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Nietzsche’s Goal of Friendship

Abstract: The purpose of this essay is to illuminate the topic of Redlichkeit in *The Gay Science* in order to provide a greater understanding of the relationship between friendship, knowledge-seeking and overcoming in Nietzsche’s GS and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In GS 14 Nietzsche formulates friendship as involving “a *shared* higher thirst for an ideal.” Although higher friendship, for Nietzsche, involves a mutual goal, this paper argues that the goal is not truth. First, the notion of the intellectual conscience and how passionate knowledge-seeking is distinguished from the standardized practices of truth that Nietzsche rejects is explained. Second, the problem of the Übermensch, or Overhuman, and its status as an ideal or goal is examined. In conclusion, the link that Nietzsche makes between becoming Overhuman and the development of Redlichkeit by the intellectual conscience in passionate knowledge-seeking friendship is explained.

“But say to me now, my brothers: if humanity still lacks a goal, does it not also lack—  
itself?—” Z I “On the Thousand Goals and One.”

In GS Nietzsche characterizes the experimental path of the knowledge-seeker as one that is vulnerable to great instability. He compares “truths” to skins that are shed again and again through the practice of critical engagement with the self and others.<sup>1</sup> “*Life as means to knowledge*” is praised by Nietzsche (GS 324), however in order for one’s knowledge to gain relevance it must be repeatedly questioned (GS 335). In Z Nietzsche writes that it is important to fight for understanding and to even “triumph” when one’s arguments are defeated by an opponent (Z I “On War and Warrior-Peoples”). Learning through agonistic interactions that support critique between peers is emphasized. Nietzsche expresses the need for friends to challenge beliefs, to inspire each other into overcoming and to “a yearning for the Overhuman” (Z I “On the Friend”).

The purpose of this essay is to illuminate the topic of Redlichkeit in GS in order to provide a greater understanding of the relationship between friendship, knowledge-seeking and overcoming in GS and Z.<sup>2</sup> In GS 14 Nietzsche formulates friendship as involving “a *shared* higher thirst for an ideal.” I read this section to mean that higher friendship, for Nietzsche, involves a mutual goal, but this goal is not truth. In order to bring greater clarity to Nietzsche’s treatment of truth in GS and provide evidence for my claim that there is an alternative goal of friendship outlined by Nietzsche in Z, I focus on two important Nietzschean concepts. First, the notion of the intellectual conscience and how passionate knowledge-seeking is distinguished from the standardized practices of truth that Nietzsche rejects is discussed. Second, the problem of the Übermensch, or Overhuman, and its status as an ideal or goal is examined. I question the feasibility of the Overhuman and ask why Nietzsche thinks such an ideal is required. In conclusion, the link that Nietzsche makes between becoming Overhuman and the development of

Redlichkeit by the intellectual conscience in passionate knowledge-seeking friendship is explained.

### Goal-Oriented Friendship

Nietzsche values a goal-oriented friendship in which two people come together in the interest of shared striving. In GS 14 Nietzsche writes, “Here and there on earth we may 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*.” In this section Nietzsche differentiates friendship from erotic love and neighborly love relationships in which the same drive gives rise to love and greed (Habsucht). Friendship allows for a sublimation or refinement of this tyrannical drive into a more productive outlet so the attention of the people involved is oriented to the actualization of an ideal instead of the possession of one another. Friendship as goal-oriented thus becomes a creative and disciplined solution to the problem of immoderate egoism and its multiple expressions, especially for those who have an excess of energy and a hunger for power.

The advantages of cultivating goal-oriented friendships are numerous within Nietzsche’s framework. In GS 14 and 13 Nietzsche suggests that people in general are mostly interested in having a feeling of power and are willing to use and hurt others in order to achieve this (although those who hurt are considered to be lacking in power as opposed to those who benefit others). Nietzsche states that the hunger to possess that which is new is often expressed hastily and repeatedly. Those experiencing this drive

enact an inconsiderate consumerism that bores easily and has a propensity to be exploitative of others in its need to assimilate. The structure of a goal-oriented friendship provides a foundation for this drive to face resistance and, if the friends are well matched, a prolonged experience of challenge and learning.

Instead of attempting to incorporate the other person as Nietzsche states tends to be the case in both neighborly and erotic love relationships, goal-oriented friendships are grounded on mutual admiration and friends do not employ the other for self-aggrandizement or escapism. In order to recognize the other person as a worthy partner in the attempt to meet a particular goal, admiration and respect for the other person's relevant abilities are necessary. In addition, Nietzsche suggests that enmity has a role to play within friendship because it encourages competition and the development of "virtue (Tugend), virility (Männlichkeit) and cheerfulness (Heiterkeit)" (GS 169). Nietzsche shares the sentiments of Montaigne whose writings on the art of conversation include the statement that "I like a strong, intimate, manly fellowship, the kind of friendship which rejoices in sharp vigorous exchanges just as love rejoices in bites and scratches which draw blood."<sup>3</sup> Montaigne and Nietzsche view argumentative friendship as an opportunity to exercise one's skills; they believe that critique should be welcomed, not avoided. Nietzsche writes that one's best enemy is found in the friend: "You should be closest to him in your heart when you strive against him" (Z I "On the Friend"). He considers the unique kind of intimacy that friends share when they bring a degree of enmity into their relationship to be important: the push and pull of goal-oriented friends inspire shared questioning and expose aspects of the self that would not ordinarily be visible. Nietzsche

writes, “let us be enemies too, my friends! Divinely we want to strive *against* each other!”(Z II “On the Tarantulas”).

The competitive nature of this kind of higher friendship allows for a striving which can be both therapeutic and transformative. Friends can provide the kind of resistance necessary that Nietzsche later states in GM is important for discharging the will to power and preventing the development of the bad conscience.<sup>4</sup> For example, difficult and potentially destructive emotions such as envy are utilized in order to motivate striving: instead of envy of the friend driving one to harm him, that envy inspires one to attempt to be similar to or better than his friend. When mutual admiration is present, a certain level of intellectualized enmity drives competition and encourages critical engagement between peers while also providing an outlet for aggressive emotions. The passions of the knowledge seeker, which are neither objective nor indifferent (GS 351), can be moderated through opposition. By sharing an argumentative engagement with one another, friends, especially those who have different passionate motivations, engage in a discourse that allows for greater recognition of the other and his perspectives to occur. The shared goal of the friends provides structure for the intensity of the interaction and allows for a sustained practice of emotional sublimation and intellectual intimacy.

Although Nietzsche does not name one specific higher ideal of friendship in GS 14, he does nevertheless state that the distinguishing feature of friendship is “a shared higher thirst for an ideal.” Robert Miner, who also turns to GS 14 in order to claim that “superior friendship” has a higher goal for Nietzsche, argues that this goal is truth.<sup>5</sup> I believe this is a misreading of Nietzsche: Miner fails to explain the central role that questioning plays in Nietzsche’s treatment of truth. What Hannah Arendt wrote about Lessing can be applied

to Nietzsche here: “his thinking was not a search for truth, since every truth that is the result of a thought process necessarily puts an end to the movement of thinking.”<sup>6</sup>

Nietzsche’s discussion of truth is pointed toward its fallibility; friendship with a higher goal offers the friends an opportunity for greater criticality, not so the truth will be found, but instead so that one’s truths and methods of truth-seeking will be questioned, multiplied and re-created: or, in short, overcome. Nietzschean friends help each other develop a hermeneutics of suspicion, a practice integral for developing the no-saying spirit who looks at the motivation behind his truths to determine if they are worth maintaining a belief in.

#### Truth and the Development of the Intellectual Conscience

It is tempting to conclude that truth is the goal of friendship for Nietzsche, especially in the context of GS because there are so many instances in this text during which Nietzsche highlights the importance of being a knowledge-seeker or a warrior type that seeks out new ideas (See “*Preparatory human beings*” of GS 283). These praiseworthy types of people are not lost in Z either: Nietzsche writes of both saints of understanding (Heilige der Erkenntnis) and warriors of understanding and suggests that these two types of people are vital for the change that he conceives of as necessary to occur (Z I “On War and Warrior-Peoples”).<sup>7</sup> In addition, he suggests in Z that competitive relationships, even relationships of intellectual warfare are instructive, and that for some people simply fighting for Erkenntnis is a sufficient and worthy path. However, the pursuit of Erkenntnis, translated as understanding, knowledge or awareness, is very different from the standardized practices of truth that Nietzsche undermines throughout his oeuvre.

In both GS and Z, the on-going cultivation of self-questioning is stressed in its relationship to knowledge-seeking, what Nietzsche calls the development of the intellectual conscience. Nietzsche explains that the intellectual conscience involves a healthy desire for certainty (*Verlangen nach Gewissheit*) that drives one to carefully question one's beliefs and the forming of new judgments (GS 2). The majority of people, Nietzsche contends, are satisfied constructing their lives on beliefs that they have inherited which they have not taken the opportunity to weigh. Instead of testing out opinions or observing actions to determine relevance, people are content to refer to their conscience and their faith, especially when it comes to making moral judgments. Nietzsche challenges his reader and asks: "Have you never heard of an intellectual conscience? A conscience behind your "conscience"? Your judgment "this is right" has a pre-history in your instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences, and lack of experiences. "How did it originate there?" you must ask, and then also: "What is it that impels me to listen to it?" (GS 335) When one cultivates the intellectual conscience, the conscience is requested to reflect upon the origins of its beliefs. As an alternative to simple unmeasured conclusions, Nietzsche suggests that the development of the intellectual conscience brings probity to one's beliefs and assists in the refinement of judgment so that descriptions can become more precise.

In GS 335 "*Long live physics!*" Nietzsche discusses how to engage in productive self-questioning: through the intellectual conscience one moves into a deconstructive mode that involves the "purification of our opinions and valuations." What follows this "purification" is a new creating of this-world human values. When Nietzsche proclaims „*Hoch die Physik!*“ he is proposing the value of physics, as this-worldly, propelled by

human creation, over the other-world realm of metaphysics. Nietzsche writes that human beings must “give themselves laws...create themselves” (GS 335). The intellectual conscience is a tool from which Nietzsche states people can discover what is “lawful and necessary in the world.” The quality that Nietzsche states inspires one to pursue this specific orientation is *Redlichkeit* (GS 335): “And even more so that which *compels* us to turn to physics—our *Redlichkeit!*”

*Redlichkeit*, translated as honesty in the Kaufmann edition of GS, but also meaning probity, is a term that Nietzsche returns to in Z, calling it the youngest virtue and linking it to “the one who understands (Erkennenden)” who is opposed to those who are sick and “long for God” (ZI “On Believers in a World Behind”). *Redlichkeit* is connected, like in GS 335, to this world on earth and the body and to becoming, Nietzsche states, what one is.<sup>8</sup> In order to become what one is, one must first learn how to measure the contents and drives of one’s beliefs. Goal-oriented friendships that reject the romantic escapism of erotic and neighborly love and embrace *Redlichkeit* as a shared practice enable passionate knowledge-seeking that is both this-worldly and self-impelled.

Why so many people lack *Redlichkeit* and an intellectual conscience is associated with “*Believers and their need to believe*” (GS 347, 319). Metaphysics, faith, scientific positivism: all provide a strong foundation to rest upon and deactivate the will (GS 347), follow a paradigm and be comforted by a community of fellow believers. Instead of developing a practice of questioning, Nietzsche writes that people have an unconscious and repetitive motivation to seek out that which is a familiar and comfortable and form conclusions based on this (GS 355). There is also the drive within each person to make that which is unknown accessible through creating a story or “truth” about it: in Z,



Nietzsche connects this to the need to make all other beings “thinkable,” to define within the scope of one’s particular knowledge base and in doing so have a sense of control over the meaning of that thing (Z II “On Self-Overcoming”). In other words, it is easiest to choose a little truth that fits within one’s structures of belief. Although Nietzsche maintains that the search for knowledge is important, he concurrently problematizes the tunnel vision inevitable in its pursuit. Nietzsche points to cultural inheritances, including gender, socio-economic roles and ethnic backgrounds as formative of beliefs (GS 335). Even when the desire for certainty is functioning there is a tendency to unknowingly shape it in a particular direction, to create a new fiction or faith to give it stability (GS 347), or to conform to accepted and useful humanized “truths” (GS 112). In Z Nietzsche writes that “The human being first put values into things, in order to preserve itself—it created a meaning for things, a human meaning!” (Z I: “On the Thousand Goals and One”). For Nietzsche, belief is shaped by a self-preserving need, one which has both cultural and biological components, as well as a drive to fulfill particular requirements of moral beliefs.<sup>9</sup> As such, Nietzsche indicates that “truth” should consistently be approached with a degree of skepticism and distance and even laughter at its conditionality. Truth is anything but indifferent (GS 351).

Nietzsche explains that useful beliefs are most often supported beliefs which may in fact be errors, but over time due to their usefulness have gained credence; often that which demonstrates greater honesty as a truth has less visibility and is overshadowed by such useful beliefs (GS 110 e.g. “enduring things”). “Thus the strength of knowledge does not depend on its degree of truth, but on its age, on the degree to which it has been incorporated, on its character as a condition of life” (GS 110). One who attempts to

develop the intellectual conscience is not merely limited by the capacity to genuinely attempt self-questioning: the questions one asks will themselves be influenced by shared normalized errors taken as “truths.” According to Nietzsche, the desire for certainty is overshadowed by the drive for survival and its many mutations regardless of their validity; that which supports life often prevails over that which supports Redlichkeit, especially when honesty threatens life. The truths which are supported and come to be part of the accepted knowledge base are ones which have been reconciled with life as life preserving (GS 110). In Z the “famous wise men” are mocked for knowingly pandering to normalized errors, to the so-called truths of the people, and guaranteeing their survival this way. Zarathustra declares that for one to sincerely become truthful, one must reject the people’s God and truths, go into solitude and attempt to strip oneself of the prevalent discourses that shape one’s sources of knowledge (Z II “On the Famous Wise Men”).

Nietzsche’s attack on the metaphysics of truth and his observation that the search for knowledge is inevitably hampered by many challenges both social and individual is well known and pervasive throughout his oeuvre. What makes it interesting in the context of a discussion of friendship and its goal, is whether Nietzsche conceives of friendship as having the potential to interrupt this regular ignorance and thus become a partial remedy to the limitations that one person faces during the solitary pursuit of truth. Considering that in Z becoming truthful is connected to rejecting the “the people,” “the rabble” and “the marketplace,” it is significant to ask how friendship differs. The question becomes: can the intellectual conscience, when exercised within the context of goal-oriented friendship, have a better chance at achieving greater honesty and probity than in solitude?

Before I attempt to answer this question, I would like to briefly address one other challenge that the intellectual conscience and Redlichkeit appear to face in terms of rigor, namely the psychological need for art. In GS Nietzsche states that people incorporate an aesthetic enjoyment into life and create stories in order to be able to emotionally sustain the tragic nature of existence. Art allows for the glorification of what has been appraised (GS 85) and it also has the capacity to make that which is deeply problematic, such as the erroneous nature of much of our knowledge, endurable. Although this may appear to be an impingement upon the accumulation of knowledge, Nietzsche states that it is necessary for survival. The alternative, raw honesty, is too unbearable and “would lead to nausea and suicide...We must discover the hero not less than the fool in our passion for knowledge” (GS 107). This need for artistry does not merely provide escape: art and religion also grant insight into the self through distance and a magnifying glass (GS 78). For example, Nietzsche explains that in watching theatre one may be drawn into self-observation of one’s most despicable characteristics through connection with the characters of the play (GS 78). Thus, art, which can seem to limit the pursuit of knowledge as an expression of the drive for survival, has the ability to act as a spontaneous instigator of reflection into areas of one’s knowledge that may not be usually so available. When watching tragedy, for example, the spectator of antiquity did not rationalize the experience, instead he allowed himself to occupy what Tracy Strong calls an “ecstatic doubleness” (Strong, 54) because he became the character of the drama while concurrently remaining the spectator. This involves a mirroring experience in which openness and self-reflection are generated more spontaneously, and even with greater profundity, than the pointed approach which seeks final definitions of things. “What the

plays made possible as political education was not a benign pluralism but an agonism that sought only a word and never a final word” (Strong, 56). My impression is that, for Nietzsche, friendship can have a similar function in that it allows for openings to occur in one’s knowledge base, reflective openings that would not be so easy to come to in solitude.

### The Role of Friendship in Passionate Knowledge-Seeking

What can the friend provide that one cannot find alone during an attempt to refine the intellectual conscience? Does the practice of solitude present particular limitations to knowledge-seeking that can be reconciled in friendship? How does friendship differ for Nietzsche from those communal spaces that he is so critical of, such as the marketplace? In order to answer these questions, it is helpful to examine why solitude is recommended in Z.

As we have already seen, Nietzsche discusses how the concept of truth that each person holds is vulnerable to their cultural environment and to those people one spends time with. In order to become reflective, one must remove oneself from the distracting, repressive and manipulative influences of the external world and go into solitude.

Nietzsche suggests that it is too difficult to try to pick out which beliefs one likes and dislikes if, for example, one is surrounded by the fulminations of politicians and journalists (Z I “On the Flies of the Market Place). In GS, Nietzsche also expresses concern over how education and societal values encourage one to become an object of usefulness for society instead of developing an individual path (GS 21 and 296). Going into solitude provides one with the opportunity to become more self-oriented, to learn

what is one's own taste (Z III "On the Spirit of Heaviness" 2) and in doing so, also unlearn obeying (Z II "The stillest Hour). One who seeks out understanding, Zarathustra states, must also experience isolation and a deep self-questioning that breaks through the ideology that has been self-sustaining in the past. Nietzsche employs the metaphor of a desert in order to explain the solitary experience of no-saying ideological cleansing: "Truthful—thus I call the one who goes into Godless deserts and has broken his reverential heart. In the yellow sands and burned by the sun he will squint thirstily at the islands rich in springs, where living beings repose beneath dark trees. But his thirst does not persuade him to become like those comfortable creatures: for where there are oases, there are also images of idols" (Z I "On the Famous Wise Men").

Solitude is an important therapeutic tool for the knowledge-seeker, one which cannot be overlooked. However, Nietzsche also acknowledges that solitude presents its own dangers which he suggests friendship can mediate. No matter how instructive solitude is, when prolonged a loss of human and social understanding is inevitable. In addition to the potential to become lost in one's inner world and psychologically ill from spending too much time alone (Z I "On the Friend"), Nietzsche states that one's self is very difficult to discover (Z III "On the Spirit of Heaviness" 2). In solitude one is likely to repeat the same stories and habits with which one came into solitude (Z IV "On the Superior Human" 13). A friend is a possible remedy to this predicament: if one can sustain shared critical engagement, the friend can show one parts of oneself that one was unaware of through intellectual confrontation, but also by taking a more subtle route (HAH 491). Nietzsche states that "higher human beings desire and provoke contradiction in order to receive some hint about their own injustices of which they are yet unaware"

(GS 297). Such people become involved in more argumentative relationships because they want to learn and grow, knowing that relationships which involve an element of refined enmity present the opportunity for greater knowledge discovery.

Even Zarathustra comes out of the mountains to seek friendship because his solitude is not enough for him. Solitude is important for coming to understand one's own truths but these truths only gain value once they are shared and tested out by others. In addition to his need to bestow and share his ideas with others, Zarathustra states that he requires friends with whom to cultivate his wisdom (Z II "The Child with the Mirror), companions that are more than believers of his teachings. He is looking for interlocutors with whom to engage so that he can gain greater honesty and probity in the development of his intellectual conscience and discover which "truths" he has yet to overcome.

It is in the *First Part* of *Z* that we can gain an understanding of how Nietzsche distinguishes friendship from other kinds of sociality. The central concerns he has with associating one's beliefs with larger more institutionalized groups of people is the pressure toward conformity that he considers to be active in such groups. Whether one follows the rules of the state or what is culturally or religiously popular, one remains a follower of what is widely accepted and does not take the opportunity to think for oneself (See "On the New Idol" and "On the Flies of the Market-Place").

Regarding other kinds of relationships, Nietzsche returns to his notions expressed in GS 14 that both erotic and neighborly love relationships are fuelled by romantic escapism or a desire to possess and incorporate the other instead of a drive toward a higher ideal. Rather than allowing the drive toward incorporation to fuel relationships and becoming a slave or tyrant in relation to this drive, Nietzsche recommends becoming a warrior of

understanding who openly struggles with the friend in order to reach greater Redlichkeit (See “On War and Warrior-Peoples” and “On the Friend”). Nietzsche’s approach to thinking is both agonistic and empathetic<sup>10</sup>: he views friendship as a vehicle for developing and multiplying perspectives so that one can have a more intensively developed knowledge base. João Constâncio explains Nietzsche’s knowledge-seeking method as engaging an “agonal empathy” which makes one “more personal and more partial” (136-7). Contrary to the standard notion that becoming more personal and partial makes one less “objective” Nietzsche believes the accumulation and analysis of a great number of perspectives deepens one’s knowledge.<sup>11</sup> By engaging the intellectual conscience in the accumulation of these variant perspectives, and questioning the drives behind them, one can attempt to ascertain which perspectives have greater precision. Although Nietzsche does not think one can access a complete understanding of any thing (or person), it is possible to gain a more honest perspective of some thing. Goal-oriented friends who empathetically occupy their oppositional viewpoints and bring an agonistic standard of measure to these viewpoints through reflective questioning develop better descriptions of things (GS 112) and in doing so purify their opinions (GS 335). Instead of deceiving oneself into believing that this involves indifference, strict correspondence, or metaphysical insight, Redlichkeit assists one in understanding that each reflective questioning has a selective drive behind it and chooses to make observations based on personal relevance. Truth is not ascertained; instead the ongoing agonistic engagement of perspectives is refined and overcome through social engagement with the other. What a passionate knowledge-seeker can do, Nietzsche suggests, is build up enough wisdom, as Zarathustra attempts to do, so that one can become “the creating friend” who gives back

to one's friends. This creating friend not only helps one in the pursuit of knowledge, he will also and more ideally be "a festival of the earth and a premonition of the Overhuman" (Z I "On Love of One's Neighbor"). Truthfulness as probity, the practice of Redlichkeit by the intellectual conscience is an important aim of friendship, but it is not Nietzsche's ultimate goal. When friends come together with a higher ideal in mind, passionately experimenting with knowledge in the hopes to find some truths is emphasized, but not as the goal of friendship; instead we should look to *Zarathustra* where the pursuit of knowledge is situated as part of a larger project of overcoming.

#### Becoming Overhuman: The Importance of Friendship in Overcoming

In Z Nietzsche writes, "May the future and the farthest be the cause of your today: in your friend shall you love the Overhuman as your own cause" (Z I "On Love of One's Neighbor"). From this statement we can recognize that Nietzsche thinks friendship has a significant position to fill in the coming of the Overhuman. But, why does Nietzsche think we need the Overhuman? Who or what is the Overhuman? How can friendship provide a foundation for it? These are the primary questions of this section.

There are a number of reasons why Nietzsche believes that we require the ideal of the Overhuman. Primarily, he thinks it is necessary for human beings to have an alternative to a monotheistic God, specifically a figure that the human imagination can grasp that is both closer to the human being and also open to individual interpretation. In GS Nietzsche discusses the advantages of polytheism over monotheism and points to the prevalence of non-normative diversity in polytheistic models that supports free-spiritedness. He writes, "The invention of gods, heroes, and overmen (Uebersmenschen)



of all kinds... was the inestimable preliminary exercise for the justification of the egoism and sovereignty of the individual” (GS 143). The Overhuman who is described ambiguously by Nietzsche as “the sense of the earth” as opposed to the other-worldly is meant to replace the shadow of the Christian God (GS 108) as a spiritual symbol that encourages unique thought and creativity in the immanent frame. The Overhuman celebrates what is exceptional in the human being. Although the figure of the Overhuman is constructed out of the shadow of God, Nietzsche’s aim is to eclipse the metaphysical faith of Christianity with a post-metaphysical approach to life, a spiritualized physics that affirms human capacities without promoting conformity.

Due to the tragic nature of life and the psychological reliance that people have on faith, Nietzsche thinks a spiritual symbol is needed in order to avoid nihilism and the “last man” mentality. In *Z* Nietzsche writes, “Once one said ‘God’ when one looked upon distance seas; but now I have taught you to say: Overhuman” (*Z* II “Upon the Isles of the Blest”). People still require hope, especially those seeking knowledge that have faced the brutality of human mortality and the ephemeral nature of truth. The Overhuman is hope taken in a new form, a hope that rejects the metaphysical faith that truth is divine (GS 344) by creating a figure that is humanly thinkable and attainable and can only come into existence through the human (*Z* II “Upon the Isles of the Blest”) and through human relationships. Described by Zarathustra as a sea in which one can submerge great despising, but also as lightning and madness (*Z* P 3), the Overhuman, as a Dionysian figure of impermanence, is meant to provide redemption from suffering through the linked and repetitive movements of destruction and creation in the human world (*Z* II “Upon the Isles of the Blest”). This means continued knowledge-seeking and self-

questioning: the refinement of the intellectual conscience so that one can create one's own truths and values (and perhaps later overturn them in order to start the process again). When friends strive to grow and change with and against each other in their very human worlds, the symbol of the Overhuman provides a goal to push toward, acting as a catalyst that reveals to the friends their übermenschlich traits and potentialities.

Instead of seeking justification or reward for the pursuit of knowledge in something divine like God or absolute truth, the Overhuman is given by Nietzsche as a symbol that lacks definitive substance, but is nevertheless an instrument of provocation to inspire overcoming. The Overhuman is not one person or a God, nor is it meant to be idolized; it is that imagined, very possible self that rigorously pursues open-ended truth in conjunction with the intellectual conscience and, through an accumulation of knowledge, learns how to overcome its burdens and become a creating human being, a transvaluator. Part of becoming Overhuman involves moving beyond the regular explication of one's assumptions and attempting to demystify old values and beliefs.<sup>12</sup> This no-saying practice of Nietzschean truthfulness involves Redlichkeit and has a productive quality, for in bringing a process of questioning to one's knowledge base, one already begins to form new ideas. In GS, Nietzsche's notion of truth cannot be disconnected from production and artistry: truth is conceived as being inevitability and necessarily bound up with a creative drive. Nietzsche is attempting to give us greater awareness of it; he is even celebrating it so that this knowledge can bring us greater honesty. As Babette Babich has pointed out, "A gay science will need to know itself as art."<sup>13</sup>

Friends who come together in order to strive for truthfulness as probity are already taking one step toward becoming Overhuman; those who challenge and critique the

friend in an attempt to develop the intellectual conscience help to confront their inherited beliefs. Before one can become a creative leader, Nietzsche states that one must learn to question those characteristics which others have valued most and decide whether they are also to one's own taste. Since self-observation is extremely difficult to accomplish, the intellectual sparring of friends can help one's habits, beliefs and values to become more visible. The practice of Redlichkeit in passionate knowledge-seeking friendships brings attention to the value of the lived in social world and the potential of human relationships to facilitate change. For Nietzsche, friendship in GS and Z is closely connected to overcoming and to becoming Overhuman. But, this does not mean that the value of friendship is overridden by the Overhuman; friendship's association with the Overhuman does not promote some kind of extreme individualism, as has been suggested by Ruth Abbey.<sup>14</sup> Instead, making the goal of friendship the Overhuman gives an immanent spiritual meaning to human relationships, one that Nietzsche considers vital for the thriving of the human spirit. Nietzsche's conception of friendship is connected to a broader understanding of human flourishing that emphasizes the passionate and measured pursuit of knowledge in the interest of overcoming and creative re-evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> See GS 307. When quoting from Nietzsche's works the following translations are used: *Human All Too Human*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974); *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); *Ecce Homo*, trans. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> How to read Z is a matter of debate. For the purpose of this paper I follow Nietzsche's own comments in *Ecce Homo* where he writes that he shares many of the same interests and goals of Zarathustra: "I have not

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said one word here that I did not say five years ago through the mouth of Zarathustra” (EH Z 8). Further evidence for Nietzsche’s contention of the centrality of Zarathustra for representing his philosophical ideas is expressed in a letter to Overbeck, April 7, 1884. In it Nietzsche writes of texts from his middle period, *Daybreak* and *Gay Science*, stating that they prepare the reader for *Zarathustra* (KSB 6, 496). See also Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche’s Teaching* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 2, 5. Lampert claims that *Zarathustra* is a link into the most fundamental ideas of Nietzsche.

<sup>3</sup> Book III, Chapter 8 “On the art of conversation,” in Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, trans. M.A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> In GM II 16 Nietzsche writes: “Lacking external enemies and obstacles, and forced into the oppressive narrowness and conformity of custom, man impatiently ripped himself apart, persecuted himself, gnawed at himself, gave himself no peace...”

<sup>5</sup> Miner fails to explain how Nietzsche problematizes truth and the Truth; he also does not give an account of how Nietzschean knowledge-seeking differs. Robert C. Miner, “Nietzsche on Friendship,” *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 40 (Autumn 2010): 47-69, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing,” trans. Clara and Richard Winston in *Men in Dark Times* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1983), 10.

<sup>7</sup> In Z I “On Believers in a World Behind” Zarathustra discusses “the one who understands (Erkennenden)” as one who practices the youngest virtue of honesty (Redlichkeit).

<sup>8</sup> Nietzsche states many times that one must become what one is. This saying taken from Pindar is the subtitle to EH and is repeated in GS and Z. See GS 270, 335 and Z IV: “The Honey Sacrifice.” Tracy Strong states that for Nietzsche one can be judged based on how much one becomes who one is. He describes this as involving an agonistic pluralism in which superiority of strength or intellect is not the criteria. Instead, it means to have awareness of the imperatives one follows and will respond to in the future and to discover which imperative is meaningful to you. See Strong, “Philosophy of the Morning: Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration,” *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 39 (2010): 51-65, 56, 63, hereafter Strong.

<sup>9</sup> GS 110. See also Joshua Rayman, “Nietzsche, Truth and Reference,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 36 (2007): 155-168, 158.

<sup>10</sup> Both John Richardson and João Constâncio have pointed out that Nietzsche’s approach to thinking is agonistic and empathetic. John Richardson, *Nietzsche’s System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 264-5, hereafter Richardson and João Constâncio, “‘A Sort of Schema of Ourselves’: On Nietzsche’s ‘Ideal’ and ‘Concept’ of Freedom” *Nietzsche-Studien* 41(1) (2012): 127-162, 136, hereafter Constâncio.

<sup>11</sup> See GM III 12 in which Nietzsche explains his notion of objectivity: by having as many perspectives as possible, one can come to have a fuller understanding of some thing. Constâncio explains what Nietzsche’s notion of objectivity means as “seeing from the standpoint of others and at the same time striving to overcome the standpoints of others” (137). This involves an analysis of the motivations of the standpoints, one which Richardson calls “drive diagnosis” (273). Read together, they provide a detailed account of what Nietzschean objectivity involves.

<sup>12</sup> Vattimo explains that for Nietzsche when a philosopher is engaged in demythification, he remains connected to a set of values whether it is old or new ones: “explication is always already a moment internal to a given world.” Gianni Vattimo, *Dialogue with Nietzsche*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 71.

<sup>13</sup> Babette Babich, “Nietzsche’s “Gay” Science,” *A Companion to Nietzsche*, Keith Ansell Pearson ed. (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 97-114, 100.

<sup>14</sup> Abbey argues that Nietzsche’s writings on friendship in the middle period are irreconcilable with his concept of the Overhuman active in the later works. See Ruth Abbey, “Circles, Ladders, and Stars: Nietzsche on Friendship,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 2 (1999): 50-73, 67. My essay demonstrates that Nietzsche’s notion of the Overhuman is already active in the middle period (GS and Z) and is very compatible with and even dependent upon Nietzsche’s conception of friendship.