pity but ostensibly absent in compassion. We want others to be compassionate towards us, to sympathize with us, but it is pathological to want pity. There is a hierarchical distancing in pity ostensibly absent in compassion; we are like those for whom we show compassion, but we are at some distance from those we pity. This has led translators of a Nietzsche almost universally critical of *Mitleid* to render it as pity, but in so doing translators have blunted the edge of Nietzsche's criticism here. Nietzsche's target is the ideal of a shared suffering that doesn't diminish the other, compassion rather than pity. Nietzsche doesn't aim to show that pity should be avoided, that is an easy case to make. Nietzsche wants us to give up on compassion, to see the sharing of suffering as in itself an undesirable basis for ethics.

¹⁹ For a defence of this position, see David E. Cartwright, "Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche on the Morality of Pity," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45, no. 1 (1984): 97-98 n.44. There Cartwright points in agreement to Joan Stambaugh, "Thoughts on Pity and Revenge," *Nietzsche-Studien* 1 (1971): 27-35.

The first plane of Nietzsche's criticism of compassion is psychological. Nietzsche seeks to complicate Schopenhauer's story of *Mitleid*, in which compassion counts as the basis of morality because it alone among our motives for acting is unegoistic. In *Human, All too Human*, Nietzsche argues that the very notion of an unegoistic action is confused, and so dismisses the possibility of Schopenhauer's compassion. Instead, Nietzsche suggests that we look more closely at compassion, that we dig beneath the surface to see its many tangled motivating roots. Nietzsche writes:

Pity has the pleasure of the other as its object as little as wickedness has the pain of the other as such. For it conceals within itself at least two (perhaps more) elements of a personal pleasure and is to that extent self-enjoyment: first as the pleasure of the emotion...and then, when it eventuates in action, as the pleasure of gratification in the exercise of power. If, in addition to this, a suffering person is very close to us, we remove from ourselves the suffering we ourselves feel by performing an act of pity. (HH 103)

The comparison with wickedness or malice is apt. The malicious seek to cause the other pain, the compassionate supposedly to alleviate it. In the case of malice, we are prepared to accept that it is not the pain of the other as such that motivates, but the power expressed in the distancing achieved between self and other. The malicious want the other's pain not in itself but as an expression of their power over him.²⁰ Acts of malice are pathological; they are the resultants of certain needs of the agents and, whatever their

²⁰ This is not Schopenhauer's view of malice. Schopenhauer understands malicious actions as aiming at the woe of others in and for itself (OBM 16). This is an important point because it helps to make clear that Nietzsche objects to compassion not because he is simply suspicious of altruism, but because he is suspicious of the very model of action that Schopenhauer puts forward. Relatedly, ascetic practices and practices of cruelty interest Nietzsche because through them an aspect of human motivation elided by Schopenhauer's account is made manifest: that we take pleasure in making suffer (GM II 6).

immediate aims, they exist because of their pathological function.²¹ Nietzsche's claim is that compassion follows the same path: compassionate acts may involve conscious intentions to reduce suffering, but they exist because of their pathological function, because of what they accomplish for an agent.²²

It is important to stress, therefore, that when Nietzsche speaks in terms of egoism in compassion, the conception of egoism that renders his view most plausible requires that the egoistic element of an action may and does remain unconscious for the agent herself. Consistent with the project of *Daybreak*, Nietzsche is offering a naturalistic explanation of the presence of norms of compassion in our culture. He suggests that those norms have been selected because they achieve certain ends for individuals, and thus are egoistic even if they do not involve conscious selfish motivations. Agents can be self-deceived about their motives; acts of compassion can be consciously well-intentioned and nevertheless egoistic; and *Mitleid* could owe its presence in a moral landscape to its egoistic effects without compassionate individuals consciously aiming at those effects. Nietzsche writes, for instance, that "the truth is: in the feeling of pity – I mean in that which is usually and misleadingly called pity – we are, to be sure, not consciously thinking of ourself but are doing so *very strongly unconsciously*..." (D 133)

Again, in D 103 Nietzsche insists, "I deny morality as I deny alchemy, that is I deny their

²¹ Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 87, writes: "the value of our values lies in their function, namely, they fulfill specific needs." See GS 345; WP 262.

²² Nietzsche in GS 1 writes of "the most amazing economy" of drives fostered within modern human beings, an economy that, taken as a whole, serves the preservation of the species even if any one of its constituents is hard to square directly with the goal of preservation. In BGE 23 a similar point is made about the "total economy of life"; and in EH *Destiny* 4 Nietzsche refers to the "great economy of the whole". See Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 11-12. Thinking of terms of economy helps us to see the bent of Nietzsche's attempt to understand *Mitleid* as figuring in a constellation or economy of values that, taken as a whole, serves the needs of a certain type of agent. Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, 93-94 writes: "the categories of 'selfish' and 'unselfish' keep in view only the effect or intended effect on the well-being of others and ignore the dynamics of the economy out of which they originate. When we take this economy into consideration, we see that there is *always* a yield of self-enjoyment, no matter how 'unselfish' the act."

premises: but I do *not* deny that there have been alchemists who believe in these premises and acted in accordance with them.” It is this line of thinking that motivates Nietzsche’s claims that all actions are essentially unknown (D 116) and that “we never do anything of this kind [compassionate acts] out of *one* motive” (D 133).²³ That an act of compassion “conceals within itself” moments of egoism should be read as suggesting that those moments are concealed even from the agent herself. Again, this is the sort of account we are prepared to accept in the case of malicious actions, and Nietzsche means to show that compassion mirrors malice in these crucial respects.

Nietzsche’s remarks on selflessness in HH 57 help to show that the egoistic element of altruism need not be conscious:

Morality as the self-division of man. - ...A soldier wishes he could fall on the battlefield for his victorious fatherland; for his supreme desire is victor in the victory of his fatherland. A mother gives to her child that of which she deprives herself... – But are these all unegoistic states? Are these deeds of morality *miracles* because they are, in Schopenhauer’s words, ‘impossible and yet real’? Is it not clear that in all these instances man loves *something of himself*, an idea, a desire, an offspring, more than *something else of himself*..

Nietzsche doesn’t need to or mean to suggest that the self-love of ostensible acts of selflessness is understood by the above agents for what it is. Indeed, that claim would be clearly false. Instead, Nietzsche’s reference to Schopenhauer’s appeal to a miracle helps

²³ Cartwright, “Morality of Pity,” 96, writes on this point that, “Nietzsche’s point is that we cannot be sure of the motivation of this type of action. Not only do alternative explanations of this type of action carry equal explanatory force, any one or more of these alternative explanations could pick out the actual motive or motives underlying an action which we would, from an uncritical and naive point of view, attribute to pity. For all we know, Nietzsche suggests, it might be that honor, fear, self-defence, or revenge moved us to help the sufferer even though we believe that some desire solely for the other’s well-being moved us to help.”

us to see that Nietzsche is offering a rival, all too human account of the presence of altruism in our moral landscape in order to avoid something like Schopenhauer's last ditch turn to a strange metaphysical, miraculous account of an empirical moral phenomenon. Thus, the first moment of egoism mentioned above from HH 103, the pleasure of the emotion itself, does not owe its egoism to any conscious aim of or recognition by the agent herself. Nietzsche's claim is instead only that the pleasure is an aspect of the paradigmatic expression of compassionate acts and is the reason compassionate acts have found a place in our moral thinking.

Secondly, Nietzsche claims that expressing compassion is an exercise of power; the compassionate place the other in one sort of relationship to them rather than any other, determining how the other stands to them, and that for Nietzsche is the essential way that power expresses itself in human relationships: the powerful determine the ways in which the powerless can show up. Like the malicious, the compassionate gains pleasure through the power they hold over the other.

Nietzsche makes more of the distancing characteristic of *Mitleid* in *Daybreak*. There he explores the various ways that we come to the aid of those for whom we care, expressions of compassion through which, in very Schopenhaurian language, "the gulf between us and him seems to be bridged, an approximation to identity seems to occur" (D 138). But, Nietzsche suggests, expressing compassion ultimately "produces in us great joy and exultation." He continues, "in all this, however, we have the *enjoyment of active gratitude* – which, in short, is *benevolent revenge*" (D 138). The compassionate give care only so as to be able to exact a payment in return. We can see this in the fact that, if compassion is refused, we grow hurt and disgruntled, robbed of the opportunity to enjoy

ourselves at the other's expense. "Even in the most favourable case, there is something degrading in suffering and something elevating and productive of superiority in pitying – which separates these two sensations from one another to all eternity" (D 138). There is, then, an irony endemic to compassion: just where one understanding sees the gulf between beings bridged as the suffering of one is taken on by the other, Nietzsche sees a fundamental distancing, an expression of power that robs the recipient of her dignity. "To offer pity is as good as to offer contempt" (D 135).

Finally, while for Schopenhauer we act unegoistically when we seek to redress the suffering of another because we take it on as our own, Nietzsche suggests in compassion that we are only ever dealing with our own suffering, and help others only as a means to helping ourselves. That is, the *mit* of *Mitleid* and 'co' of compassion are disingenuous. Nietzsche plays on words when he suggests, "that pity [*Mitleiden*], on the other hand, is the same kind of thing as the suffering [*mit dem Leiden*] at the sight of which it arises, or that it possesses an especially subtle, penetrating understanding of suffering, are propositions contradicted by *experience*, and he who glorifies pity precisely on account of these two qualities *lacks* adequate experience in this very realm of the moral" (D 133). The suffering of the other makes us uncomfortable, and Nietzsche suggests that compassionate acts have been selected for because through them we reduce our own discomfort. We don't take on the other's suffering so much as we seek to restore our own wellbeing. If we do act in such situations, "it is only this suffering of our own which we get rid of when we perform deeds of pity" (D 133). Schopenhauer needs the suffering shared in compassion to be the very same suffering, and here Nietzsche disputes this as a possibility. He calls Schopenhauer's conception of compassion a "thoughtlessness" that

fails to seek out the many motives that figure in actions called compassionate. Thus, Nietzsche comes to regard Schopenhauer as dealing with a *Mitleid* “observed so imperfectly and described so badly” (D 133). When we look past Schopenhauer’s understanding of compassion, Nietzsche argues that we see a tangle of egoistic motives that belie the place Schopenhauer would have compassion occupy in our moral thinking.

Nietzsche also suggests that compassion involves undesirable deep motivations on the part of its recipient. Just as the compassionate place the recipients of compassion in a certain relationship to them and are gratified by this expression of their power, the recipients are gratified by the exercise of some small bit of power over others. Nietzsche writes:

...all their weakness notwithstanding, they possess at any rate *one power*: the *power to hurt*. In this feeling of superiority of which the manifestation of pity makes him conscious, the unfortunate man gains a sort of pleasure; in the conceit of his imagination he is still of sufficient importance to cause affliction in the world. The thirst for pity is thus a thirst for self-enjoyment, and that at the expense of one’s fellow men. (HH 50)

Rather than the mystery of ethics that Schopenhauer sees in compassion, Nietzsche tries to trace the all too human geography of its place in our moral lives. Both the compassionate and the recipient gain something for themselves through determining how the other stands to them, both achieve the gratification of a power to hold the other in place before them.²⁴

²⁴ Nietzsche’s concern with cruelty in GM II is motivated chiefly by this sort of concern with the human drive to determine how the other stands to oneself. “Through his ‘punishment’ of the debtor the creditor participates in a *right of lords*: finally he, too, for once attains the elevating feeling of being permitted to hold a being in contempt and maltreat it as something ‘beneath himself’” (GM II 5).

Beginning in *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*, then predominantly in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, and *The Antichrist* Nietzsche situates his previously psychological criticisms of compassion in a broader cultural criticism of a form of life that would valorize it. Where Nietzsche first wants to cast the unegoistic as impossible, conceptually confused, his criticisms now begin to turn on the desirability of thinking in terms of egoism and its opposite, on the value of compassion.²⁵ Much of Nietzsche's later cultural criticism grows out of his sense that by attending to all suffering as an evil to be extinguished we deny the ennobling aspects of suffering, and in doing that we grow forgetful of the ennoblement of humanity in general, of humanity as a project worthy of a future. A culture that flees suffering no longer desires to become anything new, to be other than it is, and reposes instead in an insipid, pale belief in itself. Nietzsche increasingly wants to point us beyond suffering, writing, "there are problems that are higher than any problems of pleasure, pain, or pity; and any philosophy that stops with these is a piece of naiveté" (BGE 225).

Although Nietzsche never frames his cultural criticism of compassion in these terms, it is helpful to understand it as structurally analogous to his previous psychological criticism. There, an agent's self-understanding as compassionate and unegoistic was contrasted with the functional egoism of *Mitleid*. Whatever the agent thinks of herself,

²⁵ This sort of development in the nature of Nietzsche's concerns, from empirical possibility to the value of values, is found throughout his writings. For example, in *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche is concerned to show that we ought to overcome belief in moral responsibility for our actions because our belief in it rests on an empirical error: "man can be made accountable for nothing, not for his nature, not for his motives, nor for his actions, nor for the effects he produces," and this because all such attempts to ascribe responsibility rest on "the error of the freedom of the will" (HH 39). In one of his final works, *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche is again concerned with responsibility, but from an importantly different angle of approach. There the slave conception of responsibility is denied by Nietzsche insofar as it is part of a moral order that we ought to deny entirely. The Christian world-order is called, "a hangman's metaphysics" (TI Errors 7) designed to make us understand ourselves and the world as guilty. Here Nietzsche's question is not whether we are in fact responsible, but rather for what type of human life responsibility is necessary, in what way of life it is implicated, what vision of humanity is propped up by it.

compassion is a live option for her because she inhabits a moral landscape in which it is valued, and it owes that place to its egoistic effects. In Nietzsche's subsequent cultural criticism, it is now a culture's self-understanding that is contrasted with the functional 'cultural egoism' of *Mitleid*. Although a culture that glorifies compassion understands itself to be genuinely and properly attentive to the sufferings of others, compassion owes its place in the culture to its functionality in preserving their particular type of life.²⁶ "All evaluation is made from a definite perspective: that of the preservation of the individual, a community, a race, a state, a church, a faith, a culture" (WP 259 1884; see also WP 258 1885-86).

Nietzsche's preface to his *On the Genealogy of Morality* is important in understanding this eclipse of the psychological by the genealogical. Before employing it in the title of this work, Nietzsche had never used the term *Genealogie* in his published works, although in *Beyond Good and Evil* he had named an embryonic form of his approach 'the natural history [*Naturgeschichte*] of morals'. Genealogy becomes Nietzsche's method of choice as he seeks to make clear the many and tangled origins of our moral concepts, the way that their history animates and motivates our present in ways never fully understood. The line of genealogy moves backwards in time, but shows too the sideways injections or encounters that grab hold of a process and rework it, marking the difference between quantitative and qualitative change, the way a marriage injects a new line into the genealogy, or the way that for Nietzsche the priest makes non-moral economic relations of debt into moral relations of guilt or the way non-moral concepts of

²⁶ Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 76, writes: "when the physiologically weak individual claims that compassion is good, he is in reality (though this is not necessarily his own understanding of what he is doing) pointing to the fact that a compassionate world favors the thriving of his physiological condition."

purity as physical cleanliness are transformed into moral concepts of spiritual purity (BGE 201).²⁷

While Nietzsche had been since *Human, All too Human* exploring morality with a view to understanding its natural origins, it is not until *Beyond Good and Evil* and the *Genealogy* that his concerns are properly genealogical rather than historical. The difference between the two approaches helps to explain why Nietzsche approved of the work of Paul Rée in the former book but ridiculed it in the latter set. The historical account of morality that figures such as Rée wanted to give became, for Nietzsche, too simplistic, too teleological, and too naïve in projecting our contemporary evaluations back in time. Nietzsche as genealogist discusses moral phenomena in order to show that bare practices can and do evolve, that their purpose, importance, and place in our moral landscape can be and are taken hold of by new interpretations (GM II 12).²⁸ Our present situation, the kind of beings we are and the concepts with which we think through our existence, are all for Nietzsche a beautifully contingent result of various lines, forces and figures.

Genealogy is a form of immanent critique, where in telling the story of how we became the type of creature we are we erase any absolute vantage point outside of that story from which to criticize it, so that there is an uneasy circularity in our attempts to

²⁷ Gary Shapiro describes the genealogist as concerned with, “the complex web of ancestry and affiliations...with all their gaps, incestuous transgressions, and odd combinations.” Gary Shapiro, “Translating, Repeating, Naming: Foucault, Derrida, and the Genealogy of Morals,” in *Nietzsche’s On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, ed. Christa Davis Acampora (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 235.

²⁸ For example, Nietzsche offers a start at listing the ways punishment can figure in a community: “Punishment as rendering-harmless, as prevention of further injury. Punishment as payment to the injured party for the injury...as isolation of a disturbance of equilibrium...as instilling fear of those who determine and execute the punishment...as a kind of compensation for the benefits the criminal has enjoyed up to that point...as elimination of a degenerating element...as festival...as making a memory...as payment of an honorarium...as compromise with the natural state of revenge...as declaration of war and war-time measure against an enemy of peace, of law...” (GM II 13)

understand ourselves.²⁹ Rather than attaining some transcendent vantage point, Nietzsche thinks genealogizing can attune us to the contingent shifts and movements of the past as a way of loosening the soil of our thinking. Indeed, Nietzsche at one point had entitled his *Daybreak* as *The Ploughshare*. This type of work opens us up to the possibility of what Gilles Deleuze calls in Nietzsche new possibilities for life: “man has been a way of imprisoning life”, Deleuze says in connection to Nietzsche and Foucault.³⁰ Genealogy is a way of loosening soil, loosening chains. And, although the distinction between psychology and genealogy in Nietzsche is a somewhat blunt heuristic, I believe that it is justified by this difference. Genealogy is self-problematizing in a way that Nietzsche’s psychological studies were not; while the genealogist seeks a healthier self-understanding just as the psychologist does, the former and not the latter realize that the best she can do is understand herself as a being who becomes, with origins but not a telos, a being whose future is up for grabs, constitutionally amenable to reinterpretation. Genealogy seeks better to understand the activity of masking, but has given up the ideal of a self behind the masks. This type of almost artful supplement to empirical questions, genealogy rather than psychology, is what in Nietzsche’s mature writings makes science gay and what gets us beyond good and evil: the limits of human inquiry are turned back on themselves,

²⁹ See Robert Guay, “Genealogy as Immanent Critique: Working from the Inside,” in *The Edinburgh Critical History of Philosophy Volume Four: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Allison Stone (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 91. Sean Kirkland stresses the ways in which genealogy is as much productive as critical, or critical only to make space for creativity. The redemption (*Erlösung*) of the past is a letting loose (*lose*): (W)e must see the positive and productive moment in genealogy *as primary*. The tracing of our current attitudes and values back to their disavowed origin sets *this* origin free, as *our origin, our foundation*, such that we now can and must engage in what is the recognized as our own already ongoing creative activity as exposed to this origin. Sean Kirkland, “Zarathustra and Redeeming the Past,” in *Nietzsche and Phenomenology*, ed. Andrea Rehberg (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 61. See Z III Tablets 25.

constraints are made beautiful by being affirmed as world-making, crucial to our being the type of creatures we are.

In the preface to the *Genealogy*, perhaps reading too much of his present interests into his former ones, Nietzsche characterizes his earlier concern with compassion in *Human, all Too Human* as a struggle with Schopenhauer over the value of compassion: “I had to struggle almost solely with my great teacher Schopenhauer, to whom that book, the passion and the secret contradiction of that book, is directed...In particular, the issue was the value of the unegoistic, of the instincts of compassion, self-denial, self-sacrifice, precisely the instincts that Schopenhauer had gilded, deified, and made otherworldly...” (GM P 5) Nietzsche then quickly introduces a genealogical element to this criticism, setting out the broad contours of the project he is attempting with the *Genealogy*. Rather than focusing on the complex motives of the compassionate, Nietzsche now wants to subsume these psychological points within a genealogical narrative that shows how compassion was able to assume a place of prominence in our moral thinking. Compassion can thus become important for Nietzsche as symptom:

Precisely here I saw the *great* danger to humanity, its most sublime lure and temptation—and into what? into nothingness? Precisely here I saw the beginning of the end, the standstill, the backward-glancing tiredness, the will turning *against* life, the last sickness gently and melancholically announcing itself: I understood the ever more widely spreading morality of compassion—which seized even the philosophers and made them sick—as the most uncanny symptom of our uncanny European culture... (GM P 5)

Not whether it is in fact possible to share in another's suffering, but what had to occur in a culture for it to seem possible and desirable now becomes Nietzsche's question.

Nietzsche describes what can happen once one begins to pull on this kind of thread:

This problem of the *value* of compassion and of the morality of compassion...appears at first to be only an isolated matter, a lone question mark; whoever sticks here for once, however, and *learns* to ask questions here, will fare as I have fared:--an immense new vista opens up to him, a possibility takes hold of him like a dizziness, every sort of mistrust, suspicion, fear springs forth, the belief in morality, in all morality totters...*for once the value of these values must itself be called into question.* (GM P 6)

Importantly, this type of attempt by Nietzsche, to read compassion as symptom of cultural decline, becomes possible only as he comes to understand it as a strategy barred by Schopenhauer's philosophy. Schopenhauer figures so much in the preface to the *Genealogy* because Nietzsche grows into himself by growing away from Schopenhauer, whose thought Nietzsche now insists lacks the historicist sense that will define the *Genealogy*. Schopenhauer succeeded only in apotheosizing morality as he found it rather than getting beyond it. Nietzsche decries with Schopenhauer in mind how, "one has taken the *value* of these 'values' as given, as a fact, as beyond all calling-into-question..." (GM P 6)

Nietzsche stands to Schopenhauer, then, as Schopenhauer stood to Kant. Schopenhauer argued that Kant, in constructing an ethics out of duty, obligation and categorical moral laws, succeeded only in finding a new vocabulary for the same old theological ethics. Schopenhauer's idea, with which Nietzsche agreed, was that Kant was

at bottom only a cunning Christian: although he sought to ground ethics in our rational capacities, in relying on concepts that borrowed their sense from theology his system could ultimately only be grounded by a basis in the divine. Schopenhauer writes of Kant's central concepts, "separated from the theological hypotheses from which they came, these concepts really lose all meaning" (OBM 4). Since Kant disavowed any basis in the divine, his ethics was a baseless system of "*a priori* soap bubbles" (OBM 16).

Nietzsche levels a similar criticism against Schopenhauer, who, like Kant, saw himself as succeeding in a project to ground morality itself. Rather than grounding a morality true for all human beings, Nietzsche wants to say that Schopenhauer, like Kant before him, merely offered a new way to glorify the provincial morality he happened to have found himself living with:

Every philosopher so far has thought that he has provided a ground for morality. Morality itself, however, was thought to be 'given'...Viewed properly, the 'grounding of morals' (as philosophers called it, as they demanded it of themselves) was only an erudite form of good *faith* in the dominant morality, a new way of *expressing* it; as such, it was itself already situated within the terms of a certain morality. In the last analysis, it even constitutes a type of denial that these morals *can* be regarded as a problem. (BGE 186)

Lacking a genealogical sense, failing to struggle with the becoming, the life, of moral value, Schopenhauer merely put a new outfit on the same moral mummy; Schopenhauer was merely, "the heir of the Christian interpretation" (TI Improvers 21). Schopenhauer's morality of compassion is seen by Nietzsche as just the latest evolution of the Christian's religion of compassion (AC 7), both caught up in the movement of slave morality in

whose light compassion takes on positive value. Nietzsche wants then to move us away from compassion as a means to pointing beyond slave morality, not because he has himself discovered the basis of morality, but because he thinks he has loosened the desire for such a basis. Genealogy doesn't explain or ground morality itself. It tells one story, our story, and so helps, if at all, only those to whom it speaks.

Nietzsche sees slave morality as urging the blanket condemnation of suffering, as claiming that suffering can have no meaning, is instead the expression of the insignificance of our finite existence. The slave's urge to be free of suffering grows out of the urge to be free of the world of becoming, where we see suffering as an affront, a reminder of our weakness as finite beings. The morality of compassion makes compassion the basis of ethics and so insists that suffering is always to be avoided, the slave is the type that refuses to see value in suffering, and so the morality of compassion is the morality of the slave. "Schopenhauer was hostile to life: *therefore* pity became for him a virtue" (AC 7).³¹ Nietzsche's question is, given that suffering is an ineradicable condition of human life and flourishing, whether we ought to be the type of being that denigrates the very conditions of its existence.³² Compassion is a symptom of cultural decline, of a culture sliding towards the nothingness of denying the possibility that our lives might otherwise have significance.

It is in *Daybreak* that Nietzsche first links compassion to the background commitments that allow it to show up as valuable. Aphorisms 133 to 148 deal with

³¹ It may seem that Nietzsche mischaracterizes compassion when he attributes to the compassionate the goal of eliminating *all* suffering. Yet, this must be the view of Schopenhauer, for whom the moral incentive to prevent, reduce, and address the sufferings of others follows from what he sees as a fundamental incentive to eliminate our own suffering. Since we desire to eliminate all of our own suffering, and all is, metaphysically speaking, one, we desire to eliminate all suffering.

³² Deleuze asks in this context, "what is the meaning of pain? The meaning of existence is completely dependent on it..." Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 129.

compassion, and are preceded by two aphorisms that set out the bent of Nietzsche's approach. "Fashions in Morality" discusses how moral judgments shift over time, showing that they too are susceptible to the vagaries of fashion (D 131). "The echo of Christianity in morality" attempts to understand the rise of compassion as "the most general effect and conversion which Christianity has produced in Europe" (D 132). Although still in an early, embryonic form, this attempt to trace the history of compassion already distances *Daybreak* from *Human, All too Human* where Nietzsche sought only to show unegoistic action to be conceptually confused.

Still in *Daybreak*, Nietzsche suggests that a culture that seeks to obliterate pain, "desires, first and foremost, that *all the dangers* which life once held should be removed from it." He asks: "are we not, with this tremendous objective of obliterating all the sharp edges of life, well on the way to turning mankind into *sand*? Sand! Small, soft, round, unending sand!" (D 174) If we understand suffering as an affront and overvalue the security of comfort, then for Nietzsche we make the world into something fallen, something at odds with our better nature. We sit and wait, huddled together like sand; rather than live, we give in to "the tendency *hostile to life*" (AC 7).

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche suggests that suffering is instead part of a successful human life of striving, change, and struggle and so to be rid of all suffering would be to be rid of life itself. Compassion leaves us deaf to the ways in which suffering can figure in human lives in beautiful ways. Against Schopenhauer's "immediate participation, independent of all ulterior considerations, primarily in the suffering of another, and thus in the prevention or elimination of it," (OBM 16), Nietzsche writes that those who would show him compassion know nothing of, "the

whole economy of my soul and the balance effected by ‘distress,’ the way new springs and needs break open, the way in which old wounds are healing, the way whole periods of the past are shed....” (GS 338) Those who want to get rid of suffering seek only, “the religion of comfortableness [*Behaglichkeit*]” (GS 338).³³ To see the point of this life as achieving comfort is to see this life as unimportant, the way that being comfortable while travelling can mean having the windows drawn and the seats reclined. “Men have become *suffering* creatures as a consequence of their moralities: what they have purchased with them is, all in all, a feeling that at bottom they are too good and too significant for the earth and are paying it only a passing visit” (D 425).³⁴ Starting with suffering in our view of existence is not basic, not necessary, but is a particular starting point that can be put into question:

Contra Rousseau. - If it is true that our civilisation has something pitiable about it, you have the choice of concluding with Rousseau that 'this pitiable civilisation is to blame for our *bad* morality', or against Rousseau that 'our *good* morality is to blame for this pitiableness of our civilisation. Our weak, unmanly, social concepts of good and evil and their tremendous ascendancy over body and soul have finally weakened all bodies and souls and snapped the self-reliant, independent, unprejudiced men, the pillars of a *strong* civilisation: where one still encounters *bad* morality one beholds the last ruins of these pillars.' Thus paradox stands

³³ Walter Brogan writes in this context, that compassion “robs suffering of its personal and creative meaning.” Walter Brogan, “The Central Significance of Suffering in Nietzsche’s Thought,” *International Studies in Philosophy* 20, no.2 (1988): 59. Christianity as the morality of compassion, and its interpretation by Schopenhauer, are clear targets of Nietzsche when he disdains comfortableness as a goal, but his point extends to any view that makes human contentment a primary ethical goal. Nietzsche, for instance, disdains hedonism and utilitarianism (BGE 225) for such a position.

³⁴ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 149, asks, “what is pity? It is the tolerance for states of life close to zero. Pity is the love of life, but of the weak, sick, reactive life.”

against paradox! The truth cannot possibly be on both sides: and is it on either of them? Test them and see. (D 163)

Nietzsche here links his criticism of compassion with the values of experimentation, trying to shake his readers out of a stupor that mistakes its present evaluative commitments with the only possible ones.³⁵ In an imperative I explore at length in the next chapter, Nietzsche insists that we can, and because we can we should, put such commitments into question by testing out different forms of life, we should risk ourselves. Nietzsche writes that, “profound suffering makes you noble; it separates” (BGE 270). How a being responds to her suffering tells us who she is, so that disabling any sort of response to suffering, as in a compassion that seeks only to eradicate it, disables the sort of ethical work on ourselves Nietzsche applauds. “In every *noble* morality it [*Mitleid*] counts as weakness...life is denied, made *more worthy of denial* by pity” (AC 7). If “all becoming and growing, all that guarantees the future, *postulates* pain” (TI Ancients 4), then eradicating pain eradicates all becoming and growing, eradicates the future as project, as possibility, leaving only Nietzsche’s unending sand. To affirm this life, on the other hand, would be to affirm it as a place where we are made, become through struggle and so also through suffering. Nietzsche explains this point at length in *Beyond Good and Evil*, suggesting that an attentiveness to the productivity of our suffering fosters a concomitant attentiveness to our role in shaping the project that is humanity:

In human beings, *creature* and *creator* are combined: in humans there is material, fragments, abundance, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in humans there is also

³⁵ Tanner, *Nietzsche*, 23, writes, Nietzsche’s “subversions, teasings and insults are directed towards making us feel ashamed not only of how we are, but of our complacency in thinking that we possess the best set of categories for the realization of what we might be.”

creator, maker, hammer-hardness, spectator-divinity and seventh day: - do you understand this contrast? And that *your* pity is aimed at the “creature in humans,” at what needs to be molded, broken, forged, torn, burnt, seared and purified, - at what necessarily needs to *suffer* and *should* suffer? (BGE 225)

We shouldn't be surprised then, that compassion figures prominently in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, for in this book Nietzsche is attempting to show humanity to itself in its decline so that it might move towards its overcoming, and Nietzsche wants to say that the rise of compassion figures integrally in this decline. The work is bookended by treatments of suffering and our response to it. In the opening pages, the title character tries to warn the inhabitants of a town away from the last or ultimate [*letzte*] human who flees suffering and striving, saying, “what is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?” (Z P 5) But Zarathustra's message is not received and the townspeople yearn only for the comfort of the herd, and so reply instead: “make us into this Ultimate man!” (Z P 5) The townspeople want decline, want to be sand, and so Zarathustra sets out, saying “they do not understand me: I am not the mouth for these ears” (Z P 5). We are introduced to Zarathustra as on a journey to reawaken in human beings some sense of striving that creates a place for suffering to show up as meaningful. He flees the town as he flees a human culture that wants nothing, seeking an audience that will grasp and affirm the value of humanity as a project, and so of suffering insofar as it figures in this project.

In Book II, Zarathustra meditates on shared suffering in “On the Compassionate”. There he contrasts compassion with a healthier form of being with others, what he simply calls love. Distinctive for Zarathustra about love is that it is creative, it says yes to

existence. “Thus speaks all great love: it overcomes even forgiveness and pity...All great love is above pity: for it wants – to create what is loved!” (Z II Compassionate) Where Schopenhauer had written that all love is compassion (WWR I 66), Nietzsche points to a different system of relationality. Importantly, Zarathustra moves seamlessly into a discussion of compassion and friendship, that relationship of shared joy in creation and self-creation. He urges us not to ignore the suffering of our friend, but to respond to it in a way that frees the friend to return to her work, a “a resting-place like hard bed, a camp-bed” (Z II Compassionate). Nietzsche links friendship to a relationality that, overcoming the erasure of compassion, seeks to join with others through an affirmation of the value of their interests, their projects. Friendship as a relationship of joy points to Nietzsche’s positive account of the ethical situation of human beings. If we are able to overcome the morality of compassion and its nihilistic devaluation of our finitude, Nietzsche suggests, it will be through an affirmation of the value of our finitude, our projects and the suffering necessary for their undertaking. And that affirmation, we will see Nietzsche suggest, is shared.

Nietzsche returns to the problem of compassion in the final book of *Zarathustra*, where compassion is described as Zarathustra’s last or ultimate (*letzte*) sin. A quotation from Book II’s “On the Compassionate” serves as an epigraph to Book IV:

Alas, where in the world have there been greater follies than with the compassionate? And what in the world has caused more suffering than the follies of the compassionate? Woe to all lovers who cannot surmount pity! Thus spoke the Devil to me once: Even God has his Hell: it is his love for man. And I lately heard him say these words: God is dead; God has died of his pity for man.

Two things are interesting here. First, Nietzsche seems to follow Kant in arguing that we can't have a duty to feel compassion, for compassion increases the suffering in the world and we can't have a duty to increase suffering (Kant, MM 34).³⁶ Second, rather than just avoid compassion, the challenge, Nietzsche suggests, is to envision a form of fellow feeling that surmounts compassion, surmounts suffering. And notice that it is lovers who are called to do this. That is, we don't overcome compassion in the name of extinguishing all fellow-feeling, we don't deny our connection with others. Instead, we change the way we relate to close others, we learn to share not suffering but joy.

Book IV narrates just this transformation. Zarathustra there overcomes compassion and discovers a more affirmative relation to others. At the outset of Book IV, Zarathustra is outside of his cave when he encounters a prophet who announces, "*Pity!...O Zarathustra, I come to seduce you to your ultimate sin*" (Z IV Cry). The prophet is Schopenhauer. Zarathustra calls him "the prophet of the great weariness"; he tells Zarathustra, "it is all one, nothing is worth while, the world is without meaning..." (Z IV Cry) Since compassion is for Schopenhauer the chief or ultimate virtue, from which all others are derived, that it is here called an ultimate sin points to the stage at which we find Zarathustra in his wanderings. He is halfway through the project of overcoming compassion, having revalued it as a sin rather than a virtue, but not yet having overcome it, for he still feels its pull. Zarathustra hears a cry of distress, the cry is described as that of the higher man, and it sends Zarathustra out to find the suffering figures and alleviate their pain, to express compassion for his higher men.

³⁶ Nietzsche in BGE 30 speaks of a compassion that "doubles these woes," and in AC 7 of a "*multiplier* of misery," closely mimicking Kant's language in MPV 34. From WP 368 1883-88: "'it cannot possibly be our duty to increase the evil in the world'."

What is Zarathustra's compassion for the higher men? The answer points to perhaps a third broad way in which Nietzsche criticizes compassion. First as conceptually confused, second as symptom of cultural decline, and now, parasitic on this second point but importantly different, as a possible, presently pervasive perspective on humanity. God is described as feeling compassion for humanity, showing that Nietzsche is here thinking through compassion as a perspective on humanity as a whole, as a way to approach humanity as project. Zarathustra will chastise the higher men, saying "you have not yet suffered *from man*" (Z IV Higher 6). The higher men represent Zarathustra's hopes for a human future, and so the way in which he approaches their suffering is the way in which he approaches the human future itself.

Zarathustra wanders, seeking out the distressed crier, trying to attend to suffering, but in the end never is able to locate and placate the sufferers he seeks. Instead, Zarathustra is able to overcome his compassion for the higher men only once he is able to laugh at their follies. He comes to understand that the higher men are not those for whom he waits, overhumans. "You do not understand me," he says (Z IV Intoxicated 8); "*they* are not my rightful companions!" (Z IV Sign) Zarathustra realizes their shortcomings when he finds them in his cave still pious, worshipping a donkey. The higher men still hope for a saviour, still reach for another world, and so haven't learned to affirm this world. The ugliest man seems to affirm life, to want it once more, but his remains an affirmation in the service of an ostensibly loftier ideal. "Was *that* - life? For Zarathustra's sake, very well! Once more!" (Z IV Intoxicated 1) The ugliest man tries to affirm life, but his affirmation is not yet complete because it remains ascetic. He says yes to this world only by hooking it up to an ideal he takes to transcend it, here the teachings

of Zarathustra. Not life as its own justification, not life beautiful in its terror, but life justified through something that transcends it, life falsely affirmed through non-life. Zarathustra chastises them, “we certainly do not want to enter into the kingdom of heaven: we have become men, *so we want the kingdom of earth.*” (Z IV Festival 2)

And precisely here, where Zarathustra distances himself from the higher men he had sought, Nietzsche turns to joy: Zarathustra distances himself from the higher men by showing them to themselves as unable to affirm the world through joy. He says that he waits for “stronger, more victorious, more joyful men, such as are square-built in body and soul: *laughing lions* must come!” (Z IV Greeting) The lion of the three metamorphoses of Book I can say ‘no’ to error but can’t yet create, as creation requires a great yes-saying. What the lion needs is laughter, to laugh away error not as truth’s competitor but as its friend. Zarathustra congratulates the higher men for their ability to despise themselves, as a first step towards overcoming, but insists that despising says only ‘no’ and they still need to learn how to say ‘yes’. Yes is laughter, yes is joy. “You have not learned to play and mock” (Z IV Higher 14).

Zarathustra relates all of this to the higher men, happily, through a series of aphorisms on joy:

For joy, though woe be deep: *Joy is deeper than heart’s agony.* (Z IV Intoxicated 8)

Did you ever say Yes to one joy? O my friends, then you said Yes to *all* woe as well. All things are chained and entwined together, all things are in love. (Z IV Intoxicated 10)

What does joy not want! it is thirstier, warmer, hungrier, more fearful, more secret than all woe, it wants *itself*; it bites into *itself*...it wants love, it wants hatred, it is superabundant, it gives, it throws away, begs for someone to take it, thanks him who takes, it would like to be hated; so rich is joy that it thirsts for woe, for Hell, for hatred, for shame, for the lame, for the *world* – for it knows, oh it knows this world! (Z IV Intoxicated 11)

Not a suffering that is redeemed in another world, not suffering as a punishment, or as deserved, but a joy in love with all things, a joy that revalues with its embrace, that says “pain is also joy” (Z IV Intoxicated 10). Importantly, ‘joy’ here is used to translate Nietzsche’s *Lust*. ‘Joy’ is the best English translation of the German, but the German connotes too desire and (erotic) striving: joy for Nietzsche is intertwined with a desire for existence; affirmation is a kind of craving.³⁷ We see here joy intertwined with eternal return, Nietzsche’s ultimate formula for affirming existence, and precisely here we can linger over the key difference between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.³⁸ Schopenhauer considered eternal return as a formula of affirmation but argued that, in the face of the ubiquity of suffering, any person would say no to it (WWR I 59). Nietzsche, of course, says yes. Nietzsche wants a certain affective orientation to the world that Schopenhauer thinks impossible. Nietzsche wants us to want the world.³⁹

³⁷ See Joan Stambaugh, “All Joy Wants Eternity,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 33 (2004): 335.

³⁸ When eternal return is first introduced in GS 341 it is in the context of the criticism of compassion in GS 338, again showing the connection in Nietzsche’s thinking between compassion and affirmation.

³⁹ Kathleen Marie Higgins understands the relationship between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer very much in this way, writing that Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer in a sloganizing rather than substantive way. Kathleen Marie Higgins, “Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: Temperament and Temporality,” in *Willing and Nothingness*, 163. See also Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 106-109. We should add, though, that with Nietzsche there is often substance behind the slogans. An idiosyncrasy of Nietzsche’s thought, call it a strength or a weakness, is that his most enduring criticisms have been his most personal, *ad hominem* ones.

Why is joy ineluctably tied for Nietzsche to affirmation and eternal return? Joy is perfect becoming; the experience of joy is itself an affirmation. The affirmation of eternal return is the affirmation of the world in its becoming, and to affirm becoming is to affirm it in, and as, its coming-to-be. To will the eternal return of a moment is then to acknowledge that the moment itself becomes and passes away. We don't want the moment eternally, outside of time, as if its character of becoming were a defect, we don't want to change a thing. We want not permanence, but the coming-to-be of the moment itself. We say yes to, we desire, not the final satisfaction of our desires in an eternity outside of time, but the eternal return, in time, of desire. "The love of life is almost the opposite of the love of a long life. All love is concerned with the moment and with the eternal—but *never* with 'length'" (KSA 10: 3[1]293 1882). And this is what it is to feel joy: joy is a perfect moment enjoyed for what it is, whose finitude is not a defect but a welcomed condition of its possibility.

Against joy, it is suffering and woe that says fade, go. Zarathustra speaks of a, "weariness, which wants to reach the ultimate with a single leap, with a death-leap, a

On this point, see Thomas Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Affirmative Morality: An Ethics of Virtue," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 26 (2003): 68: "...for Nietzsche, to carry an argument back to the person is the essence of philosophy and morality...Nietzsche uses persons, examples, and ad hominem arguments because he does not accept philosophy as an essentially abstract field of inquiry. This means that for Nietzsche ad hominem arguments are the strongest possible form of argument..." For example, Socrates is ugly (TI Socrates 3); Kant is a civil servant (TI Expeditions 29); Mill is insultingly clear (TI Expeditions 1); and Schopenhauer plays the flute (BGE 186). Nietzsche objects to Schopenhauer's half measure: Schopenhauer identifies the suffering of existence but, in seeking a moral justification for it, stops short of its affirmation, "a pessimist who negates both God and world but *stops* before morality,—who affirms morality and plays his flute...-- Excuse me? is this really—a pessimist?" (BGE 186) Schopenhauer comes to a stop before morality because he doesn't get past what, for Nietzsche in the *Genealogy*, are its hallmarks. *Ressentiment* for Nietzsche or the ability to trust others in their joys in Schopenhauer; the guilt of bad conscience that insists that someone must be to blame for my situation in Nietzsche and the attempt by Schopenhauer to justify suffering by making the world itself to blame; the questioning of the ascetic ideal in Nietzsche and its affirmation by Schopenhauer.

poor ignorant weariness, which no longer wants event to want” (Z I Afterworld).⁴⁰ Joy wants its wanting, wants to will itself, while suffering wants one final death-leap to an afterworld that frees it from itself. For Schopenhauer, that our desires are incapable of ultimate satisfaction, and so that suffering as the state of unsatisfied desire must be our condition, counts as the fundamental objection to existence; for Nietzsche, an unsatisfied desire is an invitation to desire something more, to desire again. *Lust* is its own end, its own justification. The economy of human joy is different from that of suffering; while Schopenhauer seeks a justification of human suffering through a reminder of our connection to some other, metaphysical source of value, joy insists that this very world of ours has meaning. Joy is not a promise for satisfaction somewhere else, it is in itself a manifestation of the value of existence.

Nietzsche ends *Ecce Homo* with a question, which because of the subsequent deterioration of his physical health remains the closing line of his published work: “Have I been understood?—*Dionysus versus the Crucified*” (EH Destiny 9). In a note, he gives more substance to the distinction he would like us to understand as the meaning of his philosophy:

Dionysus versus the ‘Crucified’: there you have the antithesis. It is *not* a difference in regard to their martyrdom—it is a difference in the meaning of it. Life itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilation. In the other case, suffering—the ‘Crucified as the innocent one’—counts as an objection to this life, as a formula for its condemnation.—One will see that the problem is that of the meaning of suffering: whether a Christian

⁴⁰ “To imagine another, more valuable world is an expression of hatred for the world that makes one suffer: the *ressentiment* of metaphysicians against actuality is here creative” (WP 579 1883-88).

meaning or a tragic meaning. In the former case, it is supposed to be the path to a holy existence; in the latter case, being is counted as *holy enough* to justify even a monstrous amount of suffering. (WP 1052 1888)

Both Dionysus and the Crucified are suffering gods. What separates them is the way in which their suffering is valued. Dionysus turns suffering to joy, and through joy affirms becoming: "...Dionysian philosophy; saying Yes to opposition and war; *becoming*, along with a radical repudiation of the very concept *being*" (EH Birth of Tragedy 3). The Crucified condemns becoming, saying, "happiness can be guaranteed only by being; change and happiness exclude one another" (WP 585 1887-88). The rival valuations of suffering follow from rival answers to the question of in what we should entrust our hopes. Zarathustra insists, "it was suffering and impotence - that created all afterworlds" (Z I Afterworld). The condemnation of suffering creates an afterworld conceived as a world apart, a world of being higher than the all too human world of becoming, a reprieve from desire. In affirming joy, however, we affirm a different sort of afterworld: "for every soul every other soul is an afterworld [*Hinterwelt*]" (Z III Convalescent 2). Nietzsche wants an afterworld, wants a safeguard for our hopes, but not the afterworld of a weariness that's had enough with life. Instead, we give ourselves over though the world opening up by the other, we say yes to life, this life, in sharing it.

Chapter Two

Asceticism and Experimentation

Does it matter that Nietzsche in *The Gay Science* writes of becoming who one is [*Du sollst der werden, der du bist*], but half a decade later will subtitle his autobiography, “how one becomes *what* one is” (emphasis added)? [*wie man wird, was man ist*]. Or that in the former case it is the conscience that says, “you shall become who you are” (GS 270 translated altered), and in the latter case the exchange is between two Nietzsches we are encouraged to take as real in their own right, narrator and protagonist? “And so I tell my life to myself” (EH P 4); “I am one thing, my writings are another matter” (EH Books 1). An initial reason to think these differences are important is the break in Nietzsche’s thought that *The Gay Science* certainly represents. On the back of the original edition, Nietzsche describes the work as the final installment of a trilogy “whose common goal it is to erect a new image and ideal of the free spirit” (GS p.28). In a letter to Lou Salomé written at about the same time, he tells his friend as much but adds something crucial: “‘A new image and ideal of the free spirit’ has been erected. That this is not the ‘free man in fact’ you will have long guessed” (SB 6:213); to Malwida von Meysenburg he writes, “my life now belongs to a higher goal” (SB 6:223); and several months later, again to Salomé: “Do not deceive yourself about me—surely you do not think that the ‘free spirit’ is my ideal!” (SL 99)

As these letters suggest, in the works that follow *The Gay Science* Nietzsche distances himself from the figure of the free spirit. With *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* we enter a period dominated instead by a revolving cast of concepts including eternal

recurrence, the overhuman, will to power, and transvaluation. Although the free spirit sometimes returns as an ideal, it is in ways indelibly altered by Nietzsche's new concerns and so bearing less and less resemblance to the free spirit of Nietzsche's middle period.⁴¹ One way to articulate this move away from the free spirit is to say that Nietzsche now moves from the human being as a 'who' to the human being as a 'what', from a free spirit who says 'no' to the errors of metaphysics and morality, to a yes-saying spirit that celebrates appearance and the processes out of which it becomes the 'what' that it is. Exhibiting this turn, Nietzsche in the 1886 preface to the second edition of *The Gay Science* distances himself from his earlier outlook:

Oh, how we now learn to forget well, and to be good at *not* knowing, as artists!
And as for our future, one will hardly find us again on the paths of those Egyptian youths who endanger temples by night, embrace statues, and want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into a bright light whatever is kept concealed for good reasons. No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to 'truth at any price,' this youthful madness in the love of truth, have lost their charm for us... We no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn; we have lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything, or to understand and 'know' everything... Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. (GS P 4)

⁴¹ See especially BGE aphorisms 24-44.

To say that truth does not remain truth when the veils are withdrawn is to say that truth is not something fundamental, something there at bottom to be found hidden underneath appearance. Instead, truths emerge out of the dynamism of appearance, “surface, the fold, the skin”. To live well is not to reside in truth, but to “stop courageously” before seeking it, as if before a work of art whose techniques we leave unquestioned. And so in becoming ourselves, Nietzsche will come to stress that there is no ‘who’ there to be unearthed, but only a ‘what’ already out there to be tracked down. “To become what one is, one must not have the faintest notion *what* one is” (EH Clever 9).⁴²

In chapter five, I make the case that friendship fosters just this sort of self-understanding. Before that, in chapters three and four I argue that friendship for Nietzsche figures in important ways in bringing about a particular type of desire for existence. Having arrived at the close of chapter one at understanding of joy as Nietzsche’s response to the nihilistic devaluation of the world, in the present chapter I link the productive aspects of joy and affirmation to their cultural preconditions Nietzsche identifies and celebrates among the Greeks. I discuss the conception of self that is demanded by Nietzschean affirmation in terms of a distinction I develop between asceticism and experimentation, the human being as ‘who’ and as ‘what’, so that, in subsequent chapters, I can make my case that friendship, a relationship defined by its fostering of the conditions for an affirmative desire for existence, is integral to the best sort of life as Nietzsche sees it, and so an understanding of Nietzsche’s views on friendship is a necessary aspect of an understanding of his ethics more generally.

⁴² Deleuze in this key writes, “I don’t know what I am—I’d have to investigate and experiment with so many things...” Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 11.

The difference between a 'who' and a 'what' tracks closely a distinction that structures Nietzsche's thought, the distinction between asceticism and experimentation. These mark what are for Nietzsche two opposed ways of conceiving of the human being. Ascetic practices are ones in which the elements of our existence are divided and ranked and we come to identify ourselves with one element against others. For Nietzsche, modern or slave morality denigrates a world of becoming in the name of an ostensibly higher reality, of God or truth or being, and so values those elements of the human condition that are seen as markers of our relationship to those ideals against those that follow from the elements of our nature susceptible to change and becoming. While the paradigmatic instantiation of the ascetic ideal is for Nietzsche the religious ascetic who denies his earthly body for the sake of his spiritual existence, Nietzsche in the third treatise of *On the Genealogy of Morality* insists that the ideal is a far more pervasive aspect of the psychology of the modern human being, indeed a sort of overarching ideal that has largely determined the development of modern morality.

Nietzsche sees the ideal at work, for instance, among natural scientists whose longing for truth stands in for the priest's longing for the divine. Though we think that with science we have left God behind, our will to truth is for Nietzsche just the latest means we have contrived to disvalue the world of becoming. Science, rather than a cool search for the bare facts, is only the latest expression of our desire to be beholden to something outside of ourselves. A faith in scientific truth "*thus affirms another world than that of life, nature, and history...must they not by the same token negate its counterpart, this world, our world?*" (GS 344 quoted by Nietzsche in GM III 24) Faith in science follows from a view of truth as set apart, something one and whole, divine, and so

is ascetic insofar as it seeks to separate different aspects of our existence in order to apotheosize one and denigrate the others. Nietzsche writes, “a few ideas are to be made indelible, omnipresent, unforgettable, ‘fixed,’...and the ascetic procedures and forms of life are means for taking these ideas out of competition with all other ideas in order to make them ‘unforgettable’” (GM II 3).

Asceticism is fundamental to slave morality because it both follows from and reinforces what Nietzsche describes as a basic presupposition of slave morality: “the *belief in oppositions of values*” (BGE 2; see also HH 1). Slave morality refuses to see value in the natural, and so insists that what has value for human beings must have wholly other, higher origin. Nietzsche calls the ascetic priest “the incarnate wish for a different existence, an existence somewhere else” (GM III 13). ‘Good’ is divine, untainted by any shared origin with what is earthly. Human reason, for example, as good must be for the slave something wholly separate from his passional nature.

Nietzsche’s answer to ascetic practices is experimentation, discussed in its own right and as an aspect of self-creation and self-overcoming. ‘Experiment’ is Nietzsche’s preferred term because it picks up on the way in which the self is constantly put forward as material for the world to work with; the experimenter wants to know what the world does, is, and so doesn’t hold back or protect anything from the experimenting.⁴³ “The real philosopher...feels the weight and duty of a hundred experiments and temptations [*Versuchen und Versuchungen*] of life: - he constantly puts *himself* at risk, he plays *the* rough game...” (BGE 205) The German *Versuch*, experiment, connotes attempting but

⁴³ Henry Staten writes of Nietzsche that, “his experimentalism involves his whole self, which is entirely dissolved in the perspective of the moment, and thus ranges freely from the largest and most generous utterances to the meanest and most reactive, as though one voice knew nothing of the others.” Staten, *Nietzsche’s Voice*, 152.

also temptation (*Versuchung*), so that to be an experiment is linked with tempting existence. Asceticism consists in an unquestioned identification of one's true self with certain of its features; Nietzsche points with experimentation instead to "a *different* kind of spirit" to show "how accommodating, how full of love the whole world shows itself toward us as soon as we do like all the world and 'let ourselves go' like all the world!" (GM II 24) The ascetic wants to ally itself with something enduring and the experimenter wants to unravel; the ascetic is slavish and the experimenter points beyond slave morality. I will suggest in subsequent chapters that it is the values of experimentation that are given pride of place in Nietzsche's account of friendship; friends help each other towards a self-understanding as a being up for grabs, constituted by a contest of diverse interpretive, experimental forces.

Nietzsche returns often to the claim that the true test of ideals is experimental rather than theoretical. In criticizing compassion, we saw in chapter one that he questions whether the view of human life according to which compassion seems valuable is necessary for human beings or could instead be supplanted by a different view: "the truth cannot possibly be on both sides: and is it on either of them? Test them and see" (D 163). He writes, as well, of what we ought to do in the wake of nihilism, the self-imposed devaluation of the ideals formerly taken to lend significance to existence: "suppose we realize how the world may no longer be interpreted in terms of these three categories [aim, unity, truth], and that the world begins to become valueless for us after that insight: then we have to ask about the sources of our faith in these three categories. Let us try if it is not possible to give up our faith in them" (WP 12 1887-88). There is no answer to the question 'how ought we to live' apart from a comparison of what it in fact is to live in

this or another particular way, no answer apart from an attempt, an experiment, that takes human beings as capable of inhabiting diverse affective orientations to the world. “We live an existence which is either a *prelude* or a *postlude*, and the best we can do in this *interregnum* is to be as far as possible our own *reges* and found little *experimental states*” (D 453).

My view is that asceticism and experimentation should be understood as different accounts of human of desire, different answers to Nietzsche’s question of what we should want, around which values a human life is best organized so as to make that life a flourishing one. Nietzsche calls the asceticism of science, “that *wanting* to halt before the factual” (GM III 24, see also GS 344). The scientist *wants* to be beholden to something. Ascetic life is “a conflict that *wants* itself to be conflicted, that *enjoys* itself in this suffering...” (GM III 11) To use one of Nietzsche’s examples, the asceticism of promise-making, of holding one’s will up and over against fate, nature, and changing circumstances, is actively taken on, wanted: “by no means simply a passive no-longer-being-able-to-get-rid-of the impression once it has been inscribed, not simply indigestion from a once-pledged word over which one cannot regain control, but rather an active no-longer-wanting-to-get-rid-of...”⁴⁴ (GM II 1) Nietzsche stresses the constitutive self-deception of an asceticism that sees itself as extinguishing all desire but in reality only does so out of one particular desire: “a contradiction such as the ascetic seems to represent, ‘life *against* life,’ ...can only be *apparent...the ascetic ideal springs from the protective and healing instincts of a degenerating life* that seeks with every means to hold

⁴⁴ Matthew Rukgaber too turns to the language of desire here: “What is created is a ‘wanting’ that suppresses the power to suppress one’s promises, a desire to keep one’s promises (duty) and to avoid breaking them (guilt).” Rukgaber, “The ‘Sovereign Individual’ and the ‘Ascetic Ideal’: On a Perennial Misreading of the Second Essay of Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morality*,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 43 no.2 (2012): 219.

its ground and is fighting for its existence” (GM III 13). Not non-life but a particular form of life, a wanting life to be such-and-such, animates the ascetic ideal. This is why Nietzsche’s titular concern in the third treatise of the *Genealogy* is the meaning or significance of ascetic ideals (*Was bedeuten asketische Ideale?*): what does such an ideal want? “It is not what this ideal has *done* that I propose to bring to light here; rather solely what it *means*, what it hints at, what lies hidden behind it...” (GM III 23) Nietzsche insists that all life wants something, all constellations of value are constellations-for particular visions of the human condition. Every will *wants*.⁴⁵

Nietzsche writes of experimentation that “we are experiments: let us also want to be them!” (D 453; see also GS 319, 327; BGE 42) He begins with a descriptive claim, that we are experiments, but what is important is our affective response to that claim, “to perceive not merely the necessity of those sides of existence hitherto denied, but their desirability” (WP 1041 1888). Nietzsche’s call is not to accept, acquiesce, or resign oneself to knowledge, but to want it, to want to be the type of creatures we are. Relatedly, eternal return, Nietzsche’s ultimate formula for affirming existence, is introduced as an imperative to desire: “do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?” (GS 341) The nihilism that Nietzsche diagnoses at the heart of slave

⁴⁵ Deleuze writes of Nietzsche’s method that Nietzsche asks, “what a will wants.” Nietzsche’s question, to follow Deleuze, is never ‘what?’ but ‘which one?’ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 77-78. Dionysus, the tempter, experimenting god [*Versucher-Gott*] (BGE 295), asks ‘which’, asks after values implicated in ways of living rather than values that transcend an abstract life. See Nietzsche AC 7 on compassion, as an example of the general argumentative strategy of connecting a social practice to a constellation of values that lend it sense and significance: Nietzsche writes that we begin to understand only when “one grasps *which* tendency is here draping the mantle of sublime words about itself” (AC 7). Schopenhauer’s continued influence here, even in a work in which Nietzsche explicitly distances himself from Schopenhauer, is interesting.

morality is a failure of desire, a failure to affirm that the world of change and becoming is worth something and that we are, as parts of that world, worth something as well.⁴⁶

Keeping in mind the distinction between asceticism and experimentation, we can attempt to get clearer about what it means to think of the human being as a ‘what’ rather than a ‘who’. Discussing the doer/deed relationship in the *Genealogy*, where Nietzsche writes that “there is no ‘being’ behind the doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’ is simply fabricated into the doing—the doing is everything” (GM I 13), Robert Pippin argues that our actions are not our effects, but our expressions. Pippin suggests that when we read GM I 13 we see Nietzsche as suggesting not that there is no subject, but that the subject is always and only *expressed* as its worldly actions, and so we need avoid the notion of a ‘doer’ only insofar as we attempt to separate it from its doings.⁴⁷ Importantly, Pippin has Nietzsche writing that, since we *are* our actions, and our actions are always and necessarily interpreted by others, we are what we are because of the interpretation of others. “I haven’t *performed the action*...if nothing I do is so understood by others as *that act*.”⁴⁸ So what we are is tied to what we do, and what we do is a matter of what we are taken to have done. Expressions require a community of interlocutors in order to be taken up, and need to be taken up if they are to become anything at all. We see ourselves come to be through the interpretations of others; the ‘what’ that we become, like anything, is the sum of interpretations attached to it, and so it is through the interpretative eyes of others that we are transformed into ourselves. Nietzsche’s helpful illustration of this point is the example of a flash of lightning. The logic of our grammar leads us to

⁴⁶ On nihilism as a failure of desire, see Robert Pippin, *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 19-21.

⁴⁷ Pippin, *First Philosophy*, 75.

⁴⁸ Pippin, *First Philosophy*, 79.

think in terms of a thing or doer (lightning) that sometimes acts or performs deeds (flashes). But lightning just is its flash, its expression, and so we are misled when we impute to the expression some being or 'who' that does the expressing, some doer behind the deed. There is just the 'what' of expression, of what occurs.

On this account, if the subject is what gets expressed, a free subject, a subject whose actions are meaningfully her own, is one who achieves a more authentic relationship to the world to which she is answerable because it makes her who she is, and that relationship is one that upholds the innocence of the world, that sees it not as a forum for causes and events, but alive with making and creating.⁴⁹ Freedom, then, doesn't seek to describe a relationship between a will and the events that follow its movements; freedom is instead an evaluative term that speaks to the character of one's self-understanding as expression, as a what.⁵⁰ We find a related account in the work of Deleuze. He writes of finding his own writing voice through his relationships with the texts of others, notably Nietzsche:

It's a strange business, speaking for yourself, in your own name, because it doesn't at all come with seeing yourself as an ego or a person or a subject. Individuals find a real name for themselves, rather, only through the harshest exercise in depersonalization, by opening themselves up to the multiplicities everywhere within them, to the intensities running through them. A name as the direct awareness of such intensive multiplicity is the opposite of the

⁴⁹ Pippin writes that Nietzsche wants us to relate to ourselves "in a way that makes possible a new kind of outward-looking relation to the world." Pippin, *First Philosophy*, 112.

⁵⁰ See Robert Guay, "Nietzsche, Contingency, and the Vacuity of Politics," in *Nietzsche, Nihilism, and the Philosophy of the Future*, ed. Jeffrey Metzger (London: Continuum, 2009), 161. "Since, in Nietzsche's view, agency cannot consist in exerting influence on the world from a location external to it, such a situated context is needed for there to be anything that could count as spontaneous. But then the ability to claim one's deeds as one's own and take responsibility for them depends on conditions that make one susceptible to 'fate'."

depersonalization effected by the history of philosophy; it's depersonalization through love rather than subjection...⁵¹

Although Deleuze's coinage, the concept of a depersonalization through love articulates well several of Nietzsche's attempts to outline a positive ethical vision for the human being. Pointing to the tentative, experimental status of his vision, Nietzsche writes of the type of affirmative relationship to the world possible after the death of God, that "love of life is still possible, only one loves differently. It is the love for a woman who causes doubts in us" (GS P 3). Nietzsche attempts to articulate this sort of desire for existence through a series of ideals that stress the cultivation of a certain affective, desirous stance towards existence: eternal recurrence, *amor fati*, and self-creation among others.

Whenever Nietzsche goes to clarify these and other concepts we as readers risk being confounded by a constant pairing of imperatives that seem to contradict each other. Our strategy in getting through such seemingly intractable paradoxes must be something like Wolfgang Müller-Lauter's, who argues that in Nietzsche's ideals we find placed in a productive play fundamentally divergent imperatives so that the task of Nietzsche's reader is to conceptualize a figure or form of human feeling able to contain and celebrate rather than suffer from contradiction.⁵² In this vein, Nietzsche describes as a prerequisite for revaluing values the combining of "contrary capacities that had to be kept from disturbing, destroying one another" (EH Clever 9).⁵³ The apparent contradictions most at work in Nietzsche are between freedom and fate, being and becoming, necessity and chance, but also the tension between a self's noble pride and its self-overcoming and in

⁵¹ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 6-7.

⁵² Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: His philosophy of contradictions and the contradictions of his philosophy*, trans. David J. Parent (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 1-6.

⁵³ See also Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, 21-22.

the dual nature of self-creation where the human being is both creator and creation. Nietzsche is concerned with outlining a form of human feeling able to feel the capacity for creation that these distinctions engender rather than, as he diagnoses slave morality, suffering from them by seeing their tension as a defect, an objection to human existence. So, for instance, in *Twilight of the Idols*, Goethe's freedom is called by Nietzsche a "trusting fatalism" (TI Expeditions 49); Goethe is described as "strong enough" to allow himself to be what his fate will make of him:

Goethe...he did not sever himself from life, he placed himself within it...What he aspired to was *totality*; he strove against the separation of reason, sensuality, feeling, will (- preached in the most horrible scholasticism by Kant, the antipodes of Goethe); he disciplined himself to a whole, he *created* himself...A spirit thus *emancipated* stands in the midst of the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism, in the *faith* that only what is separate and individual may be rejected, that in the totality everything is redeemed and affirmed—*he no longer denies*. (TI Expeditions 49)

Goethe achieves freedom by letting go of the desire to be something other than in the world, to be pure and unmoved; he comes to trust the world and his place in it. Rather than something at odds with physical necessity, Nietzsche calls freedom a characteristic of those strong enough to allow themselves to be settled by the world, to grow into the being the world will make of them. It is, again, a desire, a way of wanting the world.

Likewise, the freedom of artists, an account that should always be brought to bear on Nietzsche's call for artistic self-creation, is marked by the absence of the directing 'I'. Nietzsche writes of artists that "their feeling of freedom, finesse and authority, of

creation, formation, and control only reaches its apex when they have stopped doing anything ‘voluntarily’ and instead do everything necessarily, - in short, they know that inside themselves necessity and ‘freedom of the will’ have become one” (BGE 213). Creation doesn’t emerge from a will, choice, or a plan. We don’t impose ourselves on the world so much as we allow ourselves to be its conduits. The artist creates precisely in receding just enough to allow herself to be a conduit for some force that is not her yet infuses and moves through her in a way she claims as her own, and loves, and so she calls herself free just when she recedes most.

Once again pairing contraries in order to feel the potential of their tension, in the dice throw of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the affirmation of necessity is called chance (Z III Before Sunrise; III The Seven Seals 3). There are good and bad ways of rolling the dice, good and bad ways of understanding the connection between becoming and being, necessity and chance. The good player rolls the dice, plays, knowing that the dice return necessarily. There is only fate, only one roll, but the good player *calls* the return of the dice chance. In a different context Nietzsche describes a lover of fate who “is strong enough; hence everything *must* turn out for his best” (EH Wise 2).⁵⁴ We throw the dice: chance. We affirm the number that falls back: necessity. Not a necessity that sets limits, not a compulsion, but chance as what an innocent world does, what’s necessary in an innocent world.⁵⁵ We don’t play the odds, we don’t roll until we get our numbers,

⁵⁴ The problematic of willing backwards from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*’s discussion of eternal recurrence counts as an additional articulation of this issue in Nietzsche (Z II Redemption).

⁵⁵ Deleuze writes, “it is not a matter of several dicethrows which, because of their number, finally reproduce the same combination. On the contrary, it is a matter of a single dicethrow which, due to the number of the combination produced, comes to reproduce itself as such.” Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 25.

because the world is not an impediment, a contestant among others, it is the game, the dice table, play.⁵⁶

Nietzsche begins book four of *The Gay Science* with a further example of this phenomenon, his wish for himself for a new year: “I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth!” (GS 276) *Amor fati*, love of fate, holds together a curious complex of concepts. We are called to love fate, to see the necessity of fate as beautiful, and this is something that we can learn to do. But the fate that we learn to love cannot be conceived of as stifling, as an impediment to freedom, for he insists elsewhere that the task of *amor fati* is to “not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it...but *love* it...” (EH Clever 10) In coming to love fate we, “make things beautiful” (GS 276). Fate can’t rule out agency, for in loving it we ‘make’: loving fate is put forward as the condition of an exemplary exercise of agency.

Later in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche again links agency with necessity, writing that “we, however, *want to become those we are*—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves. To that end we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world: we must become *physicists* in order to be able to be *creators* in this sense” (GS 335). Here becoming unique, becoming able to create ourselves, follows from understanding necessity as physicists do. Becoming ourselves is becoming necessary.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Nietzsche in an early unpublished essay writes that the deepest wisdom of Greek spirituality is that “even the gods are subject to necessity”, helping to make their faith not one of duty or asceticism but a “religion of life” (Nietzsche, *Die Geburt des tragischen Gedankens*, quoted in Pippin, *First Philosophy*, 10).

⁵⁷ Keith Ansell Pearson describes these examples from Nietzsche as “different ways of thinking fate and freedom in terms of our dual nature as creatures and creators...an opposition Nietzsche is working through in the entirety of his writings.” Keith Ansell Pearson, “A “Dionysian Drama on the ‘Fate of the Soul’”:

It is only by reading these passages alongside something like Deleuze's depersonalization through love that we can make sense of the otherwise paradoxical tangle of concepts. It is only if freedom is a certain mode of fate that we could become ourselves through becoming necessary. It is in loving, surrendering, affirming that we let go of the instinct to see the self as needing protection from the world, and so we are able to "let ourselves go' like all the world" (GM II 24), becoming ourselves in the act of giving ourselves away.

All of the above examples are attempts to articulate a form of desire that Nietzsche would have us cultivate. Nietzsche wants us to want the world, envisioning a form of human feeling whose strength is expressed in its giving itself away, allowing an experimental, affirmative depersonalization through love into words, fingernails, "books, handwriting" (Nietzsche, SE, p. 129). That Nietzsche calls us to *want* necessity helps to make clear the bent of his positive ideals: we cannot feel a lack or need for what we know will happen necessarily, and so if we want that necessity, then the character of our striving must be other than lack or need. Desire for Nietzsche is not negative; *Lust* is positive, a yes. Nietzsche asks what would take to feel joy in the face of becoming, to understand "becoming as inventing, willing, self-negating, self-overcoming: no subject, but a doing, positing, creative, no 'causes and effects'" (WLN 7[54] 1886-87). He asks what sort of being could see herself *as* inventing, willing, rather than as a subject who invents, who wills. "No subject-'atoms'. The sphere of a subject constantly becoming

An Introduction to Reading On the Genealogy of Morality," in *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, 28. See also Guay, "Vacuity", 162: "The productive process that makes us what we are depends on maintaining a tension between human situatedness and human aspiration. Nietzsche insists, accordingly, that how one orients oneself to human contingency expresses 'what one is' in a way that renders that orientation fundamental to ethical assessment in general." See also Christa Davis Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 20-21.

*larger or smaller...*No 'substance' but rather something that as such strives for more strength..." (WLN 9[98] 1887) And crucially, Nietzsche asks what, or who, could give herself over, who could trust her fate in a way that affirms the world as innocent, and so possess "that self-knowledge which is humility – for we are not our own work – but equally is gratitude – for we have 'turned out well'" (WLN 2 [116] 1885-86). This last quotation is, I think, perhaps the clearest articulation of the ethical impetus of Nietzsche's thought: to see ourselves as the work of the world, to give up talk of a self who stands apart, and to feel joy at the prospect.

Nietzsche returns so often to the Greeks because he believes they fostered the communal conditions for just this sort of desire for existence, conditions of experimentation extinguished by the asceticism of slave morality. Nietzsche has little interest in outlining a human nature that transcends particular cultural *types*, which he understood as unique constellations of value judgments, ethical systems, and physiologies. Types are ways of being human, forms of life. Richard Schacht describes, "complex configurations of dispositions, attitudes, beliefs, valuation, and interpretive tendencies."⁵⁸ Although we often find Nietzsche celebrating some type and denigrating another, what interests him most is the fact of types, that they arise out of human activity and that that activity can be better or worse utilized and understood (BGE 225; GS 301). Nietzsche writes, "I avail myself of the person as of a strong magnifying glass that allows one to make visible a general but creeping and elusive calamity" (EH Wise 7). Human history is the history of the development of types, forms of life, or constellations of possibilities for life, and

⁵⁸ Richard Schacht, "Nietzsche's Naturalism and Normativity," in *Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Normativity*, eds. Christopher Janaway and Simon Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 244.

individual human beings literally embody their moment in history like a photograph of a river. Yet individual human beings are not passive receptacles of psychological raw material: we interact with our inheritances and with each other in a way that makes history not a mechanical or teleological unfolding but a complex cluster of constantly re-constituting interrelations among human beings, their history, morality and psychology. Each partly creates and is partly created by the others in what is, for Nietzsche, a sort of beautiful and dizzying spectacle. The particular retelling Nietzsche wants to give of human history involves the eclipse of Greek morality by slave morality.

For Nietzsche, two recurring themes from Greek culture bear importantly on their ability to feel joy or desire towards existence, the Greek agon and Greek tragic art. In both, we can see Nietzsche trying to articulate something covered over by slave morality, a certain willingness to put oneself at risk, to see oneself as an experiment rather than something already achieved. What brings together the agon and tragic art is the feeling necessary to both, what Nietzsche calls the most illustrious human joy, “in which existence celebrates its own transfiguration” (WLN 41[6] 1885). Common to both the agon and tragic art is public, shared creation. In the agon, values and identities are forged in common; in tragic art, meaning is created out of and through the audience understood not as spectator but as participant. And Nietzsche wants to stress the possibility of celebrating the creation and maintenance of these social spaces that make possible the experiencing of joy in and as existence. Deleuze writes, “according to Nietzsche it has never been understood that the tragic = the joyful.”⁵⁹ In subsequent chapters I suggest that friendship for Nietzsche reanimates these very forces of a shared creation that occurs

⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 36.

through an affirmation of what in ourselves we owe to others, and so it is important here clearly to set out those forces that so interested Nietzsche.

Much of the scholarship considering Nietzsche's conception of the agon has been concerned with making a case for or against an agonistic political theory. I consider Nietzsche's interest in the agon to be much more pervasive in his thought, and here put it to work in the complementary service of Nietzsche's ethics, and more specifically an ethos of shared creation that is friendship. It is pervasive because it follows from his fundamental views about human beings: that they are bundles of competing drives, sometimes ascending, sometimes forging alliances, sometimes taking hold of a person's being. Agonistic relationships, insofar as they foster and render meaningful contest among diverse forces, are for Nietzsche the appropriate ethical model for beings whose psychology is similarly characterized by contest among diverse forces the organization of which can make for meaningful lives, that is beings like us. Contest at the level of culture gives form to the basic work of being an individual, namely working out some sort of self, becoming the what that we are in a contest that, because it is without end, makes that 'what' its very overcoming.⁶⁰

Nietzsche understands the agon as a forum for a type of contest that encourages human excellence by making public and mutable the standards of success. Public contest, in oration, poetry, or athletics for example, encourages participants to excel by exceeding the common measure, but also to strive to change that standard in the act of

⁶⁰ See H. W. Siemens, "Agonal Communities of Taste: Law and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy of Transvaluation," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 24 (2002): 83–112. Siemens traces Nietzsche's concern for the agon through the notebook material well into Nietzsche's mature period, showing it to be a theme animating Nietzsche's entire career. Helping to establish the connection between the different registers of individual and collective contest, Christopher Janaway points out that the type of unity of individual drives Nietzsche advocates is a unity that maintains a place for conflict or contest among drives. Janaway, "Morality, Drives, and Human Greatness," in *Nietzsche, Naturalism, & Normativity*, 188-189.

overcoming, changing the standards of success the way that successful science or art can change what counts as good science, good art.⁶¹ The agon is a sort of excellence-making machine, affording a culture a site and mechanism for the creation of excellence through shared striving.⁶² Christa Davis Acampora writes that:

the agon is attractive to Nietzsche largely because it provides a *framework*—or gathers the elements of a context—out of which meaning can be produced and reproduced. Contest provides the means for energizing a kind of creative activity Nietzsche thinks is so vital to the production of forms of life that enhance the significance of human existence and its estimable prospects.⁶³

Nietzsche writes approvingly of the early roots of ostracism among the Greeks, when the ostracized were those so strong as to end competition, to silence the agon and so the production of meaning (HC, pp.88-89). They silenced the wonder of what Nietzsche calls *Schein*, which though usually connotes the ‘appearance’ that contrasts Kant’s thing-in-itself, means for Nietzsche the appearing of the world, its seemingness, the ways in which the world comes into being through the ways it appears, seems, to us.⁶⁴ Nietzsche asks: “What is ‘appearance’ to me now! Certainly not the opposite of some essence...Certainly not a dead mask that one could place on an unknown x or remove

⁶¹ This is how Nietzsche understood excellence most generally, as changing the standards of success. See discussions of Beethoven and Shakespeare, for example. See WP 966; Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 192-194, 242.

⁶² This view of Greek culture as organized around competition and its social preconditions Nietzsche shared with his Basel colleague and friend Jacob Burckhardt, who defended a similar thesis in his *History of Ancient Greek Culture*. Burckhardt is usually regarded as the source of this interpretation, though Nietzsche’s view predates his connection with Burckhardt, having already explored the theme as a philology student at Leipzig during the late 1860s before Burckhardt’s Basel lectures began in 1870. See Christa Davis Acampora, “‘The Contest Between Nietzsche and Homer’: Revaluing the Homeric Question,” in *Nietzsche and the German Tradition*, ed. Nicholas Martin (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2003).

⁶³ Christa Davis Acampora, “Nietzsche’s Agonal Wisdom,” *International Studies in Philosophy* 35 no.3 (2003): 170.

⁶⁴ See also Lawrence Hatab, “How Does the Ascetic Ideal Function in Nietzsche’s Genealogy?” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 35/36 (2008): 106-123. See also Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 94.

from it! Appearance is for me that which lives and is effective..." (GS 54) Nietzsche identifies in the agon the willingness to celebrate by making public and shared a space where we see the world not as a false copy but as something underway, striving, a celebration that manifests itself in an affirmative engagement.

That Nietzsche seeks to honour appearance points to an additional aspect of his appreciation for the Greek agon. Crucial to the value of contest is that it is distinctively human, as human finitude is here a condition of the creation of value; it is only because no value could ever be absolute, no victory final, that the contest is unending, and so rather than seeing our finitude as an objection to existence, in valuing contest the Greeks built our finitude into our flourishing. Insofar as Homer's competitors, to be great, had to risk all, including life, the contest was open only to mortal, human beings and not to the gods.⁶⁵ This type of affirmation, that seeks not resignation or acquiescence but love of the inevitable contours of human existence, animates Nietzsche's entire body of work, and the figure of the contestant suits particularly well this sort of celebration. In the first instance, to take part in contest or play is always to affirm the authority of evaluation. In wanting to win one values winning and so values the standards according to which she is named victor. Second, however, superlative achievement consists in changing the very standards of evaluation at work, reveling in their becoming. The paradox Nietzsche highlights is that of an affirmation that expresses itself in an overcoming, creation as destruction.

The agon is a particularly successful attempt to work out a relationship to the productive tension of becoming. Standards and values are felt as becoming, but joyfully. Nietzsche applauds the power of tragic art for the same ability. In Greek tragic theatre

⁶⁵ See Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*, 43-44.

human transformation was made visible, public, and real so that to experience tragedy was to experience the world as alive. The concentric seating of the Greek theatre placed the audience in the midst of the action, making identification with actors and plot imperative. Nietzsche writes, “a public of spectators as we know it was unknown to the Greeks: in their theaters the terraced structure of concentric arcs made it possible for everybody to actually *overlook* the whole world of culture around him and to imagine, in absorbed contemplation, that he himself was a chorist” (BT 8). Nietzsche is interested in the way in which the spectator feels herself to be part of the scene, to view the transfigurations of the scene as her own, what Tracy Strong calls an “ecstatic doubling.”⁶⁶ Strong explains, “it is quite clear that Nietzsche finds those who were actual—that is true—spectators for tragedy experienced a transfiguration or transformation. But they were not themselves changed *in toto* into another being. They *saw* themselves transformed before their very eyes. *Transfiguration is one’s own experience, to which, however, one is a witness.*”⁶⁷ Nietzsche is interested in the way that tragic art involved the audience in this complex transformation; instead of an onlooker who witnesses a story reenacted, the Greek theatre, like the agon, is a space where becoming is celebrated within its very power and pulse, something alive and new rather than read from a script. Tragedy drew one out of her experience so that she felt herself as beholden to the communal forces that would undo her. Because public, shared, affirmed, tragic art shows the thingness, the being of becoming. “To see oneself transformed before one’s own eyes and to begin to act as if one had actually entered into another body, another

⁶⁶ Tracy Strong, “Philosophy of the Morning: Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 39 (2010): 54.

⁶⁷ Strong, “Politics of Transfiguration,” 54.

character....And this phenomenon is encountered epidemically: a whole throng experiences the magic of this transformation” (BT 8).⁶⁸

Nietzsche returns to these themes in *The Gay Science* 301. Discussing those he calls higher human beings, Nietzsche laments that they too often fail to properly recognize their situation somewhere between creation and creator, spectator and actor. It is this space that Nietzsche champions and calls on his readers to better understand when he writes:

he fancies that he is a *spectator* and *listener* who has been placed before the great visual and acoustic spectacle that is life; he calls his own nature *contemplative* and overlooks that he himself is really the poet who keeps creating this life. Of course, he is different from the *actor* of this drama, the so-called active type; but he is even less like a mere spectator and festive guest in front of the stage...We who think and feel at the same time are those who really continually *fashion* something that had not been there before...⁶⁹ (GS 301; see also BGE 225)

Nietzsche understands tragic art as, like the agon, a site for the public production of meaning, a space where becoming is celebrated in and for its coming to be. In the agon one put oneself at risk; in the theatre one saw oneself transformed. It is this in Greek culture that interests Nietzsche, and this that slave morality covers over.

⁶⁸ Acampora writes: “we have the power not only to create stories about other fictional beings but also to become works of art ourselves, and not only in the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves but also in the immediate and visceral experience of who and what we are and who we could be in the future.” Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*, 63

⁶⁹ Nietzsche’s personal disappointment with Wagner’s Bayreuth Festival should be seen in this light. Nietzsche was aghast to find the spectators there to be pathetic and uninteresting. Michael Tanner writes: “what was intended to be a festival in which the community celebrated their shared values at minimal cost turned into something in which the fashionable world of philistines of culture was most in evidence, along with crowned heads and other irrelevances.” Tanner, *Nietzsche*, 21. Nietzsche had coined the term ‘philistines of culture’ in *David Strauss: the Confessor and the Writer*, to denote the person who has mastered culture as a set of propositions but makes sure that it has no real effect on him.

Nietzsche's stance on slave morality is ambivalent. Slave morality has made us who we are but it has also closed us off from our origins and so from a sense that present state is a contingent one, we are still being created. Nietzsche gives voice to both sorts of valuation when he calls the bad conscience bred through slave morality the "greatest and most uncanny of sicknesses" that nonetheless represents "something so new, deep, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, *and full of future...*" (GM II 16) Nietzsche writes as well that it is only thanks to slave morality that humanity has become interesting (GM I 6); the tangle of drives fostered by slave morality offers possibilities of life unavailable to earlier types, giving the psychology of modern humanity a "*depth* in a higher sense..." (GM I 6) Nietzsche often speaks of 'tension' in this context. The breeding of slave morality has produced beings infused with a sometimes terrible but sometimes hopeful "magnificent tension of spirit" (BGE P) that, if worked on, could allow for the development of new forms of life. Slave morality has created psychological resources for new types of human beings, although hope for putting those resources to work in the service of laudable goals is tenuous.⁷⁰

Although he finds it alive with this possibility, we find Nietzsche most often criticizing slave morality. In his criticisms, however, we should not see Nietzsche as hearkening for greener pastures, trying to erase two thousand years of human development. Looking to the future, Nietzsche calls instead for "a renewed self-contemplation and deepening of humanity" (BGE 32). Like Michel Foucault,

⁷⁰ Henry Staten asks: "how can Nietzsche not be fascinated by such a will, how can it not disturb the univocity of the judgment of contempt which he so easily pours on weakness and sickness. Here Nietzsche comes up against something he cannot look down on, a paradox that confounds his distinctions between strength and weakness, health and disease..." Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, 50,

Nietzsche's glances backward in time are always meant to help us through our contemporary situation and its unique problems and possibilities.⁷¹ Interesting Nietzsche is slave morality's singular success in cutting us off from the roots of our type, from *genealogizing*, a success that makes us forgetful of our past and so unable to imagine a future otherwise than slave morality. He laments that slave morality "monopolizes the word 'truth' for its perspective..." (EH Destiny 5) Nietzsche wants to reanimate the story of how we became the type of creatures we are so that we might become something new and in so doing better achieve our potential as the type of beings who *can* become new, who can remake themselves.

What Nietzsche unequivocally laments in slave morality is the total victory of a certain interpretation of the human being that follows from the Christian priest's ability to turn outward-directed drives inward, so that rather than understanding the human being as a site of struggle with peers and the world, we come to understand subjectivity as an internalized struggle between a being and itself, the self as a self-relation. He writes of the redirection of creative forces from the cultural sphere towards the individual: "the active force that is at work on a grander scale in those violence-artists and organizers and that builds states, is basically the same force that here—inwardly, on a smaller, pettier scale, in a backwards direction...creates for itself the bad conscience" (GM II 18). The priest's victory is in bending back the force of creative energy, so that rather than feeling the pulse of world and value creation as public, we carve out an inner space, a subject. "All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn themselves inwards*—this is what I call the *internalizing* of man: thus first grows in man that which he later calls his

⁷¹ Michel Foucault, "The Art of Telling the Truth," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, ed. Lawrence Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988).

‘soul.’ The entire inner world, originally thin as if inserted between two skins, has spread and unfolded, has taken on depth, breadth, height...” (GM II 16) Even earlier, in *Daybreak*, Nietzsche was concerned to understand modern morality as following from a turn inward. There he recounts the turn from our seeking to overcome another, a “striving for distinction” which is “the striving for domination over the next man”, to “the triumph of the ascetic over himself, his glance turned inwards which beholds man split asunder into sufferer and spectator...” (D 113)

In what Nietzsche calls ‘master morality’, the nobility of masters consists in their untroubled relationship to their actions, where one trusts one’s instincts and calls ‘good’ whatever one does as a matter of course. Nietzsche asks: “what is noble?...It is not works, it is *faith* that is decisive here...some fundamental certainty that a noble soul has about itself, something that cannot be looked for, cannot be found... - *The noble soul has reverence for itself*” (BGE 287). The ease of the noble person is something like the skill of the athlete or craftsperson, for whom excellence consists in skill’s instinctual expression in action. The noble doesn’t know *that* she is noble, she knows *how* to be herself, to let herself go, which is to trust her instincts in the way that is necessary for any sort of superlative achievement, whether in being human, or being a sprinter or a carpenter. The noble is a ‘what’, not a ‘who’.

For Nietzsche, what is bad or base is simply, and derivatively, what is unlike the noble in this respect. For the base, an outward-oriented, immanent relationship between a person and her world is replaced by the carving out of an internalized ‘I’ that understands its relationship to the world in a newly problematized, mediated way, wherein for “that *instinct for freedom*...the matter on which this force’s formative and violating nature

vents itself is precisely man himself, his entire animal old self—and *not*, as in that larger and more conspicuous phenomenon, the *other* human...” (GM II 18) In an evocative passage, Nietzsche likens the product of slave morality to a little lamb hunted by a bird of prey. The lamb says the bird of prey is evil for harming it, and it itself is good for doing no harm (GM I 13). The lamb needs to think of the subject as a neutral substratum abstracted from its actions in order to escape the reality of its powerlessness against the strong. Nietzsche explains that slave moralists “maintain no other belief more ardently than this one, that *the strong one is free* to be weak, and the bird of prey to be a lamb—they thereby gain for themselves the right to hold the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey” (GM I 13).⁷² Nietzsche thinks that slave morality has created this view of subjectivity: an I that thinks, that decides, acts, or holds back. The subject is an inside, a self that deals with the world as outside.

Importantly for Nietzsche, the victory of the slave interpretation has meant the victory of a certain picture of morality suitable only to it.⁷³ In the way that victors are said to write history, Nietzsche sees the human being as written by victorious interpretive forces that are able to mask the interpretive character of their account of human

⁷² Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 123 describes how the lamb assumes of the bird “that it can hold back from its effects and separate itself from what it can do: it is evil because it does not hold itself back. It is therefore assumed that one and the same force is effectively held back in the virtuous lamb but given free rein in the evil bird of prey.”

⁷³ What Bernard Williams has called the “minimalism” of Nietzsche’s moral psychology consists in the thought that whenever we encounter a unique configuration of particular moral concepts, we have reason to doubt that the configuration is merely descriptive and instead seek out a unique or particular moral view which is served by that conception. Williams’ focus is the peculiarity of the account of human action Nietzsche targets, peculiar first in its claim that human actions are metaphysical units unlike any other event and second that those unique metaphysical units stand in a unique relationship to a different unique sort of metaphysical unit, a self. Nietzsche, for Williams, suggests that the account of human action that posits a doer or a ‘who’ before and separate from its deeds allows for blameworthiness and personal moral responsibility. Such a picture flourishes not because of its explanatory power but because of its place in a particular moral view. Bernard Williams, “Nietzsche’s Minimalist Moral Psychology,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 1 no.1 (1994): 4-14. See also R. Lanier Anderson, “What is a Nietzschean Self?” in *Nietzsche, Naturalism, & Normativity*, 208-211.

psychology and morality. What is made to seem like a neutral, descriptive account actually serves the particular ends of the account's creators. As Pippin writes:

in order for the slave to deny consistently the worth or significance of the very real power exercised by the master over him, a metaphysical and moral system begins to unfold. This system makes possible the justification of an inner, private world, and a metaphysics wherein intentions, and intentions alone, can determine what an agent is truly responsible for, and wherein soul, or a true self, can be distinguished from the "external" body so obviously subject to the will of the master.⁷⁴

Slave morality allows the weak person to see the actual world, in which he is weak, as unimportant in the face of an inner world where he calls himself strong for *not* acting. For Nietzsche, it is only the powerless, only those for whom the world is fallen or dangerous, who would be seduced by such a picture, and so the success of slave morality, as a type, has come at the expense of humanity as a whole, as a project. In Nietzsche's own words: "the subject (or, to speak more popularly, the *soul*) has until now been the best article of faith on earth, because it made possible for the majority of mortals, the weak and oppressed of every kind, that sublime self-deception of interpreting weakness itself as freedom, of interpreting their being-such-and-such as a *merit*" (GM I 13).⁷⁵ Slave morality's ascent came at the expense of the experimental, affirmative aspects of Greek culture that so interested Nietzsche. The slave is ascetic; slave morality consists in

⁷⁴ Robert Pippin, "Nietzsche's Alleged Farewell," in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, eds. B. Magnus and K. Higgins (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 262.

⁷⁵ Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, 41 writes of the slave who cultivates "a vengeance in the depth of his interiority, by redefining helpless passivity as a free exercise of will."

the invention of a doer behind the deed, a true self no longer up for grabs, no longer able to be risked.

Nietzsche's ambivalence towards Socrates figures importantly here. For Nietzsche, Socrates like slave morality is impressive because he wins, but dangerous because he wins by changing the standards of success in a way Nietzsche understands as ultimately detrimental to human beings. Socrates is "the buffoon who *got himself taken seriously*" (TI Socrates 5) because he "discovered a new kind of *agon*" (TI Socrates 8). Socrates "fascinated because he touched on the agonal instinct of the Hellenes - he introduced a variation into the wrestling-matches among the youths and young men" (TI Socrates 8).⁷⁶ Socratic dialectic is a form of contest, and so seductive to the competitive noble, but a contest the demands of which wrought fundamental changes in the noble's self-understanding, that made the noble slavish by seducing him into a self-understanding as a neutral substratum, as a being capable of adopting a position abstracted from the concrete and so able to decide what to do and who to be.⁷⁷ Acampora argues that, "the contest is no longer organized between competitors seeking to outdo each other but rather finds its expression in a moralized rational contest in which one aims to undercut the

⁷⁶ Acampora writes how, "Nietzsche considers how the various components of the agon break down or are purposely corrupted in the course of Western history...e.g., the Socratic adaptation in the form of the dialectic has disastrous effects upon the agon of tragic art, and the Christian perversion of the internalized agon of Platonic philosophy results in a destructive battle against oneself that produces self-loathing and disgust." Acampora, "Agonal Wisdom," 168.

⁷⁷ Mark Migotti explains, "slave morality is the morality of impartial value in that it is the morality of value chosen by an (allegedly) impartial subject, one who is in himself neither master nor slave but can *freely choose* to behave and to evaluate either as the one or as the other...Masters lose their grip on their own morality by being made to feel anxious for being who they are and doing what they do...Nobles become infected with bad conscience when they begin to worry about whether they are responsible, not simply for conducting themselves as befits a noble, but for *being* noble." Mark Migotti, "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Critical Introduction to *On the Genealogy of Morality, Essay I*," in *Nietzsche's On The Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, 112-13. Nietzsche writes in BGE 62 of religions of suffering that, "crush the strong, strike down the great hopes, throw suspicion on the delight in beauty, skew everything self-satisfied, manly, conquering, domineering, every instinct that belongs to the highest and best-turned out type of 'human,' twist them into uncertainty, crisis of conscience, self-destruction..."

internal enemies that make life so torturous in the first place...Through this process the agon is effectively displaced from the cultural realm to the individual.”⁷⁸ (See D 113; BT 13) The rise of slave morality has come at the expense of the public, shared agon and so the possibility of seeing ourselves as sites of communal struggle. We become answerable to an invented interlocutor, a neutral third party to whom we must justify our actions, a Socrates, instead of to a world and the community with and through which we partly create, partly respond to it.

Importantly, in Socrates’ game the rules are fixed: reason rules absolutely in Socratic dialectic, and so Socrates wins not by elevating his opponent but, as will be definitive of slave morality, diminishing her by showing how she fails to attain an objective, *uncontestable* standard. The character of the contestant’s achievement in the agon is a great ‘yes’ that honours one’s opponent and in so doing honours and fosters the continued need for and value of contest. Socratic victory, conversely, diminishes the other, enervating future contest. Reason is not a true contestant, not a true interlocutor because the dialogue is fixed. Not able to put oneself at risk, the only way for the slave to feel victorious is to push others beneath her, what Nietzsche calls *Vernichtungslust* or a striving for the destruction of the other that would incapacitate her.⁷⁹ What Nietzsche calls the internalization of man is the further extension of this process inward. The ascetic’s *Vernichtungslust* is directed inward, towards himself. The ascetic seeks to destroy a part of himself, to silence the constructive contest possible among diverse

⁷⁸ Christa Davis Acampora, “Nietzsche Contra Homer, Socrates, and Paul,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 24 (2002): 32.

⁷⁹ See Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*, 19-22, 53, 75-76. Nietzsche writes in WS 29: “The envious man is conscious of every respect in which the man he envies exceeds the common measure and desires to push him down to it - or to raise himself up to the height of the other: out of which there arise two different modes of action which Hesiod designated as the evil and the good Eris.”

strands of his being, aligning himself instead with a few indelibles taken to represent what is best about him.

It is thus important to stress that it is not only or primarily the content of the slave interpretation that Nietzsche regrets. Nietzsche doesn't have the theoretical resources to call an interpretation of human existence wrong in itself, since for Nietzsche judgments about the value of such interpretations are made with reference to a set of values stipulated to merit such a role in guiding human development, values such as life, power, or growth. Instead, Nietzsche laments slave morality's success in closing us off from rival interpretations of human beings by building into itself an inability to be questioned. As Alexander Nehamas puts it, slave morality depends upon its ability "to conceal and to deny its own interpretive status."⁸⁰ Nietzsche's complaint is not that rival interpretations might be true, but that they might be powerful, different, new. The priest has his will to power (GM III 15); he imaginatively reinterprets human existence, giving human life a new meaning, a new set of values. But central to slave morality is its pretense to finality, so that the priest's will to power is a horrible contradiction, a will to power that seeks to silence all power understood as the interpretative, inner energy of life.⁸¹ This is why Nietzsche can write that he attacks the Christian ideal, "not with the aim of destroying it but only of putting an end to its *tyranny* and clearing the way for new ideals..." (WP 361 1887)⁸² Slave morality, like the Socratic agon, orchestrates rivalry or contest in a particular way suited to its purposes, and Nietzsche wants to point out what is lost

⁸⁰ Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 105.

⁸¹ As Müller-Lauter puts it, "*ressentiment*-morality is the expression of a will to power, although it indignantly opposes all will to power and condemns it as immoral." Müller-Lauter, *Contradictions*, 60.

⁸² Nietzsche makes this same point in BGE 202: "*Morality in Europe these days is the morality of herd animals*: - and therefore, as we understand things, it is only one type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other (and especially *higher*) moralities are or should be possible." The problem with slave morality is that "it stubbornly and ruthlessly declares 'I am morality itself and nothing else is moral!'" See also WP 957.

through this orchestration: not primarily this or that cluster of values but the very possibility of *revaluation*, of contest understood as the human production of value.

We can see this in how Nietzsche describes the priest's "will to employ as a matter of principle only concepts, symbols, attitudes manifested in the practice of the priest, the instinctive rejection of every *other* practice, every *other* kind of perspective..."

(AC 44) He writes more generally of Christianity:

Everything in [Christianity] is cowardice, everything is self-deception and closing one's eyes to oneself. (AC 46)

Faith: closing one's eyes with respect to oneself for good and all so as not to suffer from the sight of incurable falsity. Out of this erroneous perspective on all things one makes a morality, a virtue, a holiness for oneself, one unites the good conscience with seeing *falsely* - one demands that no *other* kind of perspective shall be accorded any value... (AC 9)

Man shall *not* look around him, he shall look down into himself; he shall *not* look prudently and cautiously into things in order to learn, he shall not look at all... (AC 49)

In a beautiful line, Nietzsche articulates the promise of tragic art as the portrayal of "the world as a work of art giving birth to itself." He continues in the same note to credit Christianity and slave morality with the demise of that promise (WLN 2[114] 1885-86). Absent from the slavish self is the ability to put itself at risk or to see itself transformed. For the slave, the good are those who say, "we already know what is good and just, and

we possess it too; woe to those who are still searching for it!” (Z III Law Tables 26)

When we see Nietzsche setting out his ideals, we can see him reaching back for a type of human feeling possible among the Greeks but made impossible for most of us who feel the world from within the horizon of slave morality. Where slave morality instantiates and idealizes a single vision of the human being and what matters to it, Nietzsche’s ideal of subjectivity consists in risk, a joyful sacrifice to multiple visions, multiple perspectives.

Nietzsche writes that we are experiments because we are, like anything, the sum total of the interpretations given to us so far: “something extant, something that has somehow or other come into being, is again and again interpreted according to new views, monopolized in a new way, transformed and rearranged for a new use by a power superior to it...all overpowering and becoming-lord-over is a new interpreting, an arranging by means of which the previous ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’ must of necessity become obscured or entirely extinguished” (GM II 12). There are no ‘true’ turns in this process of interpretation and reinterpretation; instead, human history is the history of an experiment – the creation of different human types who make for different human worlds. To say that we must also want to be experiments means, like the competitors of the agon, to face up to the lack of ultimate mooring and begin to more self-consciously experiment with humanity, to see more clearly and enjoy more fully our role in the shaping of the human being. This is, for Nietzsche, to ally ourselves with life, to desire. Nietzsche writes often of his wish to see human beings more actively assume their role in the creation of values. In *The Gay Science* he writes that:

Only we have created the world *that concerns man!* --But precisely this knowledge we lack, and when we occasionally catch it for a fleeting moment we always forget it again immediately: we fail to recognize our best power and underestimate ourselves, the contemplatives, just a little. We are *neither as proud nor as happy* as we might be. (GS 301)

In a similar vein, he writes in *Beyond Good and Evil* that the task of his new philosophers is to “teach humanity its future as its *will*, as dependent on a human will,” and laments the “outrageous contingency that has been playing games with the future of humanity so far” (BGE 203).⁸³ The priest’s success at closing off his flock from rival interpretations of human existence silenced the formative, constructive energy of becoming. We no longer see ourselves as beings at risk, as being who can put themselves at risk; human contest can now never be meaningful because meaning is borrowed from a beyond. Risk arrives when it does from an outside, and our surest response to it is always to define ourselves against it, as selves-as-insides against an oppositional world-as-outside. Nietzsche asks what it would take to divorce the human from its bad conscience, and calls for the other person, a human of the future to show us “how accommodating, how full of love the whole world shows itself towards us as soon as we do like all the world and ‘let ourselves go’ like all the world!” (GM II 25) And letting ourselves go is not for Nietzsche a heroic individual achievement. The world to which we give ourselves is given by the friend.

⁸³ A similar sentiment is expressed in *Z I Afterworldsmen*: “I teach mankind a new will: to desire this path that men have followed blindly, and to call it good and no more to creep aside from it...” Michael Tanner explains, “there is no value to be discovered in the world, but it is therefore all the more imperative to endow it with value. But how is that to be done? We have, Nietzsche insists, always done it, but up until now that is not what we thought we were doing. And the movement from imagining that we are finding what in fact we are inventing, to a full realization that that is what we are doing, has to be negotiated with the utmost combined lightfootedness and caution if we are not to fall headlong into the abyss of nihilism.” Tanner, *Nietzsche*, 60.

Chapter Three

Nietzsche, Kant, and Becoming What We Are

Nietzsche locates the roots of slave morality in Socrates and Pauline Christianity, but sees the system of Kant, whom Nietzsche calls a “*cunning* Christian” (TI Reason 6), as its most sublime, subtle, and so enduring justification. The picture of subjectivity Nietzsche finds in Kant is the apex of slave morality: a view of the human being as constitutionally adrift, the true self identified with those aspects of its situation taken to transcend the merely human. Nietzsche returns often to Kant’s thought as an important foil against which he defines his own positive views. And of course, Kant’s work figures importantly in the work of Arthur Schopenhauer, who looms large over Nietzsche’s writings.⁸⁴ An increasingly prominent rendering of Nietzsche’s view of subjectivity attributes to him a naturalized Kantian view of the self, wherein the unity of personality, rather than as with Kant transcendentally or logically prior to experience, is a bred, evolving priority. On such a reading, Nietzsche’s figure of the sovereign individual is often taken to represent Nietzsche’s ideal. In this chapter, attempting to establish that Nietzsche’s philosophy

⁸⁴ Indeed, while we can glean from Nietzsche’s notebooks that he read Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* in the late 1860s, his acquaintance with Kant seems otherwise to have come largely through conversations and correspondence with friends, and through secondary sources including Schopenhauer’s treatment of Kant’s ethics in *The World as Will and Representation* and *On the Basis of Morality*, the latter of which Nietzsche read closely in 1884 but whose themes were considered already in *Human, All too Human* and *Daybreak*, suggesting an acquaintance at least by the mid-1870s. See Thomas Brobjer, “Nietzsche as German Philosopher: His Reading of the Classical German Philosophers,” in *Nietzsche and the German Tradition*, ed. Nicholas Martin (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2003), 65. In HH 57 Nietzsche discusses an example of ostensible selflessness in which a soldier “wishes he could fall on the battlefield.” Nietzsche mentions Schopenhauer and the interpretation Schopenhauer would like to give of such events, but then questions Schopenhauer’s interpretation. This passage is reasonably understood as a direct response to Schopenhauer’s example of selflessness, from OBM 15, of Arnold von Winkelried. Nietzsche’s discussions of compassion in Z II and BGE 30 borrow directly language from Kant in MPV 34 where Kant worries that compassion serves only to increase the amount of suffering in the world. Nietzsche would have encountered discussions of Kant at least in F.A. Lange’s *Geschichte des Materialismus*, and Kuno Fischer’s two volume study of Kant from *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*.

maintains a place for intimate others in the processes through which we become ourselves, so that the unity of subjectivity grows out of our relationships, I seek to show that Nietzsche means to dismiss the view of subjectivity exemplified by the sovereign individual.

Perhaps because of the deficiencies of Nietzsche's direct acquaintance with Kant's work, it is important to account for the ways in which Nietzsche often offers a distorted picture of him, and so how we often must look past superficial criticisms to the wider claims that motivate them. Nietzsche is often ungenerous and sometimes just wrong about the details of Kant's philosophy. Nietzsche's most compelling criticism of Kant questions the value of the picture of human agency Kant puts forward. It is this picture, of a neutral substratum separable from its actions, that Nietzsche derides and that he attempts to address with his own positive accounts of agency and freedom. Friendship will be distinctive for Nietzsche because of the ways in which it contributes to this positive account; the friend, like the contestant of the agon, will pull us out ourselves, enabling a perspective on ourselves that recognizes the constitutive roles of public, shared processes through which we become what we are.

Nietzsche respected the Kantian posture of 'giving oneself the law,' but thought that Kant succeeded only in betraying autonomy to the rule of reason, and so we often find Nietzsche heralding a new type whose giving-of-the-law is an act of creation or invention, rather than, as we are to suppose with Kant, of submission. Nietzsche writes: "a word against Kant as *moralist*. A virtue has to be *our* invention, *our* most personal defence and necessity...each one of us should devise *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical

imperative” (AC 11). Too often we find readers of Nietzsche ready to accept at face value this portrayal of Kant, and so we find renderings of the relationship between the two such as the following from Richard White:

what Nietzsche realized was that reason by itself, or through the mediation of the Categorical Imperative, may never be used to direct or determine the nature of individual autonomy....if autonomy really is the celebration of the individual, or that mode of being in which the individual takes possession of himself, the legislation of *any* specific formula for autonomy actually denies individuality by attempting to control and order it in advance.⁸⁵

This reading is problematic because for Kant, to bring one’s actions under the rule of reason is precisely to act freely, in the sense of acting in accordance with that part of one not affected by contingent inclinations (CPrR 5:117).⁸⁶ As Mathias Risse has put it, “it is because the agent is self-conscious that she starts thinking about herself and her reasons and finds that, *qua* rational decision-making, she cannot help but act in accordance with the Categorical Imperative.”⁸⁷ For Kant, our moral obligations are not to be seen simply as constraints, for they follow from our being the type of creature we are. They do not impose upon us, but open us to fuller experience of ourselves *qua* rational beings. The categorical imperative is the only law that can maintain the spontaneity of the choosing

⁸⁵ Richard White, “Nietzsche contra Kant and the Problem of Autonomy,” *International Studies in Philosophy* 22 no.2 (1990): 6.

⁸⁶ A more compelling version of this criticism, consistent with and implicit in Nietzsche’s concerns but not made explicitly by him, is that the categorical imperative, especially in its test of universalizability, asks us never to perform actions which require us to make exceptions of ourselves. Nietzsche wants exceptional individuals to do precisely this, and discredits the leveling, mediocre-making forced equality of herd morality and *a fortiori* Kant’s morality. Nietzsche coins the term de-selfing [*Entselbstung*] to describe the way that herd morality forces exceptional individuals to sacrifice themselves to the herd, and lauds instead a selfishness or self-seeking [*Selbstsucht*] that calls on one to gather and refine the elements of one’s self so as to grow into a coherent whole, a human being (EH Destiny 7). See Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*, 184-192.

⁸⁷ Mathias Risse, “Nietzschean ‘Animal Psychology’ versus Kantian Ethics,” in *Nietzsche and Morality*, eds. Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu (New York: Clarendon Press, 2007), 62.

subject, its ability to initiate through its will a new causal chain of events in the world, and since the subject must see herself as acting according to a law if her actions are to be meaningfully hers and those of a unified, coherent and temporally continuous self, only by acting morally are we free, that is ourselves.⁸⁸ Insofar as we are agents, we act on reasons. Since we are reflective creatures, we are able to adopt a detached deliberative perspective on ourselves from which we are able to decide upon which reasons we will act. Since reasons are derived from principles, for actions to be ours, and so free, they must be carried out according to principles freely chosen by the will itself.

Importantly, this freedom consists precisely in the lack of content supplied by the categorical imperative, and so the claim by some readers of Nietzsche that true autonomy is obstructed by determining in advance how we will act misunderstands Kant. The categorical imperative prescribes nothing other than its form, for if there were any content prescribed then it would be the desirability of the realization of that particular state of affairs that motivated the will, a motivation which, insofar as it is external to the agent's will, would make the will heteronomous (GMM 4:433). Nietzsche seems not to understand this about the categorical imperative. He writes in *The Gay Science* 335, "it is selfish to experience one's own judgment as a universal law." The categorical imperative asks us not to act as we would like others to, but to act only as all others could without contradiction.

The categorical imperative does not limit freedom so much as affirm and foster it. And so we would be wrong to agree with Garrath Williams that, contra Kant, "a

⁸⁸ As Christine Korsgaard writes, "the will that makes the categorical imperative its law merely reaffirms its independence of everything except law in general. Its dependence on law in general is not a constraint, for that is just a consequence of the fact that it is a will." Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 167.

dependence on rules is inimical to the freedom of those who might be able to create or discover new possibilities...It is one of Nietzsche's central themes that the man who truly acts brings forth something new, and reveals his freedom in his ability to *create*."⁸⁹ For if we must act on reasons, and so on principles, then a rule which stipulates only that we so act as to maintain our freedom is not an imposition, but, in the instant of its affirmation by a choosing subject, creation (Kant, GMM 4:446). Since for Kant the categorical imperative is just such a rule, it is productive of rather than inimical to our freedom. We do not depend upon it; we affirm that it is ours in the same way that the religious initiate affirms, at say a Catholic confirmation, the faith that has been hers all along.

There are good Nietzschean grounds for doubting Kant's project, but among them is not the idea that Nietzsche simply explores our commitment to autonomy "with greater radicalism."⁹⁰ Kant's ethical project begins with the necessity of autonomy, of reasons being ours before their being acted upon. Criticisms of Kant that see Nietzsche as simply more committed to autonomy misconstrue Kant's philosophy, and, it must be admitted, follow Nietzsche too closely at times in criticizing a strawperson. If we agree with Kant on what genuine human action is, and so that we act from a practical standpoint of deliberative detachment, then we have good reasons to agree that the categorical imperative is not a constraint on, but a condition of freedom.

It is, instead, Nietzsche's disdain for the constellation of values that underpins Kant's account of agency that best captures Nietzsche's criticism of Kant. Kant's project relies on a certain picture of what it is to be a subject, and for that subject to act freely. Christine Korsgaard articulates Kant's view that "when you deliberate, it is as if there

⁸⁹ Garrath Williams, "Nietzsche's Response to Kant's Morality," *The Philosophical Forum* 30 no.3 (1999): 210.

⁹⁰ Williams, "Nietzsche's Response," 206.

were something over and above all of your desires, something which is you, and which chooses which desire to act on.”⁹¹ The slavish ontology of an appeal to something other than the merely human, the contingent and earthly, an inner chooser that is really us, is Nietzsche’s target in his criticism of Kant.⁹² Risse writes that for Kant, “for a practical identity to pertain to a *unified* decision-maker operating over a range of phenomena, there must be a principle governing her choices to guarantee that similar choices are made under similar circumstances. Otherwise, the agent’s choices would be a set of disconnected phenomena.”⁹³ The unity of our personality is borne out of a rational will, undetermined by the empirical world, that seeks a principle that gives it unity, and so gives it itself as unity. Nietzsche’s suspicions about Kant follow from reading these themes as befitting too much Nietzsche’s little lamb, something most at home as a rational being, being unduly affected by nothing, engaging in the world only after a willed choice and so always as a visitor, someone whose identity as a unified being depends upon appealing to something outside of a fallen world of heterogeneous, disconnected phenomena.

Kant aligns human freedom with escape from what is contingent in us, writing that the hope of every human being is to escape the influence of inclination. He writes,

⁹¹ Christine Korsgaard, “The Authority of Reflection,” in *Foundations of Ethics*, eds. Russ Shafer-Landau and Terence Cuneo (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 96.

⁹² Nietzsche draws on and significantly revises Schopenhauer’s criticism of practical reason in Kant. Schopenhauer deflated Kant’s account of deliberation, describing the agent as a clearing house for contingent inclinations which move the agent this way and that. “The ability to deliberate...yields in reality nothing but the very frequently distressing conflict of motives, which is dominated by indecision and has the whole soul and consciousness of man as its battlefield...This puts the will in the same situation as that of the body on which different forces act in opposite directions, until finally the decidedly strongest motive drives the other from the field and determines the will” (FW, p. 37). And yet for Schopenhauer there is still *something* there, a body which stands apart from the forces that act on it. For Nietzsche, the will consists in a hierarchy of drives; the feeling of will is the feeling that attends a coherent organization of drives and is not something apart from that organization; what we call deliberation is nothing apart from a conflict of drives. See D 109; BGE 21; WP 387.

⁹³ Risse, “Animal Psychology,” 61.

“freedom, and the consciousness of freedom as an ability to follow the moral law with an unyielding disposition, is *independence from the inclinations*, at least as motives determining (even if not as *effecting*) our desire...[inclinations] are always *burdensome* to a rational being, and though he cannot lay them aside, they wrest from him the wish to be rid of them” (CPrR 5:117-118). Kant is not blind to the passional natures of human beings, or the role that our bodily natures must play in our being the type of creature we are. Yet, when he discusses what we are at our best, in what our humanity consists, Kant rescues the human being from its body, its drives, its human situation. As moral beings, we act from that part of ourselves that transcends the merely human. Morality just is escaping the determination of the contingent world of nature determined by causal laws, and so we are only free insofar as we are not merely of this world:

The natural necessity which cannot coexist with the freedom of the subject attaches merely to the determinations of a thing which stands under conditions of time and so only to the determinations of the acting subject as appearance...But the very same subject, being on the other side conscious of himself as a thing in itself, also views his existence *insofar as it does not stand under conditions of time* and himself as determinable only through laws that he gives himself by reason; and in this existence of his nothing is, for him, antecedent to the determination of his will, but every action...is to be regarded in the consciousness of his intelligible existence as nothing but the consequence and never as the determining ground of his causality as a *noumenon*. (CPrR 5:97-98)

To be a free subject is to be capable of initiating a new causal chain of events in the world; the active subject is whatever escapes determination by the world, and freedom is success at such escape.

Nietzsche uses the figure of the “sovereign individual” to make clear what is lamentable about the account of agency won through the victory of slave morality. That the sovereign individual is described in very Kantian terms helps to evince Nietzsche’s alignment of Kant’s with slave morality, and the fact that Nietzsche is, as I will argue, critical of the sovereign individual helps to show the importance of Kant’s picture of agency as a foil for Nietzsche. Nietzsche discusses the sovereign individual at only one point in his entire body of work, GM II 2:

If we place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process, where the tree at last brings forth fruit, where society and the morality of custom [*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*], at last reveal *what* they have simply been the means to: then we discover that the ripest fruit is the *sovereign individual* [souveräne Individuum], like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom autonomous and supramoral [*autonome übersittliche*] (for ‘autonomous’ and ‘moral’ are mutually exclusive), in short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the *right to make promises*—and in him a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of *what* has at length been achieved and become flesh in him, a consciousness of his own power and freedom, a sensation of mankind come to completion.⁹⁴

There is debate about whether the sovereign individual represents Nietzsche’s ideal or anti-ideal, and I argue for the latter position, drawing on work by Lawrence Hatab,

⁹⁴ For the purposes of my argument, I use Kauffman’s translation here.

Acampora, and Matthew Rukgaber. The fact that such a debate exists points to the presence of a great deal of ambiguity in Nietzsche's description of the sovereign individual. The ambiguity is either intended by Nietzsche or it is not. If it is not, then it is evidence of poor writing by Nietzsche. If the ambiguity is intentional, the ambiguity can only serve the anti-sovereign individual reading.⁹⁵ Establishing that Nietzsche's ambiguity is intentional, then, should help to settle the debate.

Three textual clues give us reason to draw this conclusion. First, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche writes of the *Genealogy's* three treatises that "every time a beginning that is *calculated* to mislead: cool, scientific, even ironic, deliberately foreground, deliberately holding off" (EH *Genealogy*). Nietzsche here cues his reader to what should be taken as the ironic coolness with which he begins each treatise of the *Genealogy*, and the account of the sovereign individual begins the second treatise. Section one discusses promising and its preconditions; section two introduces the sovereign individual as the exemplar of the morality of promising, exemplary in heeding the call of conscience that alerts him to a feeling of responsibility for his actions. Of the sovereign individual's sense of responsibility it is asked in GM: "what will he call it, this dominant instinct, assuming that he feels the need to have a word for it? But there is no doubt: this sovereign human being [*Mensch*] calls it his *conscience*" (GM II 2). In the sections that follow this "cool, scientific, even ironic" description of a conscience that makes one feel responsible, Nietzsche's titular concern in the second treatise is the development in human beings of feelings of guilt, bad conscience, and related matters. Given that Nietzsche describes the opening as ironic, and that in the opening sections certain features of our moral psychology seem to be praised, and that in the following sections those same features are

⁹⁵ See Rukgaber, "Sovereign Individual," 230-231.

objects of criticism, we should conclude that Nietzsche's praise for the sovereign individual is ironic.⁹⁶

Second, Nietzsche's use and italicization of 'calculated' in the EH passage also suggests his strategy of deceptive ambiguity. The italicization allows us to understand the language of praise directed towards the figure, in its hyperbole, as ironic. "Every time a beginning that is *calculated* to mislead" (EH Genealogy). While Nietzsche is ultimately critical of the sovereign individual, he shows here that he understands that his deceptive presentation of the figure will be lost on some of his readers. This rhetorical strategy underscores Nietzsche's point that those still caught within slave morality *celebrate* their submission to the morality exemplified by the sovereign individual, a morality wherein we've succeeded in taming ourselves, where we no longer have to be beaten into submission because we see submission qua promise-keeping as meritorious, we see "weakness itself as freedom" (GM I 13). "To call the taming of an animal its 'improvement' is in our ears almost a joke" (TI Improvers 2). Nietzsche intends the ambiguity of the section to seduce his readers into an identification with the sovereign individual so that, when he demolishes it as an ideal, the reader feels herself demolished.

At the close of the second treatise of GM, Nietzsche asks, "is an ideal actually being erected here or is one being demolished?" (GM II 24) Here again, Nietzsche points to the intended effect the treatise is meant to have on his readers, to have them catch

⁹⁶ Scott Jenkins suggests that Nietzsche's claim in *Ecce Homo* that the beginning of each treatise is meant to deceive applies to the second treatise insofar as its first sections deal with what Jenkins argues is Nietzsche's ideal of naturalized human freedom, the sovereign individual and his right to promise, and the rest of the treatise deals with unrelated questions of guilt and bad conscience. On my view, these questions are deeply related and the intended deception has to do with Nietzsche's false praise for the sovereign individual. Scott Jenkins, "Morality, Agency, and Freedom in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 20 no.1 (2003): 73-78. Rukgaber, "Sovereign Individual," 19-20, makes much of promise-breaking and the reproaches of conscience, helping to show the deep relations between the sovereign individual and guilt and bad conscience.

themselves celebrating their slavishness, seeing what's best about themselves as what is, because it is the voice of the herd, least theirs. The Kantian elements of the sovereign individual are clearly discernible here. In the same section Nietzsche writes, "redemption from the curse that the previous ideal placed upon reality" is possible. The only ideal discussed in the section is the sovereign individual, and so it must be the ideal represented by him that Nietzsche means to redeem us from.

Third, Nietzsche's use of scare-quotes when describing the strengths of the sovereign individual suggests that those strengths are merely apparent. First, the sovereign individual is said to 'earn' trust, fear and reverence:

This being who has become free, who is really *permitted* to promise, this lord of the *free* will, this sovereign—how could he not know what superiority he thus has over all else that is not permitted to promise and vouch for itself, how much trust, how much fear, how much reverence he awakens—he *earns* all three—and how this mastery over himself also necessarily brings with it mastery over circumstances, over nature and all lesser-willed and more unreliable creatures?
(GM II 2)

Since what she 'earns' is apparent, and Nietzsche makes the point in the context of outlining the sovereign individual's self-image, the problematization of 'earns' supports the view that the sovereign individual is deceived about herself: she feels powerful in the very act of sacrificing her power; she lords her submission to the herd over others as if she should be proud of it, she is able only to practice "that sublime self-deception of interpreting weakness itself as freedom" (GM I 13).⁹⁷ Furthermore, Nietzsche puts 'free' in scare quotes when he continues, "the 'free' human being, the possessor of a

⁹⁷ On this point, see Rukgaber, "Sovereign Individual," 227.

long-unbreakable will...” (GM II 2). It is of course a feature of Kant’s morality that we are free insofar as we act according to a law we impose on ourselves, so that being free is aligned with a good will. Nietzsche is critical of this view, a point I return to below in discussing the will as standard of value for the sovereign individual. The use of scare quotes here supports the interpretation that the freedom of the sovereign individual is only apparent.

These clues are perhaps not enough to be decisive, and indeed have not been in the literature.⁹⁸ We can corroborate the reading that these clues indicate by looking more closely at the features of the sovereign individual that are described by Nietzsche. If these features point to views accepted to be objects of Nietzsche’s criticism elsewhere in his writings, we will have additional reason to support the reading of the sovereign individual as Nietzsche’s anti-ideal. The general thrust of this argumentative strategy is to align the sovereign individual with views Nietzsche rejects, so that the laudatory language of the sovereign individual passage is understood as emphasizing the delusional self-image of the modern slave. As I point out below, many of Nietzsche’s books contain elucidations of key concepts at odds with the conceptions central to the sovereign individual passages, but we can begin by looking at the *Genealogy* itself. In the first treatise, Nietzsche asks:

What causes *our* aversion to “man”?...*Not* fear; rather that we have nothing left to fear in man; that the worm “man” is in the foreground and teeming; that the “tame man,” this hopelessly mediocre and uninspiring being, has already learned to feel

⁹⁸ See Christopher Janaway, “Beyond Selflessness in Ethics and Inquiry,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 35/36 (2008): 124-140. See also Mark Migotti, “‘A Promise Made is a Debt Unpaid’: Nietzsche on the Morality of Commitment and the Commitments of Morality,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, eds. J. Richardson and K. Gemes (Oxford: University Press, forthcoming).

himself as the goal and pinnacle, as the meaning of history, as “higher man”—indeed that he has a certain right [*Recht*] to feel this way, insofar as he feels himself distanced from the profusion of the deformed, sickly, tired, worn-out of which European today is beginning to stink... (GM I 11)

Here Nietzsche concisely articulates his and his readers’ aversion to what is taken as the modern human being, and he does so in the very same language of the sovereign individual passage: a tamed being who feels like the goal or pinnacle of humankind and who has been bred to feel a right of superiority over others.

Lawrence Hatab offers additional good reasons to be skeptical about the sovereign individual as Nietzsche’s hero.⁹⁹ First, the sovereign individual’s free will and freedom resonate more with the ideal Nietzsche is attempting to replace rather than his own. Nietzsche calls the sovereign individual the “lord of the free will”, but Nietzsche calls nonsensical the very notion of a free will throughout his writings, most notably in BGE 21, and aligns the desire for free will with the view of ourselves offered by slave morality, the view of ourselves as causes, doers, subjects. Nietzsche sometimes writes approvingly of ‘freedom’, and of *strong* wills, but reserves the language of *free* will to a view of will-as-faculty that he rejects.

Second, Nietzsche describes the sovereign individual as having a “power over oneself and fate,” that “has sunk into his lowest depth and has become instinct, the dominant instinct.” ‘Power over fate’ is not a recognizable goal of Nietzsche’s. Instead, one of his central ideas, *amor fati*, love of fate, calls for the opposite. *Amor fati* calls us no longer to lash out against the world, to see our fate as cornering us, determining us, limiting us. Nietzsche writes in *The Gay Science* 276, “I want to learn more and more to

⁹⁹ Lawrence Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995).

see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati.*” Power over fate is a goal only for the subject of slave morality, the internalized doer who sees the world as something to be overpowered.

Third, Christa Davis Acampora adds to these considerations the thought that a good deal of the force of the sovereign individual for those who see it as Nietzsche’s ideal relies on a questionable translation. The defining feature of the sovereign individual is his “right to make promises” (GM II 2), but Acampora is correct to point out the German is better translated as someone who is permitted to promise, who has the capacity to promise because they act within a social context that enables promising as a possibility, the way that a 21st century Canadian has the capacity to use a credit card while a 12th century person did not. Nietzsche’s German is: “*Ein Tier heranzüchten, das versprechen darf—ist das nicht gerade jene paradoxe Aufgabe selbst, welche sich die Natur in Hinsicht auf den Menschen gestellt hat...?*” (GM II 1) The modal in question is ‘*darf*’, which does not carry the legalistic weight of the English ‘right’, and is usually rendered as *may, permitted*. Acampora writes of the mistranslation that it “has encouraged those who rely on the translation to think that Nietzsche sees promise-making as an entitlement that one must earn or which one is granted, and which presumably stands in contrast with something to which one might be inherently obliged.”¹⁰⁰ Rendering the passage along Acampora’s lines, as newer translations do, makes better sense of the contrast that Nietzsche draws in the *Genealogy* between promising and forgetting: it makes little sense to think of a ‘right’ to forget. Finally, thinking in terms of

¹⁰⁰ Christa Davis Acampora, “On Sovereignty and Overhumanity: Why it matters how we read Nietzsche’s *Genealogy* II:2,” in *Nietzsche’s On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, 148. For a defence of the pro-sovereign individual reading in which this translation issue figures, see Jenkins, “Morality, Agency, and Freedom,” 73-79.

capacities and social practices, rather than rights, fits much better Nietzsche's project as a whole in the *Genealogy*, and in the passage in question: how, over time, through breeding and compulsion, we have become the people we are, with the capacities and practices we have.

Importantly, it is in this sense that Nietzsche discusses promising elsewhere in his writing. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche writes not of some special right of the truly free, but of a social practice that depends, "upon our having the same *belief* in regard to the extent of our power as others have: that is to say, that *we are able* [*können*] to promise certain things..." (D 112) In *The Gay Science*, it is the herd that values the person who acts "as if his character and occupation are unchangeable, even if at bottom they are not" (GS 296). Promise-making is a practice that arises, that could only arise, once we take each other to be largely capable of keeping to our word.¹⁰¹ It makes little sense to contrast a special right to promising with some inferior status, because for there to be a practice of promise-making in a culture is already for there to be an expectation that promises will largely be kept.

Fourth, Nietzsche in the German uses the term "*Individuum*" to denote the 'individual' that is sovereign. This term, rare in Nietzsche, appears when it does most often in a pejorative sense, such as in *Human, All too Human*, where we are encouraged "not to reduce oneself to uniformity in this way, but to listen instead to the gentle voice of each of life's different situations...thus ceasing to treat oneself as a *single* rigid and

¹⁰¹ When teaching Kant's view of promise-keeping, we stress that a lying promises vitiates its own ground, that the practice of promising depends for its existence on people keeping their promises. For Kant, the maxim of promise-breaking serves to bring "it about, as far as I can, that statements [. . .] in general are not believed, and so too that all rights which are based on contracts come to nothing and lose their force." Immanuel Kant, *On the Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy*, 8:426. Having a social practice of promising is co-primordial with people keeping their promises.

unchanging individuum...” (HH 618) Here ‘individuum’ is used pejoratively to denote an unhealthy attachment to a self that gains its unity from barring the influence of the world.

Fifth, the ostensible strengths of the sovereign individual are not topics of much concern for Nietzsche. The figure is sovereign, autonomous, and is good at keeping his promises. ‘Promising’ receives little positive attention from Nietzsche anywhere but at the sovereign individual section. It is hard to suppose that the defining feature of Nietzsche’s ideal subject is mentioned by him so sparingly. Forgetting, in fact, is a far more prominent theme, and is always clearly contrasted with the *ressentiment* of the slave, someone who holds a grudge against the world, who can’t forget. Nietzsche writes derisively how, “one cannot get rid of anything, one cannot get over anything, one cannot repel anything...memory becomes a festering wound” (EH Wise 6). When Nietzsche describes the type of person he applauds, a figure he explicitly identifies with himself, he writes: “he knows how to *forget*...” (EH Wise 2) And although this same figure is described as steady and in control, Nietzsche stresses that the figure does not believe in bad luck or guilt, the titular concerns of GM II. The world is not an impediment, he doesn’t exercise mastery over it through a word or promise; instead his strength is in letting himself be taken up by the world, able to call ‘best’ whatever the world works through him.

Self-rule or mastery is a topic of concern for Nietzsche, but he rarely writes of it in terms of ‘autonomy’, a word Nietzsche mentions only seven times in his written work. Likewise, ‘sovereignty’ is used sparingly by Nietzsche, and most often in its political sense. When used to describe individuals, Nietzsche’s evaluation of it as an ideal is at

best ambiguous, and most often problematic for the pro-sovereign individual reading.¹⁰² In AOM 329, individual sovereignty is applauded, but it is a sovereignty of “the bad” at odds with the *Genealogy’s* discussion insofar as in AOM the demands of others are expressly ignored: “to revere the bad, too, and to embrace it, if it *pleases* us, and to have no idea that we might be ashamed of being thus pleased, is the mark of sovereignty, in great things and small.” In a notebook, Nietzsche aligns sovereignty with a picture of free will he clearly derides: “the will as fiction...one believes that he is free and sovereign, because the origin of the will remains unknown to him, and because the affect of command accompanies him” (KSA 11: 27[24] 1884).¹⁰³

Sixth, the will of the sovereign individual is described in a very Kantian and very un-Nietzschean way as the ultimate source of value. “The ‘free’ human being, the possessor of a long, unbreakable will, has in this possession his *standard of value* as well” (GM II 2). It is Kant who thinks of a good will as alone in having absolute worth, as a standard of value, and Nietzsche frequently criticizes the idea in Kant of a value stripped of its contingent, personal character. Nietzsche is critical of the move towards “an ever *more impersonal* appraisal of deeds” that leads one to think in terms of “justice and injustice *in themselves*,” talk Nietzsche calls devoid of all sense (GM II 11).

Finally, section two begins, “precisely this is the long history of the origins of *responsibility*” (GM II 2). The sovereign individual lays claim to “the proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and fate” (GM II 2). This aligns the sovereign individual with a picture of responsibility that Nietzsche clearly rejects. In BGE 21 Nietzsche points to a

¹⁰² See Rukgaber, “Sovereign Individual,” 214-215, 223.

¹⁰³ “der Wille als erdichtung. [. . .] man glaubt, daß er frei und souverän ist, weil sein ursprung uns verborgen bleibt und weil der affekt des Befehlenden ihn begleitet.”

pernicious form of responsibility that grows out of slave morality, where we believe in responsibility as a corollary of free will, and value free will only because it seems to offer escape from the “compulsion need, having-to-follow, pressure” of causal necessity. Nietzsche derides such a picture for setting humans against the world by seeing it as a threat to our freedom, and it is this picture that the sovereign individual exemplifies.

There are, then, several good reasons to conclude that the sovereign individual is Nietzsche’s anti-ideal. Why is it important that interpreters of Nietzsche get this right? I argue that the sovereign individual is a sort of naturalized Kantian actor, and since Nietzsche objects to the fundamental tenets of Kant’s picture of agency, he objects to the sovereign individual. Interpreting the sovereign individual as Nietzsche’s ideal leads one to favour an account of Nietzsche’s ethical vision too close to Kant in aligning agency with escape from our finitude.¹⁰⁴ My view is that readers who already see in Nietzsche a positive evaluation of themes from Kant are liable to see the sovereign individual passages as confirming their view, and so in a very interesting way are failing the test of self-deception that I understand Nietzsche intends the sovereign individual passages to be.¹⁰⁵

This interpretive question is important to the concerns of this dissertation because a positive evaluation of the sovereign individual makes it difficult to see Nietzsche as

¹⁰⁴ Rukgaber writes, at “Sovereign Individual,” 213, that, “attempts to reconstruct a Nietzschean ethic based on the SI passage have resulted in uncharacteristically Kantian results, because of the deontological nature of promising in the SI passage.” More emphatically, Rukgaber stresses at 228 that, “...I find it hard not to see the SI as a fearful, tame, and narrowly prudent soul who is too weak to live up to the idea of Nietzschean sovereignty and responsibility in which one risks pursuit of a complex and even contradictory field of desires.”

¹⁰⁵ See Christopher Janaway, “Autonomy, Affect, and the Self in Nietzsche’s Project of Genealogy,” in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, eds. Ken Gemes and Simon May (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). More conjecturally, such readers are also less likely to focus on the more nebulous themes in Nietzsche discussed above that speak against the sovereign individual, including *amor fati* and forgetfulness.

calling for the sort of affirmation I argue is central to his ethical thought. If our capacity to promise is taken to represent a great achievement, then we must ask after the type of contest in which promise-keeping would count as such an achievement. The answer, I suggest, is that promise-keeping is most desirable from within a movement of thought that seeks to locate our humanity otherwise than in the finitude of our becoming. Rather than reveling in the innocence of a world that is made and changed by our participation, the sovereign individual is the human who has learned to withhold her will from contestation, who withdraws a part of herself from the game, from others. This is perhaps why, while we often think of promise-keeping as a sign of our commitment to others, with the language of the sovereign individual section Nietzsche portrays it is something we lord over others, a source of distance rather than intimacy.

That Nietzsche questions the sort of morality that would make promise-keeping central should not be taken to suggest that he thinks the practice of promising should be jettisoned, or that we should always and everywhere break our promises. In D 103 he writes generally of his attempts at ethical revaluation: “it goes without saying that I do not deny – unless I am a fool – that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged – but I think the one should be encouraged and the avoided *for other reasons than hitherto.*” In chapter five I argue, in a similar vein, that Nietzsche’s criticism of a morality of compassion does not entail a disavowal of all acts that concern themselves with the suffering of others. In both cases, Nietzsche’s question is something like: when we make this or that practice central to our morality, what do we glorify about the human condition, what do we mark as best about ourselves? Practices take on value according to their place in a constellation of

values, a form of life, which, rather than bare practices, are the ultimate target of evaluation for Nietzsche.

In what form of life does the sovereign individual function as an ideal? The sovereign individual is ascetic, what Nietzsche actually calls in the section following Nietzsche's treatment of the figure, "the entirety of asceticism" (GM II 3). I will examine a few instances of the pro-sovereign individual reading and show how its attempt to trace real causes of actions shares with Kant the unattractive urge to see us as discrete unities interrupting a world with our will. Nietzsche objects to the need in Kant to insist that to be subjects is to be causes of this sort, and to be free subjects is to be a special sort of cause. I will argue that in some cases a naturalist interpretation of Nietzsche shares this preoccupation with the causal powers of an internalized subject, and so betrays what Nietzsche calls the atomistic need to understand the world as a world of things.

An increasingly prominent account of the relationship between Kant and Nietzsche sees Nietzsche as naturalizing Kant's project, so that the freedom of the human being is something that becomes, something bred rather than metaphysical. This line of interpretation concerning Nietzsche's view of the subject wants to stress the continuity between Kant and Nietzsche, portraying Nietzsche's criticisms of Kant as naturalistic emendations rather than absolute refutations. 'Naturalism' is a broad term; in its broadest sense it is simply the view of human beings as a certain kind of organism, or animal, whose capacities need to be understandable as evolved and evolving, subject to and products of natural processes over evolutionary time.¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche certainly holds this

¹⁰⁶ See Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 48-49. See also Williams, "Minimalist Moral Psychology," 2-3.

view. He writes, for instance, in BGE 230 that a naturalist worldview helps the human being to overcome “the lures of the old metaphysical bird catchers who have been whistling to him for far too long: ‘You are more! You are higher! You have a different origin!’” A problem arises when readers of Nietzsche try to descend from this general naturalistic picture to a more robust account of what place precisely Nietzsche’s commitments here hold in his thought as a whole. Bernard Williams puts it nicely when he writes of the consensus among Nietzsche’s readers that he is a naturalist of some sort, that “the trouble with this happy and extensive consensus, however, and no doubt a condition of it, is that no one knows what it involves.”¹⁰⁷

When philosophers approaching from this perspective write about Nietzsche’s philosophy, they often take Nietzsche’s criticisms to be directed towards beliefs we have about ourselves that cannot be squared with a view of ourselves as evolving organisms, such as Kant’s appeal to will, self, agency, and freedom. More fundamentally, their target is Kant’s method of transcendental argumentation that grants explanatory power to the practical perspective of agents, a method upon which the force of Kant’s thought relies. That is, while Kant agrees that the elements of his moral psychology are not empirically verifiable, he believes that the practical perspective of human beings, what it is like for human beings to deliberate and act, has some bearing on the question of in what we are justified in believing. A thoroughly naturalistic account of human beings denies our self-conception any such power. Nietzsche himself is indeed interested in the natural and social sciences, in understanding human beings as natural creatures; he doesn’t, though, take these concerns as central to what is wrong with Kant, and *a fortiori*,

¹⁰⁷ Williams, “Minimalist Moral Psychology,” 5.

slave morality. For Nietzsche, it is a particular type of human being who flees a view of human beings rooted in their naturalness, it is a particular constellation of value judgments that claims the blameworthiness of human, all too human existence, and Nietzsche attacks not the wrong-headedness of these claims but the undesirable aspects of the values that motivate them. Nietzsche castigates as slavish the view of human freedom as consisting in the freedom of a will. Practical freedom as described by Kant is for Nietzsche a sort of miracle of somehow causally impinging on the empirical world from outside of causality, something like an immaculate conception. It is important that we understand Nietzsche's goals here, so that we have a clearer picture of his project and its importance. The sovereign individual exemplifies the cluster of ascetic practices Nietzsche means to overcome through his ideal of experimentation, values to be overcome not because they are false, or metaphysical, but because they grow out of a system of values that Nietzsche understands as inimical to human flourishing. Aiming to establish the importance of friendship for Nietzsche's ethical thought, I will suggest in subsequent chapters that the type of relationality fostered by friendship will pull one out of the type of self-understanding exemplified by the sovereign individual.

While Nietzsche is excited by the methods and prospects of the sciences during his middle or positivistic period, beginning perhaps with the idea of eternal return in 1881 Nietzsche grows increasingly critical of the community of science. Nietzsche thinks a view of human beings that attempted only to conform itself to the methods and results of science would be impoverished. In 'Science as prejudice' in *The Gay Science* Book V, Nietzsche suggests that naturalist scholars "can never catch sight of the really great problems and question marks...." (GS 373) Those he calls, "materialistic natural

scientists,” insofar as they try to reduce the broad and varied spectacle of human existence to natural facts, “divest existence of its *rich ambiguity*” (GS 373). Nietzsche concludes the section by stressing that whatever role naturalism should play in our understanding, we need to guard against the threat of it turning our attention away from what has real significance for us, a phenomenon’s “skin and its sensualization”:

But an essentially mechanistic world would be an essentially *meaningless* world! Assuming that one estimated the *value* of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas: how absurd would such a ‘scientific’ estimation of music be! What would one have comprehended, understood, grasped of it? Nothing, really nothing of what is ‘music’ in it! (GS 373)

Keeping this type of concern in mind, in this section I consider the ways in which readings that rely on the sovereign individual simply recreate Kant’s picture of the subject in a new vocabulary. Then, I’ll show that more careful attention to Nietzsche’s heroes shows us the subtle but important ways in which his project is different from the one attributed to him by such naturalist interpreters. When Nietzsche discusses his heroes, their triumph is always a result not of conscience, and not of a conscious self-fashioning, but of a consciousness that, by receding into the background, allows the instinctual excellence of the person to be expressed.

Brian Leiter sees Nietzsche as arguing for what Leiter calls a ‘doctrine of types’ according to which “each person has a fixed psycho-physical constitution, which defines him as a particular type of person.”¹⁰⁸ When we go to explain behaviour, we look to facts about an agent’s psycho-physical constitution in order to put forward the real causes of

¹⁰⁸ Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 8.

her actions. “Given two regularly correlated effects E1 and E2 which have the same ‘deep cause,’ we confuse cause and effect when we construe E1 as the cause of E2, missing altogether the existence of the deep cause that *really* explains them both.”¹⁰⁹ Nietzsche seems to confirm such a reading in *Twilight of the Idols* when he discusses the case of Cornaro, who recommends eating very little in order to live a long life. Cornaro sees his (E1)eating very little as the cause of his (E2)long life, but in fact both his eating habits and his long life are the result of an underlying deep cause, his metabolism, a psycho-physical fact about his physiology (TI Errors 1).

Yet, where Leiter thinks his work is thus done, having unmasked an apparent cause and effect relationship as two effects of a deeper natural cause, Nietzsche’s criticism of cause and effect runs much deeper. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes: “cause and effect: such a duality probably never exists: in truth we are confronted by a continuum out of which we isolate a couple of pieces” (GS 112). Nietzsche states too that, “we should use ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ only as pure *concepts*, which is to say as conventional fictions for the purpose of description and communication, *not* explanation...*We* are the ones who invented causations, succession...” (BGE 21) To carve the world into causes and their effects is a symptom of our atomistic need, an effect of our coming to see the world as a world of things and causes, what Nietzsche calls the “mechanistic stupidity” of those who “erroneously objectify ‘cause’ and ‘effect,’ like the natural scientists do (and whoever else things naturalistically these days)” (BGE 21). For Nietzsche, cause and effect relations are not false but artificial insofar as they isolate a part of the whole, disentangle it, and consider it in a capacity in which it could never

¹⁰⁹ Brian Leiter and Joshua Knobe, “The Case for a Nietzschean Moral Psychology,” in *Nietzsche and Morality*, eds. Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu (New York: Clarendon Press, 2007), 89.

present itself or operate, namely ‘in itself’. Leiter’s explanation of events pushes back the talk of causation to facts about bodies, but there is no reason in Nietzsche to suppose that this is the correct register at which to talk. Our bodies, like our actions, are tied up with the fatality of nature.

Understanding this can help us to make sense of Nietzsche’s (to some insanity-laced) claim that Julius Caesar, or Alexander or Dionysus, could be his father (EH Wise 3). In introducing this strange remark, Nietzsche writes, “people are *least* related to their parents: it would be the most extreme sign of vulgarity to be related to your parents. Higher natures have their origins infinitely further back, collecting, economizing, accumulating has gone on longest for their sake. *Great* individuals are the oldest: I do not understand it, but Julius Caesar could be my father...”¹¹⁰ (EH Wise 3) The question here is one of causes. What’s “great” is not settling for one standard and proximate account of one’s origins, but instead to create or impose our own history for ourselves, so that we see ourselves as composed of many lines, as the child of many parents, and so involved in all of time, knotted together with the whole.¹¹¹ Relationships of cause and effect, past and present, are not true, or false, but are for Nietzsche always in play, always creative.

Criticisms such as Leiter’s, that take the form of ‘Kant thinks x, but empirical evidence suggests that what is really going on is y, just are not Nietzsche’s game.’¹¹² His

¹¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Ecce Homo,” in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols And Other Writings*, eds. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78. This part of EH Wise 3 is not included in Kaufmann’s translation.

¹¹¹ Nietzsche writes in *On the uses and disadvantages of history for life*, of a monumental approach to history that, “is an attempt to give oneself, as it were *a posteriori*, a past in which one would like to originate in opposition to that in which one did originate” (HL 3 p. 76).

¹¹² They also, not unimportantly, ignore Kant’s own understanding of the intention and methodology of his project, which was of course not to bring our understanding of human beings into accord with the results of science. Leiter and Joshua Knobe, in “The Case for a Nietzschean Moral Psychology,” suggest that, though philosophers have long been preoccupied with the moral psychologies of Aristotle and Kant, it is Nietzsche’s that is actually borne out by the empirical work. Kant’s ethics conceives of humans as first

body of work is replete with instances of a sentiment expressed perhaps most clearly in *Beyond Good and Evil*: “We do not consider the falsity of a judgment as itself an objection to a judgment” (BGE 4). Nietzsche is a philosopher deeply concerned with truth, but not whether this or that truth holds up against empirical scrutiny but rather what sort of value a system of truths and falsehoods contributes to the world, what sort of person arises as a result. The above section continues: “the question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating.” Elsewhere, he writes of religion that “what is now decisive against Christianity is our taste, no longer our reasons” (GS 132). Reasons are quotidian, everyone has them; what matters is what a reason makes of its holder, and so philosophers who think that the point of philosophizing is to arrive at true beliefs are, for Nietzsche, immature (HH 21). He writes that “even if a morality has grown out of an error, the realization of this fact would not as much as touch the problem of its value” (GS 345). The project of understanding a system of thought is not exhausted by establishing its truth or falsity. Instead, we ought to recognize the sublimity of our past errors, what they contributed to human history, what sort of lives they made possible.

So we misunderstand Nietzsche’s philosophy when we see him trying to find empirical foundation for our account of the human being because in so doing we are diverted from Nietzsche’s preoccupation with value, with what a system of thought contributes to the world. Leiter’s understanding of Nietzsche depends upon Leiter’s

deciding upon proper principles, and then rationally carrying out actions according to those principles. We are ‘inside’ our minds or selves first, and then express that ‘inside’ in the outside world. The problem with Kant’s view is that it is precisely the opposite of what seems to be going on when we begin empirically to study how agents act. Leiter and Knobe point to a growing consensus among psychologists that any causation between beliefs and behaviour runs, contra Kant, from behaviour to beliefs, with our behaviour causing us to, *ex post facto*, adopt appropriate corresponding beliefs about ourselves. The doer seems to be, with Nietzsche, a fiction added to the deed.

claim that we can easily separate the empirical claims of Nietzsche's philosophy from whatever moral imperatives Nietzsche also aimed to promote. Leiter makes a distinction between what he calls a "Humean Nietzsche" and a "Therapeutic Nietzsche", with the former a naturalist trying to understand human beings in terms of feeling and sentiment rather than Kantian will, and the latter a Nietzsche who has the different aim of changing his readers' moral sense.¹¹³ Leiter's distinction maps well onto the one I have drawn, and questioned, between Nietzsche's interest in empirical questions and his interest in questions of value. Leiter admits that it is sometimes difficult to separate the Humean from the Therapeutic Nietzsche because Nietzsche acts as both in his works. In a single book, even aphorism, he is sometimes making empirical claims, sometimes ones of value, like a therapist who sometimes tries to treat a patient by reading aloud his latest textbook. If with, say, Freud we can separate the empirical claims about human psychology from the therapeutic practice of practitioners that is ultimately grounded on those claims, Leiter contends we can separate Nietzsche's empirical claims from his therapeutic aims, and so it makes sense to read Nietzsche as attempting to build his philosophy on firmer, because empirically-sound, foundations.

By way of casting doubt on the tenability of Leiter's distinction, we can look to the ways in which Nietzsche problematizes just such an attempt to separate facts and values. Nietzsche's style of constantly undercutting his empirical claims shows that by his own lights, empirical claims are always tied to ways of feeling and so to valuing the world, and moreover that the latter type of concern always precedes any empirical question. He writes not only that the best philosophy can aspire to is autobiography, a

¹¹³ Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche's Naturalism Reconsidered," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, eds. J. Richardson and K. Gemes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

“confession of faith on the part of its author” rather than a “drive for knowledge” (BGE 6), but he even calls his own claims to truth into question, such as when, after expounding upon the inescapability of interpretation, he anticipates a possible rejoinder: “Granted, this is only an interpretation too – and you will be eager enough to make this objection? – well then, so much the better” (BGE 22).

Perhaps the clearest presentation of this phenomenon is eternal recurrence. The scope of scholarly debate that has been engendered by Nietzsche’s concept is proof enough of Nietzsche’s less-than-straightforward view of truth and value. Is eternal recurrence a metaphysical hypothesis about the ultimate nature of reality? Is it an ethical ideal? Without pausing to do justice to the depth of these debates, we can say at least that in eternal return Nietzsche entwines empirical claims with their power to affect rather than with their truth. When Nietzsche first introduces the concept, in *The Gay Science*, his question is not whether it is true but rather what would it take to believe it true, to feel it as true. “Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus?...If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you” (GS 341). Eternal recurrence is an empirical claim inseparable from the feeling it induces, the constellation of values that a feeling being would have to embody in order to know it and affirm it as such.¹¹⁴

An additional example of this thread in Nietzsche’s thinking comes in Nietzsche’s discussion of Christ’s message prior to its perversion by Paul. For Nietzsche it is the

¹¹⁴ From Nietzsche’s notebooks: “Even if circular repetition is merely a probability or a possibility, even *the thought of a possibility* can move and transform us...” (KSA 9: 11[203] 1881) Christopher Janaway likens the sort of question Nietzsche is asking to the following: “how great a specimen of physical prowess would you have to become to succeed in winning the London Marathon ten times in a row? How great a composer would you have to become to sustain consistent style, expressiveness, and narrative through writing a cycle of four substantial operas.” Janaway, “Morality, Drives, and Human Greatness,” 184.

Pauline Church that alters Christ's message from one of practice to one of belief. Where Christ's glad tidings are a new manner of feeling and action, the Church makes belief, intention, our inner life, salient. There Nietzsche laments the loss of Christ's message: "The profound instinct for how one would have to *live* in order to feel oneself 'in Heaven', to feel oneself 'eternal'...A new way of living, *not* a new belief..." (AC 33) Christ is a creator for Nietzsche not because he dictated new doctrines but because he created new ways of feeling, new ways of being human.

Leiter's Nietzsche's urge to get hold of the empirically-correct causal factors for human actions, then, is perhaps not sensitive enough to Nietzsche's problematization of such an endeavour. The preoccupation with the causal powers of agents, however, is attributed to Nietzsche in more subtle forms than Leiter's. I move now to discuss recent work that revolves around two related claims. First, that Nietzsche's ideal of subjectivity is a 'unity' of drives, variously fleshed out. Second, that we can see this ideal in Nietzsche's figure of the sovereign individual. I responded to Leiter's position by suggesting that what chiefly interests Nietzsche about a theory isn't its basis in fact, but instead is the system of values that animate it. Here, my response is similar. Readings that see Nietzsche's ideal as a unified, sovereign individual misunderstand Nietzsche's interests, goals, and so perhaps what is most interesting in his thought.¹¹⁵ When Nietzsche offers his own positive accounts of the subject and freedom, they are put forward not as better suited to what we know about ourselves as natural creatures, but as criticisms of value, of what Kant's system makes of its holders. Nietzsche's goal is not to

¹¹⁵ Reginster notes a danger within Nietzsche studies of a thematic focus, e.g. Nietzsche and naturalism or Nietzsche and truth, which fails to see the forest for the trees. "If Nietzsche's views are animated by a fundamental philosophical motivation...this approach runs the risk of missing it, and therefore of misunderstanding them." Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 2.

make us right, but, as he writes in *Daybreak* 103 of the point of his denial of morality, to allow us “*to feel differently.*”

‘Unity’ of personality is a recognizable feature of Kant’s philosophy. Increasingly in Nietzsche scholarship, we see attributed to Nietzsche a sort of naturalized Kantianism where unity remains as a goal but it is a *naturalized* unity, a unity of the drives of a certain sort of organism. Ken Gemes argues that Nietzsche offers a “naturalist-aestheticist” account of the subject whereby, “(t)o have a genuine self is to have an enduring coordinated hierarchy of drives.”¹¹⁶ Simon May writes that it is a necessary condition for freedom that one, “be a self in which a maximum number of drives of maximal power is organized into an evolving hierarchy.”¹¹⁷ Peter Poellner suggests that Nietzsche valorizes figures who have succeeded “in integrating an unusually great multiplicity of ‘drives’ and evaluative commitments into a long-lasting, coherent whole.”¹¹⁸ I would like to suggest that the mistake common to these readings is that they end up reifying the self in a way that Nietzsche explicitly warns against, so that if the self is a unified order of drives, the truest self is the unifier, the force that brings together disparate elements into a whole. In short, they re-describe Kant’s picture in a naturalist vocabulary. I’ll discuss the drives, what Nietzsche says about their unity, and what he doesn’t. I’ll show that these readings reach a self-described impasse, an ostensible paradox in Nietzsche’s thought that clears once we recognize their common mistake. I’ll return to the debate about the sovereign individual to help make my case.

¹¹⁶ Ken Gemes, “Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual,” in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, 46.

¹¹⁷ Simon May, “Nihilism and the Free Self,” in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, 89.

¹¹⁸ Peter Poellner, “Nietzschean Freedom,” in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, 152.

Nietzsche's criticisms of transcendent subject are well known. He writes, for instance, of the subject in GM I 13 that "there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is simply fabricated into the doing—the doing is everything." Nietzsche sees the belief in such a transcendent subject as a regrettable legacy of slave morality. Naturalist readings admit as much and suggest that Nietzsche also has the positive project of re-imagining the subject along naturalist lines, with the unity of personhood now borne out of a coherent order among the drives. There exists support for this characterization in the published works. Nietzsche writes, for instance, in BGE 12 that in doing away with the metaphysical notion of soul, there remains room to rework the concept, suggesting that we conceive of the soul as "a society constructed out of drives and affects." In *Daybreak* 119 Nietzsche speaks of "the totality of *drives* that constitute [a person's] being." In the notebooks, Nietzsche writes that "the most general picture of our essence is *an association of drives*, with continual rivalries and alliances with one another" (KSA 10: 7[94] 1883).

So Nietzsche indeed places drives and their unity of some sort at the centre of his picture of subjectivity. The mistake common to the above naturalist readings is that they end up reifying this unity in a way that fails to appreciate the spirit of Nietzsche's aversion to the transcendent subject: it's not that no such subject really exists, it is instead that the picture of a unified subject cut off from the world is part of, and only makes sense from within, the regrettable movement of slave morality. Nietzsche is quite clear that he doesn't intend his unity of drives theory to recreate the traditional picture: "to indulge the fable of 'unity', 'soul', 'person', this we have forbidden: with such hypotheses one only

covers up the problem” (KSA 11: 37[4] 1885).¹¹⁹ The challenge that Nietzsche sets is to account for this unity in a way that doesn’t repeat, or cover up the problem. Meeting this challenge requires that we understand what precisely the problem is, and my suggestion is that the problem with the concepts of ‘unity’, ‘soul’, and ‘person’ has been their place in a moral system that cuts us off from the productive, creative processes upon which the healthy production of subjects and of values relies. Any attempt to meet the challenge that remains ensnared in that picture cannot be Nietzsche’s. I’ll consider a series of important instances of the naturalist readings’ reification of the subject, leading in each case to a paradox that clears once we recognize their common mistake in recreating the elements of the picture of subjectivity from which Nietzsche means to escape.

John Richardson subscribes to the unity of drives theory, and argues that in putting it forth Nietzsche is attempting to naturalize an otherwise bankrupt, because metaphysical, conception of the subject and freedom. “Nietzsche wants in the first place to ‘*naturalize*’ freedom—to show it as a feature of a certain kind of organism, one variety of life...The freedom he rejects as impossible is the freedom of a metaphysical subject—somehow detached from that biological root, something ‘pure’.”¹²⁰ But in telling the story about the unity of drives, Richardson distances himself from Nietzsche’s warnings about relying at all on concepts like unity, person, and soul. Richardson argues that to make sense of what Nietzsche says elsewhere about ethical agency, the mere unity of drives is not enough. He suggests that Nietzsche, to be consistent with himself, needs a more robust account of a conscious, deliberating subject. Richardson writes of Nietzsche’s claims that no robust subject exists: “but this account isn’t enough for the

¹¹⁹ A contemporaneous note reads: “the multiplicity of drives—we must assume a master, but it is not in consciousness, rather consciousness is an organ, like the stomach” (KSA 11: 27[26] 1884).

¹²⁰ John Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, 129-130.

explanations Nietzsche wants to give us...In the end he means not to dismiss consciousness and deliberation, but to naturalize and de-moralize them.”¹²¹ While Nietzsche explicitly reduces talk of subjectivity to drives, and warns against imputing an actual unity where there is only a grammatical one, Richardson writes that “even the story he tells about the drives often depends on an account of agency. And so we must not take those outright rejections of any such thing [a robust subject] as conclusive.”¹²²

Richardson imputes to Nietzsche a naturalized view of agency, where deliberation is conceived of as a dispositional ability not to act on a strong desire bred into us in the ways described in the *Genealogy*. “We might sum it as the capacity, in an ‘action situation’, to restrain our drives in order to become aware of certain relevant rules, and so act in accordance with these...On Nietzsche’s naturalistic story, this notion of an I is the idea that the new ability has of itself. The ability to consciously think and choose includes or involves a certain idea of itself.”¹²³ Richardson’s view is that Nietzsche sees the self a special sort of drive that, in overpowering others, begins to identify itself with the person, laying claim to the title of ‘I’ or subject.

Richardson recognizes a tension in his view, a paradox issuing from what Nietzsche says explicitly about there being no subject and what Nietzsche seems to say about deliberation and choice that seems to rely on the existence of the very same subject. Richardson writes:

This idea—of an I or self—is on the one hand self-referential, and picks out the capacity [agency]. But it also thinks of that capacity not as a capacity but as a (metaphysical) subject. In this situation, there are, I think, two options: a) we can

¹²¹ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 136.

¹²² Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 137.

¹²³ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 141.

identify the I solely by its reflexive role, in which case the term refers to that capacity, or b) we can identify the I by the content the capacity attributes to itself, in which case there is no I.¹²⁴

Richardson concedes that Nietzsche chooses the second option, but continues, “and yet it would be just as legitimate to identify the self or I through the self-referential role, hence with the capacity that calls itself so. There really is *something* there, something important.”¹²⁵ And: “there seems to us—doesn’t there?—to be a self or I that has this new ability.”¹²⁶ This *something* that *has* agency that Richardson imputes to Nietzsche is what I mean when I discuss the reification of the self, the insistence that to be a self must be to stand apart, a doer behind the deed.

Richardson’s paradox is confounded, he realizes, by a further lack of fit between his picture and what Nietzsche says about ‘masters’. For Richardson’s view of Nietzschean agency, the subject results from a constant struggle between the I or subject and the unity of drives. For “masters,” conversely, this alignment of drives and agency happens without effort, indeed the ease of this naturalness is their defining feature.¹²⁷ Richardson writes, “it is a puzzle, on my view, how this can be.”¹²⁸ The puzzle disappears when we no longer follow Richardson in reifying the subject, a move only after which it is possible to have a struggle between agents and drives. Masters have an untroubled relationship to their actions, they get out of the way of themselves in act and conception.

¹²⁴ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 142.

¹²⁵ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 142.

¹²⁶ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 141.

¹²⁷ See Tanner, *Nietzsche*, 41-42.

¹²⁸ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 144.

Christopher Janaway's account of Nietzsche follows a path similar to Richardson's. Nietzsche's project is conceived of as a naturalist one; the unity of drives account is accepted but the subject becomes reified; the account culminates in a self-recognized paradox, where we are encouraged to sacrifice or soften Nietzsche's insistence that there is no subject. Janaway too points to places where Nietzsche seems to rely on a stronger notion of the subject, Richardson's *something that has* drives:

In using the fullness of our affective responsiveness to the world, we come to occupy ourselves, as it were, in a more complete and healthy way, to fulfill our potential as cognizers. But if the way in which we are to reach this healthier cognitive state is by rethinking what we are and by conscious identification with as many of our affects as possible, we must arguably be unified self-conscious subjects, subjects of 'I'-thoughts. So we cannot *simply* be a multiplicity of drives and affects, as Nietzsche's official position proclaims.¹²⁹

And:

When Nietzsche is thinking of his ideal, creatively evaluating, perspectively knowing individual, he freely imbues this individual with the status of a unified, self-conscious, autonomous subject, in a way that fails to mesh comfortably with his eliminativist description of what the individual amounts to in reality...Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole demands that we do not regard ourselves *only* as complex hierarchies of drives and affects.¹³⁰

But does it? It is Nietzsche's ethical ideal that seems to be at odds with what he says about the subject and so prompts Janaway and Richardson to encourage us to discount the

¹²⁹ Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 57.

¹³⁰ Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 59. See also Janaway, "Morality, Drives, and Human Greatness," 192-195.

eliminativist elements of Nietzsche's views. On this score, Richardson writes, "I think that Nietzsche affirms the power and freedom in agency in his account of the sovereign individual."¹³¹ Janaway suggests that in the figure of the sovereign individual Nietzsche outlines his vision of "someone who is conscious of the strength and consistency of his or her own character," and in this way Janaway aligns the figure with his own account of what Nietzsche means by agency.¹³² Ken Gemes sees Nietzsche as offering an account of free will, part of what he calls Nietzsche's "revisionary naturalistic metaphysics of the soul" in which we act freely insofar as our actions follow from our settled character.¹³³ In suggesting that Nietzsche countenanced the possibility of a free will, Gemes points to the sovereign individual as Nietzsche's ideal, and describes the achievements of this individual in Kantian terms. Since the sovereign individual is described as a lord of a free will, "the implicit message to his audience is that you are not sufficiently whole to have the right to make promises; you have no free will, but you are merely tossed about willy-nilly by a jumble of competing drives, and, hence, you cannot stand surety for what you promise."¹³⁴ Furthermore, Gemes explicitly links Nietzsche's project to Kant's when he writes that they are motivated by the same goals: "those, like Kant and Nietzsche, who endorse agency free will typically see it as something valuable...That Nietzsche wishes to promote the development of genuine individuals, that like Kant, Nietzsche sets autonomy as a goal, clearly indicates that he endorses agency free will as an aspiration."¹³⁵ Gemes uses Nietzsche's interest in the development of genuine individuals as proof that Nietzsche has an account of free will. But Gemes is only able to

¹³¹ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 142.

¹³² Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 62.

¹³³ Gemes, "Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual," 36-37.

¹³⁴ Gemes, "Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual," 37.

¹³⁵ Gemes, "Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual," 47.

suppose that Nietzsche has this interest because of Gemes' understanding of the Nietzschean sovereign individual.

Peter Poellner also takes the sovereign individual to be Nietzsche's ideal and so describes his ethical project in Kantian terms. He suggests that Nietzsche's concern is how we might become "a 'unique' human being, rather than merely an instance of a certain type of conscious organism."¹³⁶ He attributes to Nietzsche an interest in answering "a *transcendental* question: the constitutive conditions of full-fledged, autonomous rather than heteronomous selfhood."¹³⁷ He writes that Nietzsche is "interested, like Kant, not just in minimal agency, but in autonomous or free agency" and then references the sovereign individual passage as an example.¹³⁸

These naturalist readings find a tension between Nietzsche's eliminativist claims about subjectivity and his ideal of ethical agency because they get his ideal wrong. The sovereign individual is Nietzsche's anti-ideal. I think that such readings simply miss the force of Nietzsche's criticism of the metaphysical subject. Nietzsche's concern with slave morality is chiefly with the creation of a subject as an inside, a doer separate from its deeds. He objects to this view because of what it makes of human beings; since the Kantian-inspired naturalist reading simply recapitulates the main features of this story, to read Nietzsche as offering a naturalized Kantian actor just gets him wrong.¹³⁹

Looking at *The Antichrist* will help us to understand in what ways Nietzsche sees slave morality as a wrong turn in the development of the human. Nietzsche there

¹³⁶ Poellner, "Nietzschean Freedom," 152.

¹³⁷ Poellner, "Nietzschean Freedom," 152.

¹³⁸ Poellner, "Nietzschean Freedom," 156.

¹³⁹ As Pippin suggests, "the trouble with proceeding very far in this direction is that Nietzsche does not seem interested in merely naturalizing all talk of motives, goals, intentions, and aversions; he denies that whole model of behavior, 'root and branch'" Pippin, *First Philosophy*, 74.

criticizes the way in which the religion of Christianity has perverted Jesus of Nazareth's message of action into permission for inaction, has turned us into lambs. Of Jesus's own message, Nietzsche writes:

In the entire psychology of the 'Gospel' the concept guilt and punishment is lacking; likewise the concept reward. 'Sin', every kind of distancing relationship between God and man, is abolished...The *consequence* of such a condition projects itself into a new *practice*, the true evangelic practice. It is not a 'belief' which distinguishes the Christian: the Christian acts.¹⁴⁰ (AC 33)

The actual world becomes other and we cease to see it as worthy of our efforts. What becomes important is the purity of an inner self, a chooser who inhabits a fallen world the fate of which loses all meaning: "So to live that there is no longer any *meaning* in living: *that* now becomes the 'meaning' of life" (AC 43).

Where Gemes and Poellner want to view Nietzsche as naturalizing Kant's account of freedom while maintaining its fundamental orientation, Nietzsche's conception of freedom is meant not to naturalize but to redeem the world, to get out from under a view of the world as a false copy, of becoming as guilty:

What alone can *our* teaching be? – That no one *gives* a human being his qualities; not God, not society, not his parents or ancestors, not *he himself* (- the nonsensical idea here last rejected was propounded, as 'intelligible freedom', by Kant, and perhaps also by Plato before him). *No one* is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives. The fatality of his nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality

¹⁴⁰ Now, "the Christian's world of ideas contains nothing which so much as touches upon actuality: on the other hand, we have recognized an instinctive hatred *for* actuality as the driving element, the only driving element in the roots of Christianity" (AC 39).

of all that which has been and will be...One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole – there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare, condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare, condemn the whole...*But nothing exist apart from the whole!* – That no one is any longer made accountable, that the kind of being manifested cannot be traced back to a *causa prima*, that the world is a unity neither as sensorium nor as ‘spirit’, *this alone is the great liberation* – thus alone is the *innocence* of becoming restored...The concept ‘God’ has hitherto been the greatest *objection* to existence...We deny God; in denying God, we deny accountability: only by doing *that* do we redeem the world. (TI Errors 8)

Here, clearly, freedom in Kant’s sense is denied. One is a piece of fate, inextricably entangled in a web of causation that constitutes the world. Where Kantian freedom admits of this causation and seeks freedom in another place or perspective, true Nietzschean freedom is the adoption of a certain attitude to our place in the world. Where Kant sees being determined by the world as inimical to freedom (Kant, CPrR 5:97-98), we might see Nietzsche as asking: what is so awful about being a part of the world? Nietzsche’s is in the end a freedom that delivers us over to fate, but it is *our* fate, and we trust it rather than, as the sovereign individual is described, claiming power over it.

For Nietzsche, the unity of personality is not a name for some substratum that exists apart, that wrenches back from existence. Instead, we seek to be strong enough to borrow the unity of our personality from the multiple ways we are determined by a world affirmed as innocent, a point I explore at length in the next chapter. We are not the cause

of ourselves, for nothing is, but we can be free insofar as we feel the world move through us. Nietzsche describes his heroes as just as multiple as whole (BGE 212); he calls for a new account of the subject as a multiplicity, an aristocracy of cells (WLN 40[42] 1885; see also BGE 12). These are ways of getting away from the Kantian picture, naturalized or otherwise, of a self-contained doer. Instead, Nietzsche envisions a subject, just as multiple as whole, who carves out the unity of his actions in expression, from the multiple sites where he engages the world, borrowing unity, and so himself, from the world rather than protecting himself from it.

When Nietzsche discusses his ideal, Dionysus, he describes not an individual who stands apart, who affirms the world from apart. Instead, what is described for us is a being who is open to the world that makes him, "...newer than before, broken open, blown on, and sounded out by a thawing wind, perhaps less certain, more gentle, fragile, and broken, but full of hopes that do not have names yet, full of new wills and currents, full of new indignations and countercurrents..." (BGE 295) Just as Goethe is described as strong enough for his freedom, this is a strong surrendering, the strength to give oneself over, to be settled by forces that one doesn't choose or will. This is why Zarathustra wants to know not what we are free from but what we are free for (Z I Creator). We don't rescue the freedom of a will from a fallen world. We express our freedom in creating, the way a look expresses longing or care, and we are responsible for the world we make, for what, in the end, our freedom is for.

Chapter Four

Shared Joy as Affirmation

I suggested in chapter two that what interests Nietzsche in the Greek agon and tragic theatre is the way that the subject felt herself beholden to communal forces of creation. The Greeks championed sites of constitutive undoings, exposure to processes of becoming that constituted values and so subjects understood as constellations of values, embodied possibilities of life. The Greek could see herself being transformed, beholden to others, a contested 'what'. Nietzsche understands slave morality as the methodical, mendacious undercutting of this posture, the creation of a human type characterized by its inability to call itself into question. I have discussed this inability as it is made manifest through both the morality of compassion and the picture of subjectivity that grows out of slave morality. Distinctive about slave morality is its success in cutting us off from the genealogical roots of our type, a sense that insofar as we have become, we are still becoming, beings at risk. In chapter three, I suggested the sovereign individual represents, for Nietzsche, the summit of this lamentable picture, important because of the extent to which the person of sovereign individuality has internalized the morality that, on Nietzsche's view, inhibits her flourishing through its inability to risk itself.

I argue in this chapter that Nietzsche turns to friendship as a precarious force capable of reanimating what is lost here. Nietzsche defines friendship as *Mitfreude*, shared joy. In friendship we open ourselves to a joyful affirmation of the world, helping to overcome the internalization of the human being wrought by slave morality. This is accomplished, I suggest, through the friend's ability to draw us out of ourselves and into

the world through a posture I locate in Nietzsche's thought and call a 'strong surrendering'. In turning to our relationships with others as entry points into the type of ethical work he would have us do on ourselves, Nietzsche shows that this ethical work is accomplished with others through whom we are afforded the opportunity to put at risk our sense that we are whole, to lend ourselves to a world that becomes. The way Nietzsche wants us to account for the unity of personality without covering up the problem, the way he wants us to become what we are, travels through relationships of affection that make the contributions of others conditions of our becoming ourselves.

I have suggested in previous chapters that slave morality represents a disfigurement of human desire. Nietzsche turns to the form of relationality expressed in relationships of love and friendship as models for the ethical posture he anticipates. Deleuze asks expectantly, "what precisely is an encounter with someone you like?"¹⁴¹ Whatever it is that happens when we meet someone we like, that rush or smile, the slowing down and the speeding up, is Nietzsche's model for how we might want the world. Relationships of love and friendship share the features of the agon that interested Nietzsche: they pull us into a space of contest where being is affirmed in its becoming, where combatants struggle as a way to say yes to the dice table, the stage that sets their scene. To feel the ideas of another move through me is to feel the transformations of the drama as my own; to celebrate the joy of my friend more powerfully than she is to feel as my own my combatant's achievement, insofar as both help to shape the contest in whose affirmation I locate myself. In each, there is the ecstatic doubling of seeing ourselves become,

¹⁴¹ Gilles Deleuze and C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 10-11.

catching sight of ourselves from a perspective offered through a relationship with another. Nietzsche sees as best about us our capacity to be undone, unsettled, to allow ourselves to come apart in a desirous frenzy that allies itself to the world. He writes of love:

...there is no more confused or impenetrable spectacle than that which arises when both parties are passionately in love with one another and both consequently abandon themselves and want to be the same as one another: in the end neither knows what he is supposed to be imitating, what dissimulating, what pretending to be. The beautiful madness of this spectacle is too good for this world and too subtle for human eyes. (D 532)

As David Mikics writes, “love, therefore, furnishes a model for the trust we give to versions of the world.”¹⁴² Lovers surrender to each other in the way Nietzsche would have us surrender to the world; friends share a thirst similar to but higher than lovers (GS 14), they allow themselves to be unsettled, but want to give themselves not just to the other but to the world so that they can become the what that they are, whatever the world will make of them.¹⁴³ Friendship is that form of love where our commitment to the other opens us towards the world, where we are beholden not to a lover but to a loved, desired world.¹⁴⁴ And while we moderns no longer have access to the contest in the same way the Greeks did, we do have the capacity to share ourselves with others, to share in their

¹⁴² David Mikics, *The Romance of Individualism in Emerson and Nietzsche* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 163.

¹⁴³ Importantly, this conception of friendship from GS 14 is there presented as a response to the form of relationality fostered by compassion, what is for Nietzsche a rival model of relationality, a point I discuss in chapter five.

¹⁴⁴ Leslie Paul Thiele discusses Nietzsche’s account of love in the context of desire and overcoming, suggesting that for Nietzsche, “to love is to idealize, to desire the birth of that which rests in a state of pregnancy. It marks an active, participatory relationship. Love becomes decadent in pity. The sharing of ideals is replaced by the sharing of suffering.” Leslie Paul Thiele, “Love and Judgement: Nietzsche’s Dilemma,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 20 (1991): 90.

joy and to affirm their place, their voice, in our own becoming. We can, Nietzsche insists, overcome the nihilistic claim that the world lacks meaning by engaging in the beautiful, meaning-creating frenzy that is opened up by friendship.

Others occupy a contested place in Nietzsche's thought. While Nietzsche is often understood as the arch-individualist, hard and aristocratic, I think that Mikics is on the right track when he writes that, "in Nietzsche...identity remains (at times promisingly, at times maddeningly) subject to the other person who, we hope, might unlock the mystery of the self for us."¹⁴⁵ Part of our propensity for reading Nietzsche as an individualist is the undeniable place of exemplary individuals in his thinking. For Nietzsche, though, it is lamentable that such heroes can exist only as "the infrequent exception" against the increasing mediocrity of the human being of slave morality (BGE 62). Nietzsche's interest in the agon is symptomatic of a more general interest in the cultural foundations of individual excellence. He writes, "peoples were the creators at first; only later were individuals creators. Indeed, the individual himself is still the latest creation" (Z I Goals). Nietzsche stresses in *Homer's Contest*, one of five completed but unpublished 'prefaces to unwritten works' he wrote in 1872, how the Greeks presupposed that "in a natural order of things, there are always *more* geniuses who reciprocally incite [each other] to deeds, as they also reciprocally hold [each other] within the borders of measure" (HC, p.89). And he writes that it is the task of poets to remind humanity that, whatever the failings of contemporary society, "the great and beautiful soul is still possible..." (AOM 99) The breakdown of the agon wrought by slave morality has meant a breakdown of the varying productive processes out of which excellence can emerge. Modern heroes are now celebrated as regrettably rare expressions of human potential forced into latency:

¹⁴⁵ Mikics, *Romance of Individualism*, 2.

Such men of great creativity, the really great men according to my understanding, will be sought in vain today and probably for a long time to come; until, after much disappointment, one must begin to comprehend *why* they are lacking and that nothing stands more malignantly in the way of their rise and evolution, today and for a long time to come, than what in Europe today is called simply “morality” – as if there were no other morality and could be no other... (WP 957 1885)

The history of slave morality placates, tells us that we know who we are and what the world is. Nietzsche writes instead of an experimental spirit that seeks out and takes on a host of contrary perspectives, suggesting that, “the *more* affects we allow to speak about a matter, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, the much more complete will our ‘concept’ of this matter, our ‘objectivity’ be” (GM III 12). Although here a remark about knowledge in general, Nietzsche frequently praises in individuals the strength to bring a range of disparate feelings, eyes, perspectives to bear on one’s situation. He writes of his desire to “appropriate many individuals as so many additional pairs of eyes and hands...” (GS 249); he calls for new philosophers who ought to “run through the range of human values and value feelings and *be able* to gaze with many eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths up to every height, from the corner onto every expanse” (BGE 211); and he suggests that:

if one could burden one’s soul with all this—the oldest, the newest, losses, hopes, conquests, and the victories of humanity; if one could finally contain all this in one soul and crowd it into a single feeling—this would surely have to result in a

happiness that humanity has not known so far—the happiness of a god full of power and love, full of tears and laughter... (GS 337)

Not surprisingly, then, we find Nietzsche often praising those who are able to take on, to feel, a host of perspectives. A note reads: “deep disinclination to settle down comfortably once and for all in any single overall view of the world; charm of the opposite way of thinking; refusal to be robbed of the attraction of the enigmatic” (WLN 2[155] 1885-86).¹⁴⁶ Again, Nietzsche writing of the possibility of occupying a different, new perspective that is ours as the sort of creature we are: “the type we are representing is one of our possibilities – we could form many persons – we do have the material or that in us” (KGW 25[362] 1884; see also KGW 25[21] 1884).

Nietzsche credits certain of our relationships with the potential to reawaken in us the craving for communal creation silenced in slave morality. In our relationships with others we are confronted with a world, a cluster of views and valuation that can shake us out of the slave’s insipid inactivity. Nietzsche often points to our relationships as providing the opportunity to seek out the other’s world, an economy of feeling, ideas, and valuation that can change us.¹⁴⁷ Nietzsche understands these economies as a sort of micro-agon, the creation between beings of the sort of communal production definitive of the former agon. He writes, “how I rejoice in any mood and secret transformation within myself which means that the ideas of *another* have prevailed over my own!” (D 449) He goes so far as to locate what is best about those we love as their bringing with them a

¹⁴⁶ Tracy Strong puts it well when he writes that, “the more composite a knower is... and the more that we do not insist that we be a unity, the more eyes the ‘subject’ will have, the more it will see things ‘as they are’, not as given, but as multiple themselves.” Tracy Strong, “Nietzschean Explorations,” *Political Theory* 13 no.2 (1985): 172.

¹⁴⁷ He writes, “the isolation of the individual ought not to deceive us: something flows on *underneath* individuals” (WP 686).

different estimation of life: “what is love but understanding and rejoicing at the fact that another lives, feels and acts in a way different from and opposite to ours?”¹⁴⁸ (AOM 75)

Nietzsche explores these themes in ‘From High Mountains’, the Aftersong of *Beyond Good and Evil*. There he begins by expressing his longing for a home, a table that can be shared with true friends, then says: “Oh friends, you’re *there!* But – what grave ill portends? – Am I a stranger?” His friends beckon from the future as if welcoming him into the person he is to become. Nietzsche continues, “I *am* no more? – In face, or stride or hands?” Nietzsche lets go of a sense of self as settled or achieved. He is no more if he is something already there, something that stands apart from the whole, for nothing exists in that sense. Nietzsche continues, “but *am* I not what I am for you, friends?” He affirms that he is what he is for and through his friends, he is his becoming. He seeks himself through his friends, not as if there’s a truth waiting to be found but as if it is only with them that he can play the game that will return him to himself. Finally, near the end of the Aftersong, we read: “the friend of noon-time – but – no! don’t ask who – It was at noon, when one turned into two.” Borrowing the imagery of sun and shadow from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, noon is the time of the shortest shadow, a threshold where the past loses its grip and the future is open, a site of passage. The friend at noon is one that splits into two, a self exploded into its spectral possibility. And Nietzsche wants to stress we can’t ask *who* turns into two, because we *are* the turning, we are the overcoming.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸Nietzsche in 1876 began preparations for what he called in letters to friends a community of education, where a close-knit group would live together, challenge each other, and help each other grow into themselves. He wrote, “I am always hunting for men like any pirate, but not to sell them as slaves, rather to ransom myself with them in liberty” (SB 5:188).

¹⁴⁹ Sean Kirkland writes that “the overman must be understood, as the name indicates, as having its *being* only within the *Untergang* or ‘going under’ of each of us qua human being... The overman exists then if at all only at or as the futural edge of the site of self-transformation.” Sean Kirkland, “Zarathustra and

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*'s "On the Friend", the friend is referred to as a third term that supplements the complacent conversation between the self and itself. "I and me are always too earnestly in conversation with one another: how could it be endured, if there were not a friend? For the hermit the friend is always the third person: the third person is the cork that prevents the conversation of the other two from sinking to the depths" (Z I Friend). A contemporaneous note reads: "I and Me are always two different persons" (KSA 10: 3[1]352 1882). If Nietzsche's problem is the deleterious effects of the internalization of the human subject, what has been called in this context, "sinking into the depth of self-interrogation,"¹⁵⁰ and the, "jealous narcissism of a dyadic relationship,"¹⁵¹ here he suggests that his solution is a certain mode of being with others, a friendship that gets in between the I and its self, that makes public the processes through which the self finds itself still worked on, unfinished. The friend is a particular kind of witness for Nietzsche. She is the audience to the play of our becoming, not a cold onlooker but a participant who feels herself wrapped up in the drama. What is made manifest by the witnessing activity of the friend is the possibility of seeing ourselves being seen, which is to see ourselves contested. I return to these themes in chapter five in connection with Aristotle's conception of friendship and in an attempt to link friendship in Nietzsche to more general themes in his ethics.

This capacity of friends to open each other up to their overcoming is for Nietzsche the essence of friendship. Nietzsche writes: "here and there on earth we may

Redeeming the Past," in *Nietzsche and Phenomenology*, ed. Andrea Rehberg (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 54. See also Paul van Tongeren, "Nietzsche's Naturalism," in *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, 213-214; and Christine Daigle, "Virtue Ethics... Virtue Politics?" *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 32 (2006): 8-9.

¹⁵⁰ Paul van Tongeren, "Politics, Friendship and Solitude in Nietzsche: (Confronting Derrida's reading of Nietzsche in 'Politics of Friendship')," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 19 no.3 (2000): 209.

¹⁵¹ Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso Books, 1997), 641.

encounter a kind of continuation of love in which this possessive craving of two people for each other gives way to a new desire and lust for possession – a *shared* higher thirst for an ideal above them. But who knows such love? Who has experienced it? Its right name is *friendship*” (GS 14). In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche is more explicit about this higher ideal, suggesting the friend should be “an arrow and a longing” for the overhuman (Z I Friend). Robert C. Miner has argued that for Nietzsche the goal of friendship is truth.¹⁵² Miner quotes Nietzsche calling friendship a shared thirst for an ideal and suggests that this ideal is truth.¹⁵³ Miner offers as support a quotation from the posthumously published *We Philologists*, in which Nietzsche speaks of a fellowship of close friends who, in Nietzsche’s words, “apply the standard of their criticism to everything and sacrifice themselves to Truth” (P, p.194). This is a somewhat obscure source for Nietzsche’s settled view, and we can find much more support for the claim that friendship’s goal is self-overcoming, a goal at odds with truth. In GS 214, Nietzsche suggests it is tempting but wrong to view friends “as if they had one goal.” There he speaks not of fellowship but of divisiveness, strife, and distance. In “On the Friend,” there is no mention of truth, and we read instead several claims that link friendships to deception and incitement rather than to knowledge.¹⁵⁴ Where Miner calls the shared higher thirst of friends ‘truth’, *Zarathustra* just is a narrative wherein Nietzsche tries to urge humanity to a new, shared striving towards not truth but his figure of the overhuman, a process wherein we seek to overcome ourselves, our truths, so that we might give birth to something new, different, over human.

¹⁵² Robert C. Miner, “Nietzsche on Friendship,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 40 (2010): 47-69.

¹⁵³ Miner, “Nietzsche on Friendship,” 57.

¹⁵⁴ “He who makes no secret of himself excites anger in others... You cannot adorn yourself too well for your friend... The friend should be a master in conjecture and in keeping silence: you must not want to see everything” (Z I Friend).

On my view, friends help us to overcome ourselves. Nietzsche says through Zarathustra that “your love of your neighbour is your bad love of yourselves” (Z I Neighbour). Nietzsche’s German is better than the English here, for *nächstenliebe*, charity or love of the neighbour, is more literally love of the nearest, an ambiguity Nietzsche plays with when he next counsels instead *Fernsten-Liebe*, “love of the farthest”. Nietzsche sees the turn in slave morality to the figure of the neighbour as too safe, stifling. The figure of the neighbour is too like us, so to love him is just to love ourselves as we are; neighbour-love is our “bad love of ourselves” (Z I Neighbour).¹⁵⁵ The neighbour, as herd, provides comfort and consolation, confirming our beliefs rather than calling them, and so calling us, into question. Rather than the neighbour, nearest and similar, Nietzsche wants human beings to strive for something other and insodoing to locate themselves in their becoming other. Nietzsche contrasts the neighbour with a phantom, ghost or spectre [*Gespensst*] that stands in for the person we might become: “this spectre that runs ahead of you, my brother, is more beautiful than you: why do you not give him your flesh and your bones? But you are afraid and run to your neighbour” (Z I Neighbour). The possibility that we might grow out of ourselves into something new is a thought difficult for the subject of slave morality to think. Bred into complacency, the thought that we might be unfinished, that we might give our flesh and bones to someone new is suffocating, so we “flee to our neighbour.” This is why Nietzsche writes elsewhere that love of the neighbour is better called “*addiction to the neighbor*” (EH

¹⁵⁵ Jacques Derrida makes much of this theme in Nietzsche’s account of friendship. Derrida sees Nietzsche as an ally against an ethics that esteems hearth and home and so is open only to those who already belong and hostile to those who do not. In Nietzsche, conversely, Derrida finds a “friendship without presence, without resemblance, without affinity, without analogy.” Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 155.

Destiny 7). Our affinity with the figure of the neighbour is the pathological expression of our inability to put ourselves at risk. Nietzsche wants to overturn this pathology and claims the figure of the friend is crucial for this overturning: “I wish rather that you could not endure to be with any kind of neighbour or with your neighbour’s neighbour; then you would have to create your friend and his overflowing heart out of yourselves” (Z I Neighbour).

We can ask what is distinctive about the friend such that she figures precisely in this way. John Coker writes that Nietzschean friendship is agonal, not about shared character so much as a shared struggle or striving. “Instead of loving others as they *are*,” Coker writes, “one loves what they *are becoming*.”¹⁵⁶ A friendship that aligns two creators would be one that aided in their respective processes of self-overcoming, an ethical imperative that becomes possible once one feels the productive tension of becoming, and coming so to feel occurs best in our agonal interactions with friends. Coker describes Nietzsche’s insight as setting the discord between friends into creative tension. “Instead of friendship involving concord, friendship will involve differences that create tension within and between friends, albeit creative tensions that inspire or spur on our friends.”¹⁵⁷ The friend is precisely not the neighbour because friendship happens where satisfaction departs, in a space opened by the confrontation of creative energies, an agonal space. Coker suggests that friends love who the other is becoming, but it is perhaps better to say that friends love the other in their becoming, or as becoming. Friendship attaches at the places where they are becoming new, different, other, so that just what is the object of the friend’s love, and what loves *qua* friend can’t be stated

¹⁵⁶ John Coker, “On Becoming Great Friends,” *International Studies in Philosophy* 25 no.2 (1993): 116.

¹⁵⁷ Coker, “Becoming Great Friends,” 116.

clearly, for it is the very dissimulation of the process that is central for Nietzsche. We fight for the friend's becoming-other in the light of the type of affirmation exemplified in the agon. We are not the one thing that changes into the second but the very possibility of the passage, a possibility, both in the agon and in friendship, propped up by our participation. As with the ecstatic doubling of the Greeks, in friendship we can see ourselves transformed.

Diana Freibach-Heifetz too argues that the goal of friendship for Nietzsche is to aid in the self-overcoming of friends. Friendship is described as, "a joint struggle with the human within each of the friends, in order to transcend it and reach towards the overman that is beyond them."¹⁵⁸ The friend's care for the other consists in a particular type of temptation that colours the world as alive with possibilities for life, fertile ground for the experimentation of self-overcoming. And Abbey likewise suggests that friendship is important for Nietzsche because of its tensional dynamic. She writes that for Nietzsche, "friends can assist in the self's struggle with itself."¹⁵⁹ It is a struggle, I've said, forced into latency by the victory of the slave interpretation of existence, a victory through which the communal forces of the agon were forced out of effect. The work particular to friendship is reinvigorating that force, and since self-overcoming figures so crucially in Nietzsche's ethics, friendship too is crucial.

Friendship is able to play this role because it involves the type of joyful giving of oneself over to forces that one does not control that Nietzsche respected so much. That Nietzsche celebrates a certain way of giving oneself helps to resolve a seeming tension in his views.

¹⁵⁸ Diana Freibach-Heifetz, "Pure Air and Solitude and Bread and Medicine: Nietzsche's Conception of Friendship," *Philosophy Today* 49 (2005): 247.

¹⁵⁹ Abbey, "Circles, Ladders and Stars," 58.

For while he calls often for a noble type of person who is proud and resolute, leading many readers such as those discussed in chapter three to see Nietzsche's ideal as a sovereign type, he also calls for self-overcoming, seeing ourselves as experiments, and putting ourselves at risk.¹⁶⁰ The apparent contradiction between these two imperatives dissolves in agonistic relationships, where strength displays itself by giving ground. Nietzsche's account of strength comes in the form of what I call a strong surrendering, an ethical posture that animates Nietzsche's account of friendship.

Emphasizing the importance of contradiction in Nietzsche's account of subjectivity, Müller-Lauter points to the dual, potentially contradictory imperative in Nietzsche of affirming wholeheartedly one's particular perspective or valuation of the world while also remaining able to give it up. Nietzsche calls on us to, "achieve this twofold attitude, belief and simultaneous readiness to give up belief...It would, then, be not only changing assent, surrendering again and again to the varying perspectives and constantly re-solidifying, but simultaneously assenting to the changing itself."¹⁶¹ Nietzsche's figure of the overhuman represents what it would mean to embody both imperatives. Her strength is displayed in the first place by an increase in power evinced by imposing her ideal upon the world, making others understand the world through her eyes. While some readers of Nietzsche stop here and see Nietzsche as heralding a megalomaniacal creator, Nietzsche also stresses a second imperative for the overhuman: that she affirms not just her perspective, but its status as one of a multiplicity of possible

¹⁶⁰ Henry Staten draws a contrast between "a self that vies itself up to be rent by time, a self that will its own suffering in the endless violation of its boundary of selfhood as endless pouring-forth into futurity," and "autarky, an autonomous, self-preserving selfhood." Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, 50.

¹⁶¹ Müller-Lauter, *Contradictions*, 68. Pippin writes in a similar vein of the imperative in Nietzsche of, "achieving a capacity both to sustain a wholehearted commitment to an ideal...[and] a willingness to overcome or abandon such a commitment in altered circumstances or as a result of some development." Pippin, *First Philosophy*, 113.

perspectives.¹⁶² This is because when the overhuman allies herself with power it is not *her* power, her control, but the power or pulse of an affirmed world which she affirms as becoming, as joy.¹⁶³ Nietzsche suggests with his ideal of self-overcoming that we trust the world so that its truths can become our own, even or especially where this means overcoming our past truths, valuations, and so selves.¹⁶⁴ We embrace the strength to see ourselves as beholden to a world that makes us rather than the weakness of standing apart: strength for Nietzsche is a certain manner of surrendering; at our strongest, we “do like all the world and ‘let ourselves go’ like all the world” (GM II 24), dissembling into “the Overman, the overcome, overtaken man.”¹⁶⁵

It is no surprise then, that we often find Nietzsche linking strength with giving way or surrender and often in connection to friendship. Zarathustra suggests that we seek to overpower only so that we can then give back: “you compel all things to come to you and into you, that they may flow back from your fountains as gifts of your love” (Z I Bestowing 1). In a passage on self-overcoming, we read that yes, the weak yields to the stronger, but “...the greatest, too, surrenders and for the sake of power stakes - life. The devotion of the greatest is to encounter risk and danger and play dice for death” (Z II Self-Overcoming). Nietzsche writes elsewhere that, “he who really possesses himself ... henceforth regards it as his own privilege to punish himself, to pardon himself, to take pity on himself: he does not need to concede this to anyone else, but he can freely relinquish it to another, to a friend for example.” (D 437) He suggests that “to relinquish

¹⁶² Müller-Lauter continues that, “the overman is to achieve *in one person* the intensification of the contradictions of all strivings to their extreme; their combination under the yoke of one powerfully imposed ideal; and readiness to give up this ideal in favor of another, previously subjugated one...” Müller-Lauter, *Contradictions*, 80-81.

¹⁶³ Bernard Reginster defines the will to power in a way that resonates here, as a desire for desire. See especially Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 103-148.

¹⁶⁴ See Z II Self-Overcoming; WP 1067; WP 125; WP 704.

¹⁶⁵ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 94.

one's rights – gives pleasure when it indicates great wealth. Magnanimity belongs here” (D 315). We read too of an imperative to, “give away, to give back, to communicate, to grow poorer! ...To be in possession of a dominion and at the same time concealed and renouncing...That would be a life!” (D 449) And: “it is of the very essence of the rich spirit to squander itself carelessly, without petty caution, from day to day” (WP 77 1883-88). Strength for Nietzsche manifests itself not in a withdrawal but with exposure to forces that would undo that strength. Finally, and succinctly, in a cryptic passage Nietzsche points to, “the two species of happiness (the feeling of power and the feeling of surrender)” (D 60). And this is precisely the posture exemplified in the agon: competitors seek to outdo each other, seek excellence, only in affirming the other's achievement as worthy of opposition, worthy of overcoming. If overcoming a standard is valuable, it must in part be because the game or practice in which it functions has value, and so the strength of achievement requires a certain type of submission.

Insofar as friendship aids in our self-overcoming, it will be infused with struggle. Nietzsche returns often to the thought that friendships will be contestatory, shown perhaps most clearly by his metaphor of the friend as enemy (Z I Friend; Z I Neighbour). Nietzsche's friends help one another in their self-overcoming by challenging each other. Nietzsche laments the wrong sort of friends when he writes, “this one cannot say ‘No,’ and that one says to everything: ‘Half and half’” (GS 32). In “On the Friend,” we read that, “if one want a friend, you must be willing to wage war for him: and to wage war, you must be *capable* of being an enemy” (Z I Friend). Rather than reaching out to our enemies as neighbours so that they will be friends, which would just be to broaden the bounds of our bad love of ourselves, Nietzsche means to point to a different form of

intimacy that will hold within itself enmity. “In your friend you should possess your best enemy. Your heart should feel closest to him when you oppose him” (Z I Friend). It is a particular form of intimacy that allows itself sometimes to turn vitriolic; to welcome enmity is to allow the friend, and through the friend the world, to have a say in what we are, who we are becoming, it is to seek the strength of submitting oneself to forces one helps to constitute without claiming control over. Importantly, Nietzsche stresses that the enmity of friendship is instrumental: rather than buttressing a sophomoric masculinity, the enmity of friendship is a marker of our commitment to the other’s becoming. It is because we aim to foster the friend’s overcoming that we must sometimes be an enemy to their present.

Crucially, the creation of friendship is self-overcoming, and self-overcoming is contest. When Zarathustra urges his audience to overcome themselves, he has no doctrine, no final state for which they should aim. “I have to be struggle and a becoming and goal and conflict of goals” (Z II Self-Overcoming).¹⁶⁶ Self-overcoming is its own end in the same way that the contest of the Greek agon was its own end, suggesting the way in which the friend-as-enemy stands in for the contestant-as-collaborator.¹⁶⁷ The enmity of friendship is the enmity of contest, the desire necessary to the game that gives us to ourselves. In both cases, what is crucial is engaging in shared practices that surf along being’s edge, that show being to itself as becoming. For Zarathustra, self-overcoming shows one to herself as becoming, and exemplarity here consists in a certain

¹⁶⁶ Nietzsche writes of Zarathustra in *Ecce Homo*, “it is no fanatic that speaks here; this is not ‘preaching’; no *faith* is demanded here...” (EH P 4)

¹⁶⁷ See Acampora, “Revaluing the Homeric Question,” 104-109.

affective response to this self-understanding.¹⁶⁸ The most comprehensive or spacious [*umfänglichste*] soul, “out of joy [*Lust*] hurls itself into chance – Having being, dives into becoming; the soul which *has*, but *wants* to want and will” (Z III Law Tables 19 translation altered).¹⁶⁹ This cultivated desire for desire, this want for existence, is the same desire as the contestant of the agon who wants to be evaluated by standards that she affirms as binding even as she helps to create them. The strength of the agon, of self-overcoming, and so of friendship is the strength to have being, to know and trust and affirm oneself, and then to plunge oneself into becoming out of joy, out of desire.

We can state more clearly, then, why a friendship organized around enmity is so important for Nietzsche’s ethics more generally. What brings together the agon, the human being, and her ethos is that in each case contest or struggle that is productive of meaning, productive of life is fostered. The agon organized disparate forces into a whole, into a culture; in his account of subjectivity, Nietzsche stresses the organization of drives into a whole, into a person. And with his focus on friendship, Nietzsche means to suggest that that organization which constitutes the human being issues from a particular relationship: not between an I and its self, a will and its body, but between a person and her friend. The struggle of friendship, its enmity, is striving glorified and fostered. To affirm the back and forth of friendship, to plunge into the rival versions of ourselves we are given through the friend as into becoming, is to affirm our status as a being up for

¹⁶⁸ Robert Guay writes that Nietzsche insists, “that how one orients oneself to human contingency expresses ‘what one is’ in a way that renders that orientation fundamental to ethical assessment in general.” Guay, “Vacuity,” 162.

¹⁶⁹ English translations of this section vary in significant ways. Nietzsche’s German is: “die umfänglichste Seele ... welche sich as Lust in den Zufall stürzt: - die seiende Seele, welche in’s Werden taucht; die habende, welche in’s Wollen und Verlangen will: - ” (Z III Law Tables 19).

grabs, and *that* affirmation, of destruction that creates, of appearance celebrated, runs through Nietzsche's entire body of work.

The call sometimes to be an enemy to our friends delivers to us a ponderous responsibility. Nietzsche will suggest we must sometimes sever ourselves from a friend if we realize they would be better off without us:

Friends in need. – Sometimes we notice that one of our friends belongs more to another than he does to us, and that his delicacy is troubled by and his selfishness inadequate to this decision: we then have to make things easier for him and *estrangle* him from us.... (O)ur love for him has to drive us, through an injustice which we take upon ourself, to create for him a good conscience in renouncing us.¹⁷⁰ (D 489)

Nietzsche wants to say that we often must estrange ourselves from a friend because we have to traffic with the other's spectral self even or especially when they are not yet able to do so, have sometimes to be an enemy to the present. Nietzsche writes of this ideal, spectral self:

Many live in awe of and abasement before their ideal and would like to deny it: they are afraid of their higher self because when it speaks it speaks imperiously. It possesses, moreover, a spectral freedom to come or to stay away as it wishes; on this account it is often called a gift of the gods, whereas in reality it is everything else that is a gift of the gods (of chance): this however is man himself. (HH 624)

¹⁷⁰ Ure writes that, in Nietzsche's framework, "it is possible to estrange others from ourselves for *their* sake, so that they can leave us with a good conscience; the need we respond to in them is not their need for us, but their need for themselves." Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy*, 230.

Here Nietzsche suggests that what is most ours as human beings is the possibility of our growing into ourselves through overcoming, what he calls a spectral freedom. Our friends are friends to this becoming, this possibility, rather than to ourselves as we are.

For Nietzsche, the space of friendship opens up a world where we can witness ourselves contested, an agonal space. As in the Aftersong of BGE, we just *are* this unsettled, third term that gets contested, worked on in the open. If we can be more attached to the friend's becoming than they, and if what is most ours is this becoming, then friends "exist outside of themselves or in the relationship between [them]."¹⁷¹ As Zarathustra says, "higher still than love of man I account love of causes and of phantoms [*Gesperst*]" (Z I Neighbour).

These difficult imperatives of friendship make it the case that Nietzsche will understand the best sort of friendships as demanding and rare. For Nietzsche the rarity of friendship follows from the bred complacency of much of modern humanity. Through slave morality the human being has become disfigured, turned inward, and unable to see herself as tied to a world of becoming that shapes her in ways she might celebrate as joy. The aim of friendship is to aid in self-overcoming, and those placed to do so are regrettably rare exceptions to the increasing mediocrity of human beings.

Because Nietzsche understands friends as aiding in each other's overcoming, personality traits that would impede this task make one ill-suited to be a friend. Miner enumerates four types for whom the best sort of friendship is not possible (2010, pp. 49-53). The first three have largely to do with activity and knowledge. Friendship is a

¹⁷¹ Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy*, 231. Ure finds in Nietzsche the thought that, "we can be ourselves, or *more* than ourselves, with and through others and they can be *more* than themselves with and through us." Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy*, 234.

shared striving, an activity that structures the relationship, and so those ill-suited to such activity will not be good friends. Nietzsche writes that, “the idle man is a danger to his friends: for, because he does not have enough to do, he talks about what his friends do and do not do...” (AOM 260) Friendships involve two lives intertwining in a way that propels both forward, and so anyone who is content with the status quo, who resists the processes through which a life mixes with another, will not be a friend.

Relatedly, those who dwell too much on their friendships will not make good friends. Nietzsche writes, “one should not talk about one’s friends: otherwise one will talk away the feeling of friendship” (AOM 252). Friendship is most at home in creative action. It is described as a thirst (GS 14) and an arrow (Z I Friend). If a friendship is treated as a talking point, Nietzsche seems to suggest, it will not be a potential site of creation. The type of action Nietzsche commends is that of someone who sees their life as process, as a work in progress.

Nietzsche suggests too that friendships will have a natural course that will usually only be obstructed by its becoming explicit. Nietzsche describes how friendships can fall victim to this type of concern, explaining a friendship that fails: “Two Friends. – They were friends but have ceased to be, and they both severed their friendship at the same time: the one because he thought himself too much misunderstood, the other because he thought himself understood too well – and both were deceiving themselves! – for neither understood himself well enough” (D 287). Nietzsche points with these examples away from a view of human relationships as based on some form of knowledge of the other. Instead, Nietzsche suggests that we do a disservice to our relationships when we try to flood them with light, seek to unmask, the way we misunderstand the play when we seek

to look backstage, or stop playing the game when we ask about the metaphysical status of its rules. There is a space opened up by friendship that exists apart from either of its members, that is not theirs to map or articulate or fully understand. Friendships do their work precisely where we allow them their own course, when we trust them in their trajectory, when we know ourselves well enough to let ourselves go, and so at their best they exemplify the ease of nobility, the untroubled faith that things will work out for the best because we feel strong enough to *call* best whatever happens to us.

Third, those who expect us to do too much for them will not be our friends. While we will help our friends, show compassion when appropriate, we cannot be friends with the helpless. Freibach-Heifetz points usefully here to Martin Heidegger's concern with helping the other without stepping in for her and thus obliterating her as other.¹⁷² Compassion, as discussed above, resides here, with the helpless. "Let your pity for your friend conceal itself under a hard shell" (Z I Friend). Friendship as shared joy requires that we understand the other as engaging in her self-overcoming, as co-experimenter. While we will and do step in to aid a friend in need, we will not dote or commiserate so much as push and shake (see Z II Compassionate).

Finally, Miner suggests that we cannot be friends with those dominated by envy and resentment.¹⁷³ Although Miner doesn't make this connection, it is important to understand why this would be the case. Nietzsche sees friendship, shared joy, as part of the processes through which the human being can overcome slave morality, and in the *Genealogy* special appeal is made to envy and resentment as slave morality's markers. We will not be friends with those who pull us back to the form of life that is overcome in

¹⁷² Freibach-Heifetz, "Pure Air," 245-246. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 180.

¹⁷³ Miner, "Nietzsche on Friendship," 52.

our self-overcoming. “The sick are the greatest danger to the healthy” (GM III 14). The type of self-overcoming that figures in friendship is about allying oneself with existence, with fate, in a way that surpasses the pettiness, the smallness of the slave. Abbey adds to these considerations the more general insight that the petty cannot be our friends precisely because it is the petty who cannot take joy in the joys of others, cannot share joy.¹⁷⁴ Nietzsche writes instead of, “another character who readily rejoices with his fellow men, wins friends everywhere, welcomes everything new and developing, takes pleasure in the honours and successes of others...” (HH 614) Here sharing the joy of others follows from the more general capacity for celebrating everything “new and developing,” becoming. We can gain access to our capacity to feel joy by first sharing in another’s. It’s not that the petty are bad company, it is that their particular failure, the inability to celebrate joy in all of its manifestations, including the joys of the other, prevents them from the real work of friendship, which is to share in other’s joy because we recognize in it the innocent, joyful movement of a world to which we ally ourself

Nietzsche sees friendship as figuring prominently in the ethical conversion that animates his thought, the conversion from slave to something other, something future that affirms the world and its joy. We are not beings who stand apart, “*fully-developed facts*” (D 560), doers behind deeds; we are, instead, beings through whom the world can move and in so moving make strong the multiplicities that we are. As beings put together by the world, we “*are being done!* [du wirst gethan] at every moment” (D 120 translation altered). One of the ways we give ourselves over, we affirm the world, is by giving ourselves over to the world through the eyes of our friends. Like lovers, like contestants, we become who we are by giving ourselves over, allowing ourselves to be settled by

¹⁷⁴ Abbey, “Circles, Ladders and Stars,” 56.

forces we do not control. And this strong surrendering of friendship is a surrender to joy, the joy of contest and the creation of a world redeemed from the nihilistic claim that suffering and striving can't matter. Through the figure of the friend, Nietzsche claims that what we create together, what happens between human beings, is real.

Chapter Five

Friendship, Self-Knowledge, and the Will to Truth

In the opening chapters, I discussed the morality of compassion and slave morality more generally as historical deformations of the type of work on ourselves that Nietzsche applauds. Nietzsche laments these developments not because they are false, but because they are unhealthy, unsuited to a being that becomes. In chapters three and four I discussed joy as Nietzsche's response to the nihilistic devaluation of our finitude he diagnoses at the core of these movements, and argued that friendship as shared joy is a relationship that fosters an affirmation of the conditions of our flourishing, and so is crucial to an understanding of Nietzsche's ethical thought more generally. In this chapter, I suggest that sharing in joy helps us to overcome ourselves through the specific ways in which friends help us towards a unique form of self-knowledge as beings who are their overcoming, who are tensional sites of struggle. Nietzsche wants to displace the urge to self-knowledge understood as knowing the truth about ourselves, because he wants us to know ourselves as beings whose truth is always being overcome, undone. This, I suggest, is what it means to ally oneself to joy, to become what we are, and so the work of friendship is the work of being human itself. I return to compassion to show that Nietzsche's ethical account preserves a prominent place for other-regarding motives, but it is a place defined by its concern for affirming the significance of our finitude, which, rather than the erasure of individuality Nietzsche sees in compassion, serves an affirmation of the very tangible, human conditions of becoming, our own and that of those we care about.

In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche asks, “how can man know himself? He is a thing dark and veiled...And, moreover again, what need should there be for it, since everything bears witness to what we are, our friendships and enmities, our glance and the clasp of our hand, our memory and that which we do not remember, our books and our handwriting” (SE p.129). Here one sense of self-knowledge, that of slave morality, is displaced by a sense of self as whatever our place in the world makes of us. We find here, as in so many places in Nietzsche’s thought, a familiar concept reworked in unfamiliar ways.¹⁷⁵ Nietzsche seeks to preserve a sense of self-knowledge, but divorced from the will to truth, that paradigmatic expression of the ascetic ideal: there is nothing to know about ourselves in the sense put forward by slave morality in the same way that there is no truth in the sense put forward by slave morality. We will see that his response in the latter case is that we open ourselves to the processes out of which truths emerge; to the former case his response is the same. Rather than seek some stable core of character, some self that we can come to know, we joyfully affirm the processes, the becoming, the “moving sphere of moods and opinions” and books and handwriting that we are (HH 376).¹⁷⁶ And this is the goal and purpose of friendship, to help us to be the type of creature we are. Nietzsche’s answer is that we are a being that is its overcoming.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ For Nietzsche, since a concept’s meaning is inseparable from the form of life in which it is implicated, concepts can be reworked to function in a new form of life. This claim underpins the very possibility of something like a revaluation of all values. Nietzsche’s call for new soul [*Seele*] hypotheses in BGE 12 is a call for just such a reworking of concepts, as is his discussion of romanticism in GS 370. Below, I discuss Nietzsche’s attempt to reconceive compassion.

¹⁷⁶ Deleuze writes of Nietzsche in this context how, “one becomes a set of liberated singularities, words, names, fingernails, things, animals, little events...” Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 6-7.

¹⁷⁷ As Pippin puts it, “for Nietzsche, too, there *is* a kind of knowledge that will set one free, but it is not knowledge of the human good...It appears to be a psychological realization of the ineliminable need for self-overcoming.” Pippin, *First Philosophy*, 116.

Through our friendships we overcome ourselves, we become a tensional site of creation, and we come hopefully to trust and affirm the precarious promise of such a being.

Coming to know ourselves as a being that is its overcoming will mean for Nietzsche overcoming our slavish will to truth and our commitment to the ascetic ideal on which it depends, aligning ourselves instead with the values of experimentation, temptation, and desire. Nietzsche writes near the end of *On the Genealogy of Morality* that, “art, in which precisely the *lie* hallows itself, in which the *will to deception* has good conscience on its side, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science” (GM III 25). Nietzsche suggests that art may offer a new overarching ideal for humanity precisely because in art, where we are proud of deception, no candidate is put forward as the final or full source of value. Art can offer meaning without pretense to truth.¹⁷⁸

For Nietzsche, human life is impossible apart from there being some beliefs taken to be true (BGE 34), and so we shouldn’t see his investigation of truth as questioning its very existence. Nietzsche asks instead what it has meant for different human types to take something as true, which is to ask what it has been in their bodies, values, hopes and fears that needed their particular truths. Nietzsche insists, “even behind all logic and its autocratic posturings stand valuations or, stated more clearly, physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life. For example, that the determinate is worth more than the indeterminate, appearance worth less than the ‘truth’” (BGE 3). Rather than denying the existence of truth, Nietzsche questions its value, asking, “*why not untruth instead?*” (BGE 1) This is, of course, a question that can be asked only after

¹⁷⁸ Art for Nietzsche figures alongside imagination (TI Improvers 1) and play (Z I Metamorphoses) as activities tied to knowing without attempting to ground themselves in knowledge or truth, exhibiting in different ways the tenuous, experimental angle of approach he is after.

we allow ourselves to doubt the conception of truth operative in slave morality; just as it is difficult for the religious to begin to question the existence of God, it is difficult for moderns to even begin to question truth, for in both cases the world we know begins to slip away. Nietzsche's question is not whether truth exists, but: "*What in us really wills the truth?*" (BGE 1) Nietzsche ends *On the Genealogy of Morality* with his answer:

One simply cannot conceal from oneself *what* all the willing that has received its direction from the ascetic ideal actually expresses: this hatred of the human, still more of the animal, still more of the material, this abhorrence of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and of beauty, this longing away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wish, longing itself..." (GM III 28)

Just as Nietzsche understands the will to truth as an expression of the urge to silence "all appearance, change, becoming" of the world, he suggests that the drive for self-knowledge seeks to do the same to our sense of self. If the will to truth insists that the world stand still, that it be knowable because we seek to know it, then the will to self-knowledge insists the subject be something that likewise stands still.¹⁷⁹ Nietzsche has Zarathustra say mockingly, "'fundamentally, everything stands still' – that is a proper winter doctrine, a fine thing for unfruitful seasons, a fine consolation for hibernators and stay-at-homes...the thawing wind, however, preaches to the *contrary!*" (Z III Law Tables 8) Friendship for Nietzsche is this thawing wind, a means to self-knowledge, but self-knowledge understood through our experimental rather than ascetic, truth-tracking capacities. Insofar as friendship figures in self-knowledge, it is only by recasting what it could mean to know ourselves as the type of creatures whose truth is always being overcome.

¹⁷⁹ See Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, 170-172.

The will to truth for Nietzsche is a moral will, which is to say that it is fundamentally creative, partisan. He writes in *The Gay Science*, that:

We see that science also rests on a faith; there simply is no science "without presuppositions." The question whether *truth* is needed must not only have been affirmed in advance, but affirmed to such a degree that the principle, the faith, the conviction finds expression: "*Nothing* is needed *more* than truth, and in relation to it everything else has only second-rate value."... But you will have gathered what I am driving at, namely, that it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests—that even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine. (GS 344)

The insistence that there be truth, that the world stand still, follows not from an unalloyed desire to get at the world as it is, but instead enables a certain form of life, a form that follows from the Platonic and then Christian metaphysical need for there being one source of value, one key to existence that human beings are specially placed or constituted to know. We can tell much the same story about self-knowledge. Nietzsche sees the turn towards introspection, towards a view of the self as something that is there to be interrogated, as following from the development of a certain configuration of social relations, propping up a particular form of life. Self-knowledge, rather than an ineliminable human drive, arises as an ideal only for a certain type of herd animal. Nietzsche writes that it is that herd that says, ““you shall be knowable, express your inner nature by clear and constant signs—otherwise you are dangerous... We despise the secret

and unrecognizable—Consequently, you must consider yourself knowable, you may not be concealed from yourself, you may not believe that you change” (WP 277 1883-88). Importantly, being knowable presupposes “the knowability and *stability* of the person...” (WP 277 1883-88) In the same way that the world is conceived of as knowable so that we can gain some security in knowing it, individuals are made knowable so that, because we are able to understand ourselves only through the herd, we can pose no threat to it.¹⁸⁰

Undercutting these demands, Nietzsche throughout his writings problematizes self-knowledge, trying to displace rather than satisfy our urge for it. He describes his, “unconquerable distrust in the *possibility* of self-knowledge...” (BGE 281); he writes of the unknown world of the subject and doubts that we ever understand our own actions (D 116); and begins *On the Genealogy of Morality* by insisting that, for himself and his readers, “with respect to ourselves we are not ‘knowers’” (GM P 1). Here and elsewhere, Nietzsche’s suggestion is that we lack self-knowledge because we lack knowledge of what the self is: not a unified coherent whole but a marketplace of competing drives and affects. We think of the self as something given, something there, and so are frustrated from the beginning in any attempt to understand ourselves. Rather than a subject-atom, “pried out of becoming...the false substantialization of the ego” (WP 786 1887), the individual is for Nietzsche “the *entire process* in its entire course...” (WP 785 1887) Tellingly, Nietzsche writes “the *inner* world is phenomenal as well” (WLN 11[113] 1887-88). We don’t gain immediate access to something inside of us, some core that we are. The internal world is made, found, constructed just as the external one is. “I maintain the phenomenality of the inner world, too: everything of which we become

¹⁸⁰ On self-knowledge and the herd, see Müller-Lauter, *Contradictions*, 70-79.

conscious is arranged, simplified, schematized, interpreted through and through. We never encounter 'facts' ...' (WLN 11[113] 1887-88; see also D 116)

In attempting to displace our drive to self-knowledge, Nietzsche repeatedly stresses the real inability of knowledge to underpin human relationships, suggesting that their basis must lie elsewhere. He writes, for instance, that:

yes, there are friends, but it is error and deception regarding yourself that led them to you; and they must have learned how to keep silent in order to remain your friends; for such human relationships almost always depend upon the fact that two or three things are never said or even so much as touched upon... (HH 376)

Rather than appeal to knowledge, Freibach-Heifetz turns to the language of temptation here. The friend has a duty to help his friend overcome himself, "not through self-exposure and frankness but through temptation."¹⁸¹ Zarathustra says, for instance:

Do you wish to go naked before your friend? Is it in honour of your friend that you show yourself to him as you are?...He who makes no secret of himself excites anger in others: that is how much reason you have to fear nakedness!...You cannot adorn yourself too well for your friend...The friend should be a master in conjecture and in keeping silence: you must not want to see everything. (Z I Friend)

We can compare this call for adornment, secrecy, and silence between friends with the herd's call for self-knowledge: "one should denude oneself with every word one says" (WP 378 1883-88). The contrast is between the surface and fold of desire and experimentation and the imposed nakedness of truth. Knowing ourselves isn't a matter of unearthing some basic fact that's there to be found; what there is to know about human

¹⁸¹ Freibach-Heifetz, "Pure Air," 244.

beings is that they are creatures who become and who can tempt each other into complicit creation.

This helps to explain why, for Nietzsche, the insufficiency of knowledge in our relationships is to be celebrated rather than lamented. It is because they lack ultimate foundation that relationships are unstable, and because they are unstable that they are potentially explosive, pushing us on our paths even if we are pushed apart. He writes, for instance, of a friendship's end:

Star friendship.— We were friends and have become estranged. But this was right, and we do not want to conceal and obscure it from ourselves as if we had reason to feel ashamed. We are two ships each of which has its goal and course; our paths may cross and we may celebrate a feast together, as we did—and then the good ships rested so quietly in one harbor and one sunshine that it may have looked as if they had reached their goal and as if they had one goal. But then the almighty force of our tasks drove us apart again into different seas and sunny zones, and perhaps we shall never see one another again,—perhaps we shall meet again but fail to recognize each other: our exposure to different seas and suns has changed us! That we have to become estranged is the law *above* us: by the same token we should also become more venerable for each other! And thus the memory of our former friendship should become more sacred! There is probably a tremendous but invisible stellar orbit in which our very different ways and goals may be *included* as small parts of this path,—let us rise up to this thought! But our life is too short and our power of vision too small for us to be more than friends in the

sense of this sublime possibility.— Let us then *believe* in our star friendship even if we should be compelled to be earth enemies. (GS 279)

Nietzsche writes of a friendship affirmed in its demise.¹⁸² He wants to celebrate rather than mourn the departure of the friend by interpreting their trajectories as cosmic, as serving some higher goal. It is, importantly, the same sort of affirmation that wants not to accept fate but to love it, not to resign oneself to eternal return but to crave it. As with these cases, Nietzsche calls on his readers to work on themselves, to “rise up to the thought,” which is to become the type of being capable of a certain affective orientation. Friendships can end for many reasons, but when they end because people are propelled apart on separate paths, the relationship they shared is to be celebrated. There is something beautiful about the end of a friendship that, if we are able to get past ourselves, gives us a vantage point on just how rich with possible paths life can be. Nietzsche writes:

Friends as ghosts.— If we greatly transform ourselves, those friends of ours who have not been transformed become ghosts of our past: their voice comes across to us like the voice of a shade – as though we were hearing ourself, only younger, more severe, less mature. (AOM 242)

We see ourselves in a friend, but not just as we are but as we were and so perhaps as we might be in future, a subject of many different seas and suns. We see ourselves stretched by the beautiful possibilities of life even or especially when their beauty borders the

¹⁸² This aphorism is usually understood as directed by Nietzsche to a particular person in his life. Wagner is a possibility, although his falling out with Nietzsche occurred at least by 1878. Kaufmann (GS p. 226n.) suggests that the friend in question is Franz Overbeck, with whom Nietzsche quarreled around the time of GS, and whose theological beliefs ultimately alienated Nietzsche. Nietzsche also had a falling out with Paul Rée at about this time, both personal and intellectual (see Robin Small, *Nietzsche and Rée: A Star Friendship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

painful or terrible. Nietzsche wants to celebrate relationships in their fragility as a tribute to the tenuous potential inherent in human life. Of his failed friendship with Wagner, Nietzsche writes that, “my greatest experience was a recovery. Wagner is merely one of my sicknesses. Not that I wish to be ungrateful to this sickness” (CW P). Although Nietzsche distances himself from Wagner, he doesn’t wish to deny or regret their friendship, for it played its part in his becoming himself: “perhaps nobody was more dangerously attached to – grown together with -- Wagnerizing; nobody tried harder to resist it; nobody was happier to be rid of it. A long story! - You want a word for it? – If I were a moralist, who knows what I might call it? Perhaps self-overcoming” (CW P). It is only the best of friendships whose demise we can celebrate, for we affirm their end as part of a process, an opening. In celebrating how life can drive us apart, in not regretting that our paths, however intertwined, might lead us finally to depart from one another, Nietzsche wants to affirm friendships in their affirmation of the joy of a life lived. He writes, “even the *blunders* of life have their own meaning and value - the occasional side roads and wrong roads, the delays...” (EH Clever 9) There is a jealous narcissism, a lust for revenge, in ill will towards a former friend, an inability to understand their different path that took them away from us. “*In parting*. — It is not how one soul approaches another but in how it distances itself from it that I recognize their affinity and relatedness” (AOM 251). In celebrating the parting, we celebrate the currents that move us through life.

This line of analysis runs counter to Paul van Tongeren’s work on Nietzsche and friendship. He suggests that in turning to the language of deceit and disguise Nietzsche means to suggest that true friendship is impossible, arguing that Nietzsche means to show

that, “friendship is in reality not what it pretends to be.”¹⁸³ This is unsatisfying because Nietzsche’s often-used method of persuasive redefinition preserves a sense of many concepts even as he shows that they are not what they pretend to be. The displacement of knowledge with temptation is not for Nietzsche a cynical, lamentable event. Instead, Nietzsche celebrates the precariousness of human relationships because their precariousness is the precariousness of life.

That Nietzsche celebrates the sometimes broken trajectories of friendship distinguishes his from the account of friendship that looms over any discussion of the topic, Aristotle’s. Aristotle devotes nearly two fifths of his *Nicomachean Ethics* to a consideration of friendship. For Aristotle, friendship is a relationship characterized by goodwill between two people that is mutually recognized, where each is liked by the other for who she is, and each attempts to serve the interests and the ends of the other. He defines the feeling of friendship as “wishing for him what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for his, and being inclined, so far as you can, to bring these things about. (A friend is one who feels thus and excites these feelings in return)” (R 1380b – 1381a).¹⁸⁴ Aristotle distinguishes three types of friendship by what it is in the beloved that is the object of affection. In most relationships, the object of affection is either pleasure or utility. In pleasure friendships, we find the company of our friend pleasant, and value her presence as a means to our own enjoyment (NE 1156a). In friendships based on utility, it is the social advantage derived from a friend that we value. Relationships of pleasure and

¹⁸³ van Tongeren, “Politics, Friendship and Solitude,” 220.

¹⁸⁴ Robert Sokolowski explains that to wish well for the friend, rather than an idle hope that things turn out well for her, is to have a certain disposition towards her, namely an existential readiness to act on the her behalf. Robert Sokolowski, “Friendship and Moral Action in Aristotle,” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 35 no.3 (2001): 358.

utility count as lesser forms of friendship because though we are attached to the characteristics of the other, the characteristics are valued not in themselves but only insofar as they contingently provide pleasure or utility to us. It is characteristic of both pleasure and utility friendships that they are unstable, liable to dissolve once the conditions that make the friend a source of pleasure or utility no longer obtain (NE 1156a). As the ways in which we seek pleasure and utility will, in the course of life, change, so too will our friendships that have these aims at their basis.

The third type of friendship considered by Aristotle is said to be more durable than pleasure or utility friendship. What are variously referred to as friendships of the good, character, complete, or primary friendships are those friendships in which it is the goodness of the friend's character that we value. This type of friendship is one shared only between good people, where one, because she is good herself, is able to contemplate and appreciate what is good in her friend. Insofar as it is characteristic of all friends to wish good for the other's own sake, character friendships are most complete because one's estimation of their friend is most complete. Character friendships are enduring because the objects of affection, the particulars of the other's character, are more likely to be themselves enduring, "excellence is something lasting" (NE 1156b). While our ability to provide pleasure or utility is contingent on the changing needs and interests of others, our formed characters are less amenable to the type of change that would end a friendship (NE 1156b). Of course, character friendships will also involve pleasure and utility, but those benefits are not the foundation of the relationship but follow naturally from a basis of shared appreciation of character, so that a childhood friend might become a lifelong

friend as we both grow into our formed characters in a way that maintains a place for the other.

Aristotle lingers over the place of the friend in a flourishing life because the relation fostered in complete friendships tells us something important about what it is to be a human being. The friend's particular role in the good human life makes her a condition of our flourishing, and since flourishing consists in self-sufficiency, the self-sufficiency of human beings somewhat paradoxically includes a place for others.¹⁸⁵ Aristotle begins his discussion of friendship by pointing out that "no one would choose to live without friends even if he had all the other goods" (NE 1155a). Aristotle holds that virtue itself does not constitute happiness, since to be virtuous is not simply to be predisposed to act virtuously but to perform virtuous acts themselves. We do not have good aspects of character in themselves, but "only by participating in these faculties in the process of perceiving or knowing" (EE 1245a7). In order to have occasion to act virtuously, however, we need others, "for it is impossible or not easy to do excellent deeds without resources. For an individual performs many actions through the use of instruments, through friends, wealth and political office" (NE 1099a). Friends are, in this first respect, part of the class of external goods that make virtuous actions, and thus a virtuous and happy human life, possible. Second, to be virtuous is to perform virtuous acts but it is also to self-consciously understand and affirm oneself as virtuous, not

¹⁸⁵ Plato in his *Lysis* (215a6–c2) had pointed to a paradox of self-sufficiency in friendship. Since the good person is self-sufficient, and to be self-sufficient is not to need others, the perfectly good person has no need of friends. Here Aristotle doubts the second premise. He asks whether a flourishing life involves necessarily friendship, not whether friendship adds something to an already flourishing life. See John Cooper, "Friendship and the Good in Aristotle," *The Philosophical Review* 86 no.3 (1977): 291. Zena Hitz attempts to sidestep the paradox by defining friendship as an integrated good, which "can have both instrumental and intrinsic value even for virtuous people...Their key feature is that they improve and augment what the good man does already rather than providing outside supplies or supplements." Zena Hitz, "Aristotle on Self-Knowledge and Friendship," *Philosophers' Imprint* 11 no.12 (2011): 11.

merely to act in conformity with the demands of virtue but to act out of a cultivated desire so to act. To agree with Aristotle that, “in the case of human beings what seems to count as living together is this sharing of conversation and thought, not sharing the same pasture, as in the case of grazing animals” (NE 1170b), is to view our shared life as allowing us to achieve our particular human potential.¹⁸⁶ Living together with others with whom we cultivate and share an understanding of our own good is for Aristotle distinctively human. It is as social beings that things matter to us, and only insofar as things matter to us in the proper way that we fulfill the potential inherent in us as the type of beings we are.¹⁸⁷ So, because of the kind of beings we are we necessarily appeal to others in coming to know ourselves and what matters to us: we are social beings.¹⁸⁸ Friends provide both an opportunity to perform virtuous acts and a relationship through which we can gain the self-knowledge of ourselves as virtuous necessary for a flourishing life.

Aristotle sees friendship’s distinctive role as making possible a form of self-knowledge. The best human beings are capable of a friendship of reciprocal, deserved appreciation of character; in appreciating the goodness of the friend, we gain insight into our own goodness and the specific goodness of human life in general. A virtuous person

¹⁸⁶ On friendship and self-development in Aristotle, see Nancy Sherman, “Aristotle on Friendship and the Shared Life,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 47 no.4 (1987): 589-613.

¹⁸⁷ Cooper writes of the connection between a shared life and meaningful life, that “a human being has to invest things with his interest, by responding in appropriate ways to them; but these responses, though subjective, are not for that reason under one’s own control. They depend in part upon the firm and continued sense of the value of what one is doing and...this can hardly be secured except through the sense that others agree with one in this.” Cooper, “Friendship and the Good in Aristotle,” 308.

¹⁸⁸ As Aryeh Kosman writes, “(t)hat we are by nature political means for Aristotle not simply that we live in groups, but that our nature is activated and determined in and by the praxis of political life.” Aryeh Kosman, “Aristotle on the Desirability of Friends,” *Ancient Philosophy* 24 (2004): 144. Cooper writes “of the social bases of a secure self-concept and of the role intimacy plays in providing a means to this.” Cooper, “Friendship and the Good in Aristotle,” 300. Connecting these themes to friendship’s role in the good life, Mavis Biss writes that, “the social nature of human life creates the need for friendship, since only through shared perception can one know one’s own goodness.” Mavis Biss, “Aristotle on Friendship and Self-Knowledge: The Friend Beyond the Mirror,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 28 no.2 (2011): 134.

will derive satisfaction from her judgment that her life is a good one. In order so to judge one's life, however, we need to be able to know ourselves. Self-knowledge is hard to attain, though, because our view of ourselves is often corrupted by bias and misinformation. Insofar as we relate to the friend as we do to ourselves, the friend is another self, and so in perceiving his actions we have a way more carefully to perceive our own.¹⁸⁹ Aristotle turns to the metaphor of a mirror to make a point about the role of the friend in attaining self-knowledge:

Moreover, direct study of ourselves is impossible (this is shown by the fact that the very things that we censure others for, we don't notice ourselves doing, and this comes about through partiality or passion, which in many of us blind our judgment of what is right). And so, just as when we want to see our own faces, we see them by looking in a mirror, similarly when we wish to know our own characters, we can know them by looking up a friend. For a friend, as we say, is another self. (MM 1212b)

The friend is a precondition of self-knowledge, for we come to know ourselves by understanding in the friend what is true of ourselves as well. Interestingly, Nietzsche too turns to a mirror metaphor to explain the role of the friend. In *Zarathustra*, he asks:

have you ever watched your friend asleep – to discover what he looked like? Yet your friend's face is something else beside. It is your own face, in a rough and

¹⁸⁹ Aristotle's argument is found at NE 1169b-1170a: "For at the outset it was said that flourishing is an activity, and an activity clearly exists as something continuous and is not possessed like a piece of property. If flourishing consists in living and being active, and the activity of a good person is good and pleasant in itself, as was said at the outset, and what is peculiarly one's own is pleasant, and we can study our neighbors better than ourselves and their actions better than those that are peculiarly our own, and the actions of good persons who are their friends are pleasant to good people (for they are characterized by both the natural marks of pleasantness)-if so, then the fully flourishing person will need friends of this kind, given that he chooses to study actions that are good and peculiarly his own, and the actions of the good person who is his friend are of this kind."

imperfect mirror. Have you ever watched your friend asleep? Were you not startled to see what he looked like? O my friend, man is something that must be overcome. (Z I Friend)

There are important differences between Aristotle's and Nietzsche's metaphors that help us to see what is distinctive about Nietzsche's account of friendship. While both Aristotle and Nietzsche implicate friendship in becoming the type of being we are, Paul van Tongeren worries that in Aristotle's account, "friendship runs the risk of becoming a disguise itself: a self-affirming mirror."¹⁹⁰ Aristotle's friends repose in a joint appreciation of a character largely achieved; Nietzsche's recoil from what they see and seek out something new. In Nietzsche's metaphor, the friend's face is my own, but in a rough and imperfect mirror. I see a version of myself in my friend but a version already disjointed, so that I am through the face of my friend something other, that spectre that runs ahead (Z I Neighbour).

In this and related contexts, Nietzsche returns often to the thought that friends serve as other worlds. We behold the friend's face in sleep, we see her in two worlds at once, confounding this world with other subterranean ones. The sleeping friend is not one world or another put the possibility of passage between them. We read that, "for every soul every other soul is an afterworld [*Hinterwelt*]" (Z III Convalescent 2). Joan Stambaugh makes a point of translating *Hinterwelt* more literally as 'backworld', accepting some awkwardness in exchange for the benefit of connoting something like a backstage or background that serves to make our lives intelligible. Nietzsche writes of, "the friend in whom the world stands complete, a vessel of the good – the creative friend

¹⁹⁰ van Tongeren, "Politics, Friendship and Solitude," 12.

who always has a complete world to bestow” (Z I Neighbour).¹⁹¹ The second self of the friend is not one thing reflecting back, but an opening onto the numberless possibility of growing out of ourselves into something new, a ghost to whom we might give our flesh and bones. Not what I am for myself, not what I am for my friend, but the change that takes place between two, a doubling that appears out in the open. Through the imperfect mirroring of friendship, the friend witnesses herself as an in-between, contested, dual work of transfiguration.

Importantly, after suggesting that every soul is a world unto itself, Zarathustra continues: “precisely between what is most similar, illusion lies most beautifully” (Z III Convalescent 2 translation altered). The almost-identity of the friend is important not despite of but because of its imperfection, for the imperfection marks the interruption of a world that will not pose for a picture: “the smallest gap is the most difficult to bridge” (Z III Convalescent 2). The beautiful madness of dissimulation Nietzsche sees in friendship is like that of a mirror that reflects not to capture or fix but to incite. There is no easy reciprocal reflection in friendship, for there is always the spectre that is running ahead, always excess. As in Aristotle, the friend is, “a vessel of the good,” someone through whom we gain access to our good, but here the good is already fractured, already something other.¹⁹² What is good is becoming undone, like the agon, like joy. There is shared life, as for Aristotle’s friends, but here what is shared is just a productive gulf that lies most beautifully, an opening to the joy of a world affirmed as illusion. Like the contest of the Greeks, friendship holds open a space for becoming to appear, for finitude

¹⁹¹ Michael Ure expresses it well when he writes that, “friends participate in an imaginative space in which they can mutually create worlds for one another.” Ure, *Nietzsche’s Therapy*, 234.

¹⁹² On Nietzsche and Aristotle on friendship and the good, see Lee F. Kerckhove, “Rethinking Ethical Naturalism: Nietzsche’s Open Question Argument,” *Man and World* 27 (1994): 157; see also van Tongeren, “Nietzsche’s Naturalism”, 213-214.

to matter. Friendships are structured to allow an interruption, a space that lets the world move through it. The experience of beholding this space Nietzsche calls joy. Sharing in its beholding he calls friendship.

In her work, Karen Houle circles back to these spaces often. She and Paul Steenhuisen discuss the uneasy self-relation required for the joint performance of Steve Reich's "Clapping Music for Two Performers".¹⁹³ The piece is written for two performers, two sets of hands each with its own pattern of claps to follow. The deceptively simple patterns of the music are written for two, but show the performers to themselves in their inability to master the music apart from each other. The music is for two, but not as added together, not as a combination or as supplement, but for two to be what it is at all. Houle and Steenhuisen describe a, "fundamentally non-economic project, a working out which neither can claim to have originated, and neither can claim to own in its completion."¹⁹⁴ And they call this project one of friendship, "a sustained affirmation of the mutually precarious but beautiful object of chance."¹⁹⁵ In the agonized space of performance, the music rules out certain modes of relating to ourselves and to others and instead puts the players in a space of friendship where they encounter themselves as already outside of themselves, as depending on processes of creation that no self-relation could provide:

More radically, it is not even clear that a relation to self qua self can be built and maintained in the playing. Each player must take on and take up a double-jointed

¹⁹³ Karen Houle and Paul Steenhuisen, "Close (Vision) is (How We) Here," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 2 no.1 (2006): 15-24.

¹⁹⁴ Houle and Steenhuisen, "Close (Vision)," 17.

¹⁹⁵ Houle and Steenhuisen, "Close (Vision)," 17.

concentration which involves impossibly, listening and not listening, intervening and letting be, being entirely in and with one's own head and hands, while being absolutely vaguely everywhere but in one's thwacking hands and head. The assumption of this form of attentiveness (which, as we said, doesn't take an "expert," can't be cultivated, only "taken up" and made worthy when it's underway), fosters the rarest of pleasures: "the finding of pleasure in the respect for that which does not belong to me."¹⁹⁶

Nietzsche himself points to the undercutting of a reciprocity that would turn the friend merely into another me. The non-identity of the friend, the mirror, is an ethical opening. Zarathustra says, "many a one cannot deliver himself from his own chains and yet he is his friend's deliverer" (Z I Friend). And in a contemporaneous note, Nietzsche writes: "there is a false saying: 'Whoever cannot save himself—how could he save others?' But if I have the key to your chains, why should your lock and my lock be the same?" (KSA 10: 5[1]92 1883) This spectral, longitudinal attachment of friendship cuts through our self-relation. Nietzsche will write that, "we find it more painful...when one of our friends makes himself guilty of something shameful than when we do so ourselves....our love for him is stronger than his own love for himself" (HH 46). And Zarathustra says, "...if a friend should do you wrong, then say: 'I forgive you what you did to me; but that you did it to *yourself*—how could I forgive that?'"¹⁹⁷ (Z II Compassionate) What Houle and Steenhuisen call, "the sustained betweenness of the friends at work,"¹⁹⁸ the

¹⁹⁶ Houle and Steenhuisen, "Close (Vision)," 20. Houle and Steenhuisen quote Luce Irigaray, "Love between Us," in *Who Comes after the Subject?*, eds. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 171.

¹⁹⁷ In a letter of December 1882, Nietzsche writes, "it is harder to forgive one's friends than one's enemies" (SL 108).

¹⁹⁸ Houle and Steenhuisen, "Close (Vision)," 22.

betweenness that belongs to neither, shows us to ourselves in this activity, shows us to ourselves as something in between, what has been described in the context of Nietzsche and the Greeks as an ecstatic doubling wherein we can witness ourselves being transfigured, we can see ourselves as seen. A mode of relationality opens a space for a new self-relation, a self that is depersonalized or surrendered through love. For Nietzsche, since the subject is a multiplicity and since multiplicities are made whole with and through others in spaces of friendship, stage, or contest, “conditions that would have to be partly created and partly exploited” (BGE 203), we have the beautiful capacity to come to know ourselves in and as this activity of creation that constitutes us without belonging to us.

Houle considers the ethical terrain opened up by such ecstatic doubling, here in the context of a visit with a tracker friend in northern Alberta.¹⁹⁹ There is an ethical opening, a moment of precariousness in seeing the world not as empty but as a stage for encounters, for all sorts of becomings including our own. What is ethical is seeking out this space, tracking it, and a good tracker is more partner than hunter, understanding herself as tracking paths that always cross others, circle round each other, and track one another. Tracking means allowing the other’s signs to speak to us in a way that makes us see ourselves being seen, situates us in a new constellation that does not revolve around us, a sort of Copernican shift in our ethical understanding:

the cultivated openness to the Other such as tracking permits & requires, can sometimes lead us right back to ourselves. But it is a very different version of ourselves than the picture of our selves we carry around with us, and present to

¹⁹⁹ Karen Houle, “Making (Animal) Tracks,” *PhaenEx* 2 no.2 (2007): 239-259.

the world, as it were, from the inside out. It is as though the animal others we are trying to read reads the backs of our greeting card and ask us pertinent questions about those parts of ourselves we somehow can't even see.²⁰⁰

Houle describes a “strange-making encounter with a non-self who stops us in our tracks”²⁰¹ as an ethical experience that substitutes for an I-me self-relation a me-world relation:

a capacity to be absolutely and totally punctured by these incoming launches is a gift, an opportunity for me not to recoil from the world and react with defensiveness to its sudden life-inverting assault on the body, the senses, the sense of where one stands in the world in relation to everything else.²⁰²

What happens in such encounters is what happens when we meet someone we like, what happens when we make a friend, a sort of self-understanding as a being that becomes, a self that finds itself in becoming. There is a strength manifested in giving, surrender, a love that wants to be pulled into a new constellation even where that means upending what it thought it was. Houle asks, “why this inexplicable self-risking behavior?”²⁰³

The risk comes from desire, from wanting the world, wanting to be an experiment and so wanting to be evaluated like a player rather than judged like a slave.²⁰⁴ Houle and

²⁰⁰ Houle, “Making (Animal) Tracks,” 242.

²⁰¹ Houle, “Making (Animal) Tracks,” 243.

²⁰² Houle, “Making (Animal) Tracks,” 255.

²⁰³ Houle, “Making (Animal) Tracks,” 258.

²⁰⁴ These aspects of Houle’s position help us to make sense of the strand of immanence in Nietzsche’s ethics. An immanent ethics evaluates according to standards we take on and asks: given what a being can do, how can we evaluate what it does? A transcendent ethics takes ethical standards to be binding uniformly and prior to experience and asks: given what a being ought to do, how can we judge it for what it does? See Daniel W. Smith, “Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward an Immanent Theory of Ethics,” *Parrhesia* 2 (2007): 66-78. See also Schacht, “Nietzsche’s Naturalism and Normativity,” 253. For Nietzsche, the distinction between immanent and transcendent is between the good/bad of noble evaluation and the good/evil of slave judgment, between the bird of prey and the lamb.

Steenhuisen discuss the move away from judgment involved in their performance, a peculiar relationship of “creation rather than judging.”²⁰⁵ They continue:

In other words, where performers, where friends, tend to want to orient themselves and respond “internally to the pitch,” to their turn, to how well they are doing as singles or a team, to an opportunity to interpret the meaning of the work, “Clapping Music” demands that they care only about inventing and repeatedly inventing a connection which they, as individuals or as a pair, neither created nor are simply following.²⁰⁶

I suggested in chapter four that in Nietzsche we should understand this as a sort of strong surrendering, that Nietzsche sees strength as a certain virtue of giving. We give ourselves to the world, to the joy of a world of becoming through which we ourselves become, a posture celebrated among the Greeks but silenced in slave morality, Dionysus rather than the Crucified. Our friends help us to do this, help us to become who we are, beings who can feel joy in the face of becoming. And so Nietzsche will call friendship *Mitfreude*, shared joy.

Our consideration of friendship has helped us to appreciate what is distinctive about Nietzsche’s positive ethical vision. Nietzsche sees an ethics of compassion as remaining blind to the desire for existence, the ability to feel the world as alive. His claim is that we ought not to want to be the type of creature who flees pain or who attends only to the pains of others. When our relationships are prefigured by shared suffering, we risk becoming incapable of affirming life. Where “one loses force when one pities” (AC 7),

²⁰⁵ Houle and Steenhuisen, “Close (Vision),” 21.

²⁰⁶ Houle and Steenhuisen, “Close (Vision),” 21.

in a note Nietzsche writes, “*Mitfreude* increases the force of the world” (KGW 7[285] 1880); “*to feel stronger*,” he writes, “or in other words, joy...” (WP 917 1887-88) Where compassion preaches nothingness, withdrawal, the ennui of a particular form of nihilism, Nietzsche sees joy, its production and affirmation, as world-making. Attending only to suffering is attending only to the ways the world breaks us down; in attending to joy, Nietzsche will suggest, we attend to the way that we can be put back together, and Nietzsche wants to say that we can more effectively come to joy by sharing it.

For Schopenhauer, we can act morally, that is unegoistically, only in response to another’s suffering; joy, on the other hand, invites only envy (OBM 16). While *Mitleid* is strictly speaking for Schopenhauer concern for the other’s wellbeing, Schopenhauer insists that given the envious nature of human beings, it is not possible for us to be with others in their joys, only insofar as they suffer. We are, Schopenhauer maintains, mistrustful of the joys of others. He quotes Rousseau who writes, “it is not peculiar to the human heart to put itself in the position of those who are more fortunate than we, but only of those who are more pitiable” (OBM 16), and adds: “even the sight of success and enjoyment *purely as such* can easily excite envy, to which everyone is prone” (OBM 16). Schopenhauer’s dubiousness about sharing joy is not, for Nietzsche, incidental. Nietzsche sees the suspicion of joy as symptomatic of slave morality’s more general suspicion of all life-affirming values. He writes, “the reverse side of Christian compassion [*Mitleidens*] for the suffering of one’s neighbour is a profound suspicion of all the joy of one’s neighbour, of his joy in all that he wants to do and can” (D 80, see

also AC 21).²⁰⁷ Schopenhauer's pessimism begins, must begin, with the 'no' of suffering, of will denied.

For Schopenhauer, it is not just that it is not in the nature of human beings to share in each other's joy, but also that suffering can claim an ontological priority over joy. For Schopenhauer, suffering is fundamental and joy, merely the temporary alleviation of suffering, marks only an absence:

The reason for this is that pain, suffering that includes all want, privation, need, in fact every wish or desire, is *that which is positive and directly felt and experienced*. On the other hand, the nature of satisfaction, enjoyment, and happiness consists solely in the removal of a privation, the stilling of a pain; and so these have a *negative* effect...To this is due, first of all the fact that only another's suffering, want, danger, and helplessness awaken our sympathy directly and as such. The fortunate and contented man *as such* leaves us indifferent really because his state is negative, namely, an absence of pain, want, and distress. (OBM 16)

Joy as positive, as a desire that is its own end, is Nietzsche's answer to Schopenhauer here. Nietzsche turns to joy as he turns to a yes-saying spirit whose first step is a yes, an affirmation, who takes the world as it is and wants only to be a part of it. Stambaugh writes that for Nietzsche, "joy is an active participant in what it encounters."²⁰⁸ Nietzsche insists that, "joy wants itself, wants eternity, wants recurrence, wants everything eternally the same" (Z IV Intoxicated 9). Like the noble person who begins with an affirmation of what she is, who wants a world in her image, joy says yes to itself

²⁰⁷ Ure connects compassion to envy at the sight of the other's joy. The compassionate is petty, he engages in "enviously spoiling those whose joy arouses the feeling of self-lack." Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy*, 226.

²⁰⁸ Stambaugh, "All Joy Wants Eternity," 338.

in wanting itself in everything, wanting everything joyful. Where joy affirms everything, suffering wants nothing, not even itself: “Woe says: Fade! Go! But all joy wants eternity, wants deep, deep, deep eternity!” (Z IV Intoxicated 12)

That Nietzsche’s reevaluation of suffering is motivated by his project of cultivating an affirmative stance towards existence helps us to see that his criticism of compassion isn’t simply in the service of some ideal of autarkic individualism. Nietzsche wants a place for the other in our moral thinking, but he wants to ensure that it is the proper place. His view is that the cluster of values in whose light compassion takes on positive value are in fact harmful for human beings, and that we would do better to question the value of those values so that we might establish a different, healthier basis for our ethical connections to others. Nietzsche’s call is to work on oneself so that one relates to others in a healthier way. Rather than ridicule or dismiss the other’s suffering, Nietzsche tries to soften his readers towards a reevaluation of it. We see this in how Nietzsche describes compassion in his own life. He writes in an August 1880 letter of an acute susceptibility to the input of others in his own work, writing that “my whole philosophy totters after an hour’s sympathetic conversation with total strangers” (GS 311n). In 1883 he writes that, “Schopenhauer’s ‘compassion’ has always been the *main* cause of troubles in my life” (SL 118). Again in 1883: “compassion, my dear friend, is a kind of hell—whatever the Schopenhauerians may say” (SL 109). These are not the words of a cold onlooker but of someone struggling for a different basis for being with others.

In criticizing compassion as a symptom of what he calls the religion of comfortableness [*Behaglichkeit*], Nietzsche doesn’t suggest that suffering is always to be welcomed. His point is just that we shouldn’t seek human comfort at any cost, shouldn’t

turn ourselves to sand, for the best sort of human life will always involve striving, struggle, and so suffering. “Pitying hands,” Nietzsche writes, “can interfere in a downright destructive manner in a great destiny...” (EH Wise 4) The pain of suffering has meaning when the life of which it is a part is given meaning through affirmation. In the way that heartbreak is a necessary part of the life of someone who can love, or loneliness after the death of a life partner, Nietzsche suggests that suffering, the sharp edge of life, is a precondition of human excellence and development, that the human being becomes through suffering and so in affirming the processes through which we become the beings we are, we need to find a place for suffering. “Abundant strength wants to create, suffer, go under” (WP 222 1887-88).

Importantly, attending to the suffering of others maintains a place in Nietzsche’s thinking, but it is an attending to the particularity of suffering in the particular lives we know best and so care best about.²⁰⁹ For example, in *The Gay Science* Nietzsche understands that we will want to show compassion, but cautions us to do so selectively, with our friends, whose sufferings we understand and so can treat in its complexity, its particularity: “you will also wish to help—but only those whose distress you *understand* entirely because they share with you one suffering and one hope—your friends—and only in the manner in which you help yourself” (GS 338). In *Zarathustra* it is admitted that we may show concern for our friend’s suffering by providing a resting place, but only a “hard bed, a camp-bed” (Z II Compassionate). Compassion for Nietzsche is a defective mode of being with others whenever the *mit* of *Mitleid* is illusory, which is to

²⁰⁹ Reginster explains that Nietzschean compassion “...is not a response to the friend’s suffering *as such*, but to the suffering that causes ‘precious capabilities’ to be ‘squandered’, or that halts someone at something less than he might have become.” Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 187. Abbey in this spirit finds in Nietzsche support for a, “discrete, sensitive, respectful, and particularized pity.” Abbey, “Circles, Ladders and Stars,” 61. See also Ure, *Nietzsche’s Therapy*, 208.

say whenever in attending to the suffering of another we obliterate their otherness by reducing them just to a being who feels pain. In the form of compassion Nietzsche criticizes, “the aim is to ensure that the gaps or differences between selves are cast into oblivion...[Pity] entails the annihilation of others qua other, in their separateness...”²¹⁰

For Schopenhauer, the personal significance of our interests is a morally unimportant epistemological diversion: since I am in closest epistemic proximity to my own interests they seem to me to be most important, but that proximity, since it is an effect of individuation, belongs to the realm of representation and so is not morally important. Nietzsche’s response here is that this shows that even if compassion on Schopenhauer’s view were possible, even if we could share in another’s suffering, what would be shared would be general suffering itself, void of particularity, never embedded in a life. If it is only this that we can share, Nietzsche suggests, then we share nothing, we are never with others in their particularity.

Nietzsche’s concept of a *pathos of distance* helps to make sense of this aspect of his criticism of compassion. Nietzsche links compassion and something like the *pathos* in EH Wise 4:

I reproach those who are fully of pity for easily losing a sense of shame, of respect, of sensitivity for distances; before you know it, pity begins to smell of the the mob and becomes scarcely distinguishable from bad manners...

Nietzsche marks as noble sensitivity to the differences between individuals that make it the case that individuals are not interchangeable. The *pathos* grows “out of the ingrained differences between stations” (BGE 257; see also AC 43 and GM I 2). Given the rhetorical flourishes of Nietzsche’s treatments of it, it is easy to see the *pathos of distance*

²¹⁰ Ure, *Nietzsche’s Therapy*, 226.

as a politically and ethically dangerous aristocratic faith in one's right to rule over others. A more sympathetic reading of Nietzsche sees him as attuning us to the historical contingency of the view, necessary to a morality of compassion, that there is something interchangeable about human beings, some core that makes us human and that the compassionate other recognizes in us when she acts to further our interests, what Henry Staten calls, "a qualitative parity between persons."²¹¹ Compassion of this sort bars us from valuing the particular significance that interests have for the people whose interests they are.²¹²

If we erase any vantage point that allows us to recognize the personal significance of interests, we at the same time disable any affirmation of suffering that would place it against the significance-conferring background of a particular life. Suffering is an evil not because we ought to be free of pain, comfortable, but because we ought to be free for the struggle of becoming what we are. For Nietzsche, we respond to another's suffering in a healthy way when, as a friend, we take their projects as worthwhile insofar as we take them themselves as worthwhile. We don't join the other in a compassion that refuses the value of this life; instead, in affirming life, we help each other through its many aspects, suffering included.

²¹¹Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, 81. Martha Nussbaum (1994) criticizes Nietzsche for a failure to appreciate the moral right to the basic needs of human beings that, given our shared inherent frailty, are prerequisites for achieving the type of human greatness Nietzsche commends. If Nietzsche wills the end, Nussbaum suggests, he must also will the means. The *pathos of distance* helps us to see that Nietzsche doesn't hold Nussbaum's implicit premises that there exists moral rights that we hold *qua* human and that every human being has the potential to live the best sort of life for human beings. Martha Nussbaum, "Pity and Mercy: Nietzsche's Stoicism," in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). See Tanner, *Nietzsche*, 43-44. See also Janaway, "Morality, Drives, and Human Greatness," 185.

²¹² Reginster describes Nietzsche's concern when he writes: "we may wonder whether deploring and seeking to relieve the sufferings of others with no thought of the individuals whose sufferings they are still captures something that remains recognizable as altruistic compassion...the genuine altruist is not one who simply seeks to fulfill the *interests* of others, but one who helps *others* to fulfill their interests." Bernard Reginster, "Compassion and Selflessness," in *Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Normativity*, 179-180.

That Nietzsche holds open the possibility of a more nuanced, particular sharing of suffering is shown too by his frequent hedging when discussing compassion. At numerous places, we see Nietzsche distinguishing between conceptions of compassion made different by the different forms of life in which they are implicated. So in BGE 225 he writes approvingly of “*our* pity,” which is a “pity *against* pity”; in BGE 293 he writes of the person of master morality that, “if a man like this has pity, well then! *this* pity is worth something!”; and Nietzsche writes of “*my kind of ‘compassion’*,” for which, “I find no name adequate” (WP 367 1885).²¹³ So concern for suffering isn’t regrettable in itself, but only when such concern erases any vantage point on our situation that might lend suffering significance.

Yet even as Nietzsche maintains a place for a particularized attention to suffering, in the main he doubts that we are of most use to other in attending to their pain, and he focusses on friendship’s incitement towards desire and joy as an antidote to the erasure of compassion. When Zarathustra meditates on the friend, he says, “may your pity be a conjecture: that you may first know if your friend wants pity. Perhaps what he loves in you is the undimmed eye and the glance of eternity” (Z I Friend). Anyone can respond to the pain of another, anyone can reduce another to a capacity for suffering. In friendship, Nietzsche suggests, we might be able to be of more use to the other in helping the friend to attune herself to the lived context that can make her suffering meaningful. Nietzsche writes of our relationships that we can “neither aid nor comfort if we want to be the echo of their lamentation” (D 144).²¹⁴ He suggests, too, that in focusing on another’s pain we

²¹³ See also HH 157.

²¹⁴ Nietzsche here echoes Emerson’s claim, that we “better be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo.” Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 150. In Nietzsche’s copy of Emerson he wrote ‘Bravo!’ here in the margins. Nietzsche read Emerson’s *The*

run the risk of confirming in them the wrong sort of attitude towards suffering, a sort of woe-is-me mentality. Nietzsche counsels instead that we seek to turn our friend's attention from suffering towards joy. He asks whether we better aid others through attending to their suffering, "...or by *creating* something out of oneself that the other can behold with pleasure..." (D 174) And elsewhere, Nietzsche credits the Greeks with a healthier approach to suffering, writing that the, "the men of the world of antiquity knew better how to *rejoice*: we how to *suffer less*; the former employed all their abundance of ingenuity and capacity to reflect for the continual creation of new occasions for happiness and celebration: whereas we employ our minds rather towards the amelioration of suffering and the removal of sources of pain" (AOM 187). Returning to these themes in *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche counsels that we are of most use to others not in attending to their suffering but in turning their attention to joy. "As long as men have existed, man has enjoyed himself too little: that alone, my brothers, is our original sin! And if we learn better to enjoy ourselves, we best unlearn how to do harm to others and to contrive harm" (Z II Compassionate). The difference marked is between treating suffering as an evil to be removed and treating it as sometimes having meaning, importance, through the myriad ways it weaves into our lives, pushes and pulls us.

And finally, Nietzsche seeks a way of attending to suffering by placing it against a background of joy: "*Seeing one's light shine*. — In dark states of distress, sickness or debt we are glad when we see others still shining and they perceive in us the bright disk

Conduct of Life and *Essays* in 1862 and then again in 1863, then every two or three years for the rest of his productive life, making Emerson, like Plato and Schopenhauer, one of a small group of figures who held Nietzsche's interest throughout the many changes in his thought. See Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context*, 186-231. Although Nietzsche doesn't point explicitly to Emerson in the published works, he frequently praises him in letters and several key themes in Nietzsche are plausibly understood as depending upon Emerson's influence, *amor fati* and perspectivism chief among them.

of the moon. In this indirect way we participate in our own capacity to illumine” (AOM 61). Here, the challenge is to attend to suffering in a way that doesn’t ignore it, silence it, but instead revalues it as integral to a joy that remains possible through it. The challenge is to be comforted not as a being who feels pain as an affront, but as a being whose pains are productive and life-affirming. Nietzsche writes in this vein of an “ideal divine cannibalism” wherein we nourish ourselves on the other’s suffering insofar as it reminds us of the great capacity of human beings to flourish in and through adversity (D 144). In each example, we see Nietzsche not ignoring pain, but revaluing it, helping to turn our glance just enough to see suffering against a background that can make it as beautiful as we are able to view the life, the possibility, of which it is a part.

I have argued that the form of self-knowledge friends help us towards is one in which we locate ourselves in and as becoming. The overcoming of friendship, like joy and like the contest, is its own end. Celebrating the finitude of our projects, the way in which they are sustained by our participation, helps Nietzsche to make his case that becoming is not a defect, suffering is not a curse, that the world is worth something and we are none the worse for being part it. The reflection of friendship shows us to ourselves in this posture, shows us as witnesses to our own becoming. If we are able to become what we are, able to understand our capacity to witness not as cold onlooker but as a friend of the world, then we will be better placed more carefully to attend to the concerns of others, their projects, pains, and possibilities. Suffering needs a stage, a place to appear as meaningful: we have to posit a world that matters if we are ourselves are to matter, and we have to believe we matter if we are to make good on the precarious

promise of the type of being it is given to us to be, beings who make joy appear in wanting it.

Conclusion

A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to tour an anatomy lab as part of a course on the ethical presuppositions of organ donation discourses. I was struck by one body in particular, what I was told was a particularly skillful dissection intended to be photographed for use in textbooks. With the other bodies, I felt, although solemnly, comfortable with the death, with the outside of the skin and the inside of the organs, muscles and bones. But the exceptional artfulness, the skill of this one, stopped me. Starting at the hands, one saw fingers, tips and nails. Eyes slowly scanning up an almost living hand, but then just past the wrist a cut, a curve on the forearm that opened up the body as inside, as cadaver: veins and muscles and manicured fingernails all at once. I was struck by the line, the curve that marked the line between life and death, inside and outside, body and cadaver, that in its artfulness showed both and all together all at once. I could handle one, or the other, but not both, not one thing that was already two, not the stubborn and palpable inbetweenness opened up by the line.

This, I think, is a good metaphor for what is striking in Nietzsche. Nietzsche's is a sort of cadaverous thinking that makes us think two things at once: that slave morality is a disaster and a great wellspring of opportunity; that a will that wills nothingness still wills; that a friend should be an enemy. These aren't contradictions, they are skillfully constructed paradoxes, lines of thought that cut, that give to us to think two things at once. When Nietzsche writes of rising up to a thought, or of learning to feel differently, he points to the character of the work he calls for: to cultivate a certain sort of affective response to existence, to *be* a certain configuration of feeling, which is to be a being

through whom certain currents of life can move. There was no contradiction in the cadaver, only an unsettling inability on my part to admit it. I was presented with an opportunity to become the type of being able to think two particular moments at once.

Nietzsche wrote that philosophical problems are like cold baths, best handled when gotten into quickly and out of quickly (GS 381). Thought requires not time, like a brooding hen (GS 381), not depth, but a skillful line that traverses with grace. What do we do when, in Deleuze's words, "trying to trace a transversal, diagonal line,"²¹⁵ a "mobile diagonal line"?²¹⁶ I have tried with this dissertation to trace a line of thought in Nietzsche, a line of friendship. In thinking through friendship alongside joy, I have attempted to show friendship's place in Nietzsche's thinking about how best human beings can understand and affirm their existence. For Nietzsche, the challenge is to articulate a saying-no that is a doing-yes, destruction that creates, a joy that reduces to rubble not out of spite but because one desires the new.²¹⁷

Joy is Nietzsche's response to suffering as a basis for our relation to others. Starting with suffering is already a false start because it aligns us with values taken to transcend existence, setting the stage for the nihilism of discovering our highest values are non-values. Joy as its own end, joy in love with this world, our world, is Nietzsche's contribution. I suggested that trying to account for Nietzsche's stated views on subjectivity without keeping something like this in mind leads us down the wrong interpretive path. What Nietzsche objects to in our picture of the subject as transcendentally and logically preceding its experience isn't the lack of empirical basis of

²¹⁵ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 88.

²¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 3.

²¹⁷ Deleuze describes this type of joy as found in Foucault, calling it "a great joy which is not the ambivalent joy of hatred, but the joy of wanting to destroy whatever mutilates life." Deleuze, *Foucault*, 22.

such a picture, correctable through a naturalist reworking of that account, but the horizon from within which such a picture gains credibility. Nietzsche's answer is that it is only the slave who thinks of himself as a self through standing back, through intentions and decisions and promises. In place of this picture, Nietzsche looks to the Greeks for reminders of the possibility of affirming the world through our communities and our relationships understood as sites of becoming, as innocent places where values and types arise.

Nietzsche's German is *Unschuld*: literally 'non-guilt'. This helps us to see Nietzsche's role in stressing the innocence of the world as akin to that of a defence attorney: he doesn't have to prove his case so much as provide reasonable doubt about the other side's. "The ideal is not refuted—it *freezes* to death" (EH HH 1); "we are sailing straight over and *away from* morality" (BGE 23). The world has had guilt foisted upon it, and Nietzsche needs not to prove innocence, but to show the imputation of guilt as following from particular historical movements of thought, particular interpretive forces that were able to grab hold of existence.²¹⁸

Overcoming these movements of slave morality, loosening their grip, Nietzsche wants to say that what is good is surrendering to the world through an affirmation of its innocence, "*to realize in oneself* the eternal joy becoming" (TI Ancients 5). Friendship as shared joy, as cultivating a space for joy to appear, a sort of micro-agon, stage or afterworld, offers for Nietzsche the prospect for us, in our historical and genealogical situation, to experience something of this surrendering in the wake of its erasure under slave morality. If this dissertation has been successful, it is in its insistence that precisely here Nietzsche's conception of friendship figures crucially in his account of the ethical

²¹⁸ See Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 63-64; D 95.

situation of the human being. Nietzsche writes of the friend that, “we believe...in the purity of his character more than he does...the unegoistic in us – this word is never to be taken in a strict sense but only as a simplified form of expression – is affected more strongly by his guilt than is the unegoistic in him” (HH 46). Nietzsche wants to preserve a relationality that does not fall into the erasure of compassion, and we can see him here pointing at the same time towards and away from the unegoistic. When the friend occupies her place in our thinking, her concerns take over our own as in Schopenhauer’s compassion, but only in a “simplified form of expression”, for what is crucial for Nietzsche is that they remain *her* concerns, her spectral freedom. There is reflection, like in a mirror, but “rough and imperfect mirror” that sends us out to find ourselves in between each other (Z I Friend). This inbetweenness, this stage that arises out of the activity of friendship is an afterworld, but not the weary afterworld of a nihilistic escape. It is the desirous, productive backstage of the other that opens us to our becoming the what that we are. Nietzsche ends a letter to Salomé:

Lastly, my dear Lou, the old, deep, heartfelt plea: *become the being you are!*
First, one has the difficulty of emancipating oneself from one’s chains, and, ultimately, one has to emancipate oneself from this emancipation too! Each of us has to suffer, though in greatly differing ways, from the chain sickness, even after he has broken the chains. In fond devotion to your destiny—for in you I love also *my hopes*. (SL 102; see also GS 272)

In discussing romantic love, Nietzsche points to an always present excess that rules out any easy reciprocation or union. Both parties want to give themselves completely to the other, but if both were successful in giving themselves away, what would remain?

Nietzsche answers his own question: “perhaps an empty space?” (GS 363) The world as alive, as productive, as dice table rather than forum for causes and events, never recedes, never grows empty, and relationality moves us in and out of precisely this play, this excess, always living space, not to reconcile but to create.

Such an account points to a more general ethical picture that sees us linked to others not through guilt and obligation but through joy, through lines of becoming that when tracked down show us tangled up with others and everything in a way that, when affirmed, shows the world in all its innocence. Nothing *is*, apart from the whole (TI Errors 8). I am what I am because of what I am for my friends (BGE Aftersong). Part of the whole, part of the world that makes us, is the world that is given through every friend. We owe our existence to a world that makes us, but this is not a debt or an obligation but a beautiful opportunity, like the surrender we take on in love, like meeting someone we like.

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