

## *Chapter One*

# **Philosophy as Therapy and the Therapy of Philosophy**

Much has been written on the profundity of Nietzsche's psychology and its importance for his vision of the human condition. Little has been said, however, about Nietzsche's effort to use the insights of this "mistress of the sciences" not merely as an again accessible "way to the fundamental problems" but as a source for tools and techniques of self-shaping.<sup>1</sup> The practical and ascetic side of his teaching of a philosophical psychology has been largely ignored, even though his entire philosophy aims at a self-overcoming of the nature of present day humans.

Nietzsche conceived philosophy neither only as a set of "true" propositions about the world, nor as a set of keys to the solving of logical puzzles, but rather also as an ensemble of spiritual exercises and techniques of askesis, of a working on oneself. The as-

cetic techniques are to prepare the soil of modern souls for the implanting of new seeds of valuations and new ways of life. This essay attempts to explore the dimensions of a Nietzschean askesis and the outlines of a philosophical praxis to be gleaned from his teaching. Specifically, it aims to answer the questions of what one should do and how one should live, if one believes Nietzsche's interpretation of the world to be "true" and valid.<sup>2</sup> It accepts his contention that present day humanity is something to be overcome, a mere transitional stage in human evolution and self-creation. It also accepts the notion that the old goals of human striving, seen to lie in some form of psychic union with some forces "beyond," will continue to shape the masses of human beings but are no longer sufficient to shape the minds of a minority of free spirits. For the latter, Nietzsche's teaching promises new goals and new horizons of willing. Yet before these new lines of willing may become actual in the souls of free spirits, their wills have to be re-shaped in the direction of "freedom of the will" and individual autonomy.<sup>3</sup> Their forms of enslavement have to be recognized and creatively

overcome. Free spirits have to prepare themselves through *disciplinae voluntatis* to use their long conditioning under the sway of slave moralities, their acquired habits of obedience to the ancestral or to divinities, as raw materials for the shaping and actualization of creative visions of the future. They have to acquire a “will to free will.”<sup>4</sup>

Before proceeding further, however, with an exposition of Nietzsche’s philosophical vision and the counsels for ascetic practices consequent upon it, it would seem prudent to suggest certain caveats in regards to any exegesis of Nietzsche’s writings. It is well known how grievously distorted his views have been by Nazi ideologues such as Alfred Bäumler and Elizabeth Forster-Nietzsche, as well as by Stalinist ideologues such as George Lukacs, not to mention post-modern culture cardinals. Similarly, any literal transposition of some seemingly dangerous doctrines found in his writings into programmatic statements for political action would result in calls for strenuous doings based on a titanic raging à la Mussolini. What all such lowerings of sublime spiritual in-

sights into the depths of political ideologies, both left and right, share in common, is a lack of dialectical subtlety. They also lack close attention to the rhetorical structure of Nietzsche's texts.

Nietzsche does not present his views as eternal verities. Indeed, he affirms that the novelty in the position of the new philosophers is their admission that they do not have the "truth," while all previous philosophers believed that they were in possession of the "truth." Rather, this type of new philosopher, the arising of which he foresees out of the free spirits to whose creation he wishes to contribute, will be "tempters and attempters." They will seize upon their lives as experiments in the creation of new cultures, and in so doing, they will undoubtedly find and invent their own "truths." But for the present, all statements of the founder and ancestor of this new line of free spirits that morphs into philosophers are to be read as involving a double and internally contradictory emphasis. They are statements directed against specific teachings of the past, most notably the Socratic-Platonic and Paulinian, Christian teachings. Even if they are declarative and affirmative, they may be

primarily intent on negations of the ancestral. But they also envision affirmations that point to new ways of living and conceiving the world, even if they are phrased negatively. Nietzsche's thinking begins with a No from which then proceeds his Yes. Hence, the last thing to be done is to take him literally, even though such identification may be very "tempting," especially for the many power-hungry individuals that inhabit late Christian and otherwise monotheistic societies. In the first three generations of Nietzsche's "Wirkungsgeschichte," the wills-to-power aggregated into such power-seekers seem to have been particularly attracted to some of Nietzsche's more questionable affirmations: they have succumbed to his "temptations," without regard to their irony. Hence, a prudent philologist would heed the advice that Nietzsche gave to one of his friends even at such a late date as 1888 when sending him his *Joyful Science*: "It is absolutely unnecessary and not even desirable for you to argue in my favor; on the contrary, a dose of curiosity as if you were looking at an alien plant would strike me as an incomparably more intelligent attitude towards me."<sup>5</sup> His writ-

ings are a school of suspicion which requires his readers to map everything said against the doctrine to which any particular affirmation maybe a negation. Thus, for example, his attacks on the morality of chastity need to be held against the Paulinian teaching on chastity and its concomitant repression of sexuality.

The opinions that Nietzsche attacks are not merely something to be found in various culture texts; they are embodied opinions, “burnt into the flesh,” as it were, of the bearers of Christian culture. They form a part of the ensemble of a given individual’s “second nature,” and are hence lived opinions, even if only imperfectly, and even if honored more in their breach than in their fulfillment. They are “illusions” that have become instinctual and unavoidable. Nietzsche wishes to induce his free-spirited readers to wrestle with themselves and with their acquired and consciously or unconsciously held views. He calls on them to re-educate themselves against themselves and against their times. His doctrines are hence attempts and temptations in a much deeper sense than being merely counters in the language games of doxographers. To realize

the full import of what is at issue here, it will be necessary to examine more closely Nietzsche's views on the nature of the philosopher, his views on culture as well as on the present cultural condition. It should be borne in mind that Nietzsche's attitudes towards philosophy, as with other thematics, are shaped by the double intentionality of an affirmation that contains a critical negation and a negation that points to a new affirmation.

### **Philosophers as Therapists of Culture**

When developing his untimely essays, particularly the essay on history and the essay on *Schopenhauer as Educator*, he continued his studies of philosophers in classical antiquity and their relationship to the culture of their day. These served as background to his evaluation of the teaching of Schopenhauer and his relationship both to the school philosophies of Nietzsche's own day and to the state of German and European culture. His focus for these reason-

ings is the unresolved contradiction in Schopenhauer's philosophy between a deeply pessimistic vision of the world calling for a radical world denial and the advocacy of a praxis of prudent living. The precepts for living elaborated by Schopenhauer in his *Parerga and Paralipomena* seemed to be irreconcilable with the vision expressed in *The World as Will and Idea*: if the latter is true, why continue to live and why even bother at all to attempt to shape society and culture. The advocacy of universal compassion with the immitigable suffering of all sentient beings hardly seems a sufficiently broad basis for any active political engagement. At best such a dark vision would suggest a posture of misanthropic solitude, as indeed adopted by Schopenhauer himself. The dilemma in which modern philosophy found itself seemed irresolvable. And philosophy as taught by thinkers such as Dühring, Trendelenburg, Teichmueller, von Hartmann, David Strauss, etc., seemed condemned to remain an empty propositionalism unrelated to any practice of living. In the case of those philosophers who wished to develop their "discipline" in the direction of imitating the victori-

ous sciences, the result would likely be the “mishmash philosophy of positivism,” which at best could claim to be border guards shielding hard science from vapid metaphysics and religion. University philosophers seemed unable to be both philosophers for others as well as for themselves. Hence they were unable to help the noble activity of philosophy in her time of need. Thus we read:

The philosopher has two sides: one he turns to other humans, the other side we do not get to see: there he is philosopher for himself. We consider first the relationship of the philosopher to other humans. The result for our time: nothing comes of this relationship. Why? They are not philosophers for themselves. ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ This is what we must say to them.’<sup>6</sup>

But Schopenhauer had managed to be a “philosopher for himself” as evinced by his practice of prudent living and by the thinking expressed in the *Parerga*. But he had remained virtually with-

out influence on his culture and was forced to live as a recluse. Thus he could not fully live up to the vocation of a philosopher which included being a physician of culture as well as his own physician. This must hence be due to the undesirable state of contemporary culture. By contrast, the school philosophers of the previous generation, most notably Kant and Hegel, had managed to some extent to fulfill the vocation of the philosopher, to be the teachers and healers of culture, but only barely and only because they lived and worked in a Germany that was still infused with the spirit of Goethe and which could hence still be called the “people of thinkers and poets.” Nietzsche’s thinking on the vocation of philosophers seems entirely inspired by his reading of the philosophers of the “tragic age of the Greeks” and quite remarkably and especially by his understanding of the philosophical labors of Plato. It should be recalled that Plato and Socrates had by that time already assumed, for Nietzsche, the role of the inventors of the “tyranny of reason” and the destroyers of tragic culture. Studying the great thinkers such as Heraclitus, Empedocles, Pythagoras, and

finally even Plato, then gave Nietzsche insight into how the vocation of the philosopher is lived in an exemplary fashion. These royal spirits managed to take possession of themselves by organizing the chaos in themselves and then found the courage to live their visions. But they also succeeded in realizing the political intentions of genuine philosophers, because they lived and worked in cultures that required and accepted the therapy they offered. They showed that a philosopher is an “artist of self-creation whose first product is his life.” But they were also able to found schools and to inspire their disciples with their own examples. Then, via the political activity of their disciples they functioned as legislators and political reformers. This was the case even after the decline of the tragic age, as evidenced by the founding of the Platonic academy and the school of Epicurus. Philosophers had first appeared as orderers of cults and myths. They organized the unity of religions, thereby acquiring an ironic attitude towards religions and ending finally as founders of metaphysically ordered states.<sup>7</sup>

One of the chief obstacles to the arising of a genuine philoso-

pher in modernity is the fast pace of modern life. Contemplation is not only not favored but it is actively discouraged. Talented youths are spoiled at an early age by being required to read too much, without ever being able to integrate this information into a mode of life. Science battles against philosophy. While the sciences are never more than means, they have usurped the role of commanding perspectives. The proper relationship would be for them to be ruled by philosophers who would then decide how the results of scientific research could be used for the ennobling and transfiguration of culture and for political changes. Perhaps an age will come in which reading much will no longer be considered a choice-worthy pursuit:

I delight in imagining that human beings will once be fed up with reading; including the writers themselves. Perhaps one day a scholar of the coming generation will come to his senses, make his testament and order that his corpse be burned among his books, including his own writings. And

when forests dwindle even further, should it not be soon time to use libraries as paper wood and kindling material? Most books are born out of the smoke and steam of heads; so it is better for them to become smoke again.<sup>8</sup>

Modern scholars are intellectually overloaded and top-heavy creatures. They have a civilized veneer of ordered reason which, however, hides an instinctual and barbaric chaos. They have completely undeveloped emotions. The thing to do now is to rediscover the virtues of the contemplative life and to live outside the ever-growing tempo of modern life. Indeed, one must rediscover the wisdom of the garden philosopher and take one's bearings by the life and teaching of Epicurus. Following him one can discover the simple garden happiness, "of waves—walking on the shores on a quiet summer day."<sup>9</sup> One needs to practice Epicurus' "refined heroism" to rediscover one's true essence which from childhood on may have been overburdened with alien character and foreign knowledge."<sup>10</sup> Even regarding insight and understanding, it has to

be acknowledged that “wisdom has not advanced one step beyond Epicurus and frequently has regressed many thousands of steps behind him.”<sup>11</sup> It would seem that the conditions of modernity only permit the Epicurean *lathe biosas*, the hidden life. One aspect of modernity is that “philosophy has let itself be drawn into the stream of contemporary education, it does not rule it at all. At best it has become science.”<sup>12</sup> But the gap between practical prudence and a merely contemplated deep wisdom prevents philosophers from assuming their political role.

Epicureanism as such is incomplete as evidenced by the misanthropic withdrawal of Schopenhauer who was only able to preserve his practical prudence by not functioning in a university. It is difficult to even use the term philosophers for university scholars and writers. It would be better to use a hearty German term and call them ‘thought economists.’ But someone who has deep insight, may not want to become a desiccated scholar, nor live the lonely contradiction of Schopenhauer: “He who does not want to live in this contradiction must fight for an improved physis (culture).”<sup>13</sup>

The task would then seem to involve an imitation of the Epicurean way. This means that one has to re-educate oneself while living the hidden life which then enables one to shed the false conditioning by bringing intellectual knowledge into harmony with one's emotional chaos. Forming oneself into a work of art must then proceed in the friendship circle of the garden community. The aim of such an askesis, however, is not the attainment of the repose of a contemplative mind, nor yet the enjoyment of tranquil friendship with like-minded seekers of truth: these are merely to serve as the base from which to fight the wars that may result in the renewal of culture. Thereby Epicurean philosophy may become complete and the dwellers in such gardens of combat may live up to the ancient vocation of the philosopher as therapist of culture and as physician of human nature. The future hence may yet produce philosophers with the royal vocation, as defined by "Alkuin the Anglo-Saxon: *prava corrigere et recta corroborare et sancta sublimare.*"<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, however, Nietzsche as a philosophical legislator and healer can only envision how in the future some royal spirits may

improve all bad things, strengthen all good things and render all sacred things sublime. This future is to be prepared by the labors of self-transfiguration to which free spirits submit themselves, once they have been jolted into wakefulness by reading Nietzsche. In an aphorism of the *Joyful Science*, entitled “One thing is necessary,” Nietzsche defined the task for future free spirits as,

giving style to one’s character—a great and rare art! He practices it who surveys everything that his nature presents in terms of strengths and weaknesses, integrates it then into an artistic plan until everything appears as art and reason and even a weakness still delights the eye. Here a great mass of second nature has been added, there a piece of first nature removed—both with practice and daily effort. Here the ugly that cannot be removed is hidden, there it is elevated into the sublime.

The aphorism then distinguishes strong from weak natures who

will approach this task with different attitudes in regard to the relation between spontaneity and artistic compulsion. Weak natures will emphasize spontaneity, whereas strong natures will aim to subject everything to artifice. Both types will thereby achieve satisfaction with themselves and will hence not need to revenge themselves on others, for “he who is dissatisfied with himself is constantly ready to take revenge for it; we others will be his victims, even if only to the point where we always have to bear his ugly sight.”<sup>15</sup> The goal of self-shaping, however, is loftier than merely self-satisfaction and the consequent ease of social interaction. It involves a questioning of one’s entire moral sense and a radical suspension of all identifications with one’s moral conscience, bad or good. The entire conditioning to which one has been subjected needs to be questioned and examined in regard to its origins. Self-observation cannot stop at a mere surface acceptance of one’s judgments of right and wrong. One has to go beyond all so-called firm opinions to their sources in one’s past; regression to one’s depths would then make it impossible to use such pathetic words

as “conscience” and “duty,” similar to the use of concepts such as “sin,” “salvation of the soul,” or “redemption.” Any recourse to any categorical imperative would also become impossible. The categorical imperative was something which afflicted the clever Kant who was being punished with it for having sneakily discovered the thing in itself, also a ridiculous concept. Kant resembles a fox who manages to escape from his cage merely to err his way back into it. It was his intelligence and his strength that broke the chains on human consciousness, but only with the result that he was infected with the very residues of these chains, namely imperative concepts such as “God,” “freedom,” “soul,” and “immortality.” The way forward on the path of self-examination and self-shaping leads in the direction of the study of physics and physiology. Such study will enable one to discover one’s inner necessities whereupon one can say:

We, however, wish to become those who we are—the new ones, the singular ones, the incomparable ones, who give

laws unto themselves, who create themselves. And for that we need to become the best learners and discoverers of everything lawful and necessary in the world: we must be physicists in order to be creators in this sense ... And therefore, praised be physics!<sup>16</sup>

### **Autopoiesis**

The terms used in the above two aphorisms to describe self-shaping, such as *creation*, *art*, *artistic plan*, and *style* are all terms that refer to an active and voluntaristic participation of human subjects in processes of natural necessities. The artistic subject comes to light as a conscious helper and awakener of unconscious and automatic manifestations. The individual artist is someone who studies, assumes, and identifies pre-given possibilities. Such possibilities are accepted as one's own, and they are loved in their particularities, with a love both of rejection and affirmation. Creation

is not at all *ab nihilo*, but is an arranging, embellishing and shaping of what is received from the past. The role of the maker and shaper resembles the agent in the traditional Platonic poiesis, namely someone who brings to light what is hidden, or who produces what is not yet there. It is a modest role, involving maximally a kind of participatory freedom of willing. It is by no means a “free will,” but is a freedom of choice between pre-given paths. The materials of these either/ors are not made or shaped by any subject, but are simply there. They are the past materials out of which limited action in the present can shape an indefinite future, which, however, already looms in the present in the form of existential possibilities. The agents thereby assume responsibility for who they are, consequent upon an act of forgiveness for who they have become and who they aim to be. Nietzsche, however, describes that which is thus given and received also in terms of artistic creation, The analysis of this deeper and unconsciously automatic process of creation proceeds by way of an analogy to the process of conscious artistic creation. All things in the world, including ourselves,

thereby reveal themselves as works of art that give birth to themselves without any willful designer. We can add something to these processes of continuous creation, indeed we must add something, if we wish to become who we are and so to gain satisfaction with ourselves. Conscious artistic creation itself may be learned by studying unconscious forms of poiesis. In becoming artists we imitate nature, but we also learn about the workings of the world. Creation, however, as practiced by an artist in fashioning pictures, sculptures, poems, or laws and constitutions, is not merely limited to the production of things that did not exist before out of materials at hand. Even all cognition and all interpretations also involve artistic creation. Scientists are creators and not merely discoverers of what is there, even if they are not aware of the elements of invention present in their findings. This is true both for the study of external phenomena as well as for the discovery of internal phenomena in introspection. Both in the vision of the world outside us and in introspection we invent at the same time as we discover. In an important aphorism of the *Joyful Science*, entitled “Illusion of the

Contemplatives,” Nietzsche classifies human beings into three kinds: the contemplative creators of valuations; the actors who act in terms of the valuations created by the contemplatives; and the spectators before the stage of life who observe the drama. The contemplative,

calls his nature contemplative and overlooks that he is the actual poet and creator of life—that he naturally differs from the actor of this drama, the so-called man of action, and even more from the mere spectator and guest before the stage. We the thinkers and sensitive ones are the ones who actually and continuously create and make something that is not yet there: the entire and eternally growing world of estimations, colors, accents, perspectives, steps of insight, affirmations, and denials. These poems invented by us are constantly learned and practiced by the practical humans (our actors, as indicated) who translate it into reality and the everyday world.<sup>17</sup>

One of the essential points of Nietzsche's transvaluation of values is then the destruction of this illusion in the contemplatives so that they may overcome the self-appraisal where they "are neither as proud nor as happy as they could be." He thereby adds to the traditional understanding of poiesis as bringing to light what is hidden or producing what is not yet there, a third element, namely the (self-)creation of a new type of human individual. This new type, a free spirit on the way to becoming a philosopher, is someone who has awakened to his/her existential possibilities. Such individuals understand themselves as works of art arising without any producing subject. In particular, they see their "bodies as work(s) of art that appear(s) without an artist. . .the artist is only a preliminary stage (*read*: for reaching this insight). The world (is) a work of art that gives birth to itself."<sup>18</sup> Taking for their studies their "bodies" as their guiding threads, they will revalue the traditional distinction of the human totality into "body," "soul," and "mind" or "spirit." The "discoveries" and inventive interpretations

ensuing from such a revaluation will then show them the lines to be followed in conscious self-shaping. Becoming poets of their lives, they will imitate and perfect the natural poiesis already at work in and through them. Thus we may think of the general outlines of a Nietzschean project of artistic self-creation as something to be learned from regular artists:

Which means do we have to make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable when they are not—and for sure they never are. Here we can learn something from doctors ... but even more from artists, who are constantly at work in designing such inventions and artifices: To remove oneself from things so as no longer to see much, or to seemingly add to them so as still to see them;-or to see things around a corner as in a section; or to place them so that they are partially hidden and only permit perspectives; or to look at them through colored glass or in the light of dusk; or to give them a surface and a skin that are partially opaque; all

that we should learn from artists and for the rest be wiser than they. For usually their artistic power stops where art ends and life begins; we, however, want to be the poets of our lives, and first in the smallest and most everyday detail.<sup>19</sup>

In thus becoming the artists of their own lives, the free spirits and philosophers of the future will provide patterns of living for future humans to follow in the age of globalization. In becoming responsible managers of their own little acres, they will show the way to other humans to become responsible managers of themselves as well as of the planet. They will be the contemplative “actors” infused with a pedagogical eros that inspires love and the desire to imitate them in others. Their seemingly “individualist” projects of becoming who they are will thereby stand as signs of a radical cultural transformation. They will show the way to the designing of a new type of human subject that neither possesses, nor aims to possess any self-assured, permanent “identity.” Rather, it

will be a subjectivity that functions as a “persona,” a mask, for the forces of life that underlie all human doing as an irreplaceably unique configuration. All materials provided by the past, both slave and master inheritances, both “bad conscience” and good conscience as well as guilt, will thus be integrated as the building blocks of a higher species of human beings.

Nietzsche once defined the stages of askesis and self-overcoming as first to free oneself from the invisible fetters that have been bred into us as our inheritance of slave morality. This first stage of emancipation from one’s fetters is then to be followed by an “emancipation from the emancipation;” seemingly slaves that have been freed frequently have the inaudible rattling of chains still in their ears.<sup>20</sup> The first stage may occur spontaneously even in the midst of a near universal enslavement to tyrannical moralities. But such spontaneous awakenings to freedom of the spirit have to be defended against pressures of the mass and reinforced through appropriate practices. The residues of former enslavements can only be transformed into the building blocks of a new architec-

ture of the soul by an inner vigilance and a continuous attention to oneself. These two stages correspond to the duality in Nietzsche's task, his no-saying and deconstructive phase and his yes-saying and constructive phase.

This unresolved contradiction in our slave inheritances inheres not only in the souls of the majority of individual culture bearers but it is a constituent element of most modern social, economic, and political institutions. These reproduce enslavements even in a context in which legal slavery has been formally abolished. But enslavement has assumed new and manifold forms, such as degrading forms of sexuality, debilitating forms of work, work-addictions, and, in general, addictions to practices and ways of life that are inimical to human flourishing. It presents individuals with a context in which they are formally free but in fact are enslaved to culture programs that reproduce revenge, anxiety, hatreds of all kinds, and "unknown envy." In these situations, politicians find it very easy "to study physiology in field hospitals" by starting and justifying destructive wars and strongly punitive systems of crimi-

nal justice, as well as programs of large scale ethnic cleansing. One is confronted with a situation in which “freeing oneself [is] one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self [is] another.”<sup>21</sup> We live, so says Nietzsche, in a,

moral interregnum. Who would now already be able to describe what someday will replace moral feelings and judgments!—however certain one may be to realize that they are structures based on erroneous foundations and that they are incapable of being repaired: their authority must diminish from day to day, as long as the authority of reason does not diminish! To build up the laws of living and acting anew—for this task our sciences of physiology, medicine, sociology, and solitudinology are not yet sure enough about themselves: but only from them can one take the foundation stones for new ideals (even if not these ideals themselves). Thus we live a preliminary or a postliminary existence, depending on taste and talent and we are well

advised to be our own *reges* and to found our own experimental states in this interregnum as much as is possible.

We are experiments: let us accept that we are!<sup>22</sup>

## **Culture Wars**

I have given the above aphorism, crafted during Nietzsche's descent into Hades, in full, because it very succinctly contains his vision of culture as well as his understanding of the cultural malaise of modernity.<sup>23</sup> Thus, culture is improved and transfigured as previously stated. The background for Nietzsche's theory of culture is his critical engagement with the ideology of classicism that dominated much of cultural life in the Germany of the nineteenth century. Nietzsche himself was educated to be a leading exponent of this ideology, with its crucial and deceptive distinction between "Kultur" and "Zivilisation." This distinction involved an implicitly racist classification of human beings into peoples that

had culture (“Kulturvölker”), primarily white and later “Aryan” Europeans and other peoples that merely had managed to acquire civilization (“Naturvölker”), mostly black Africans and non-whites or non-Aryans. Nietzsche’s early tendency, as is well known, was to place the Greeks at the pinnacle of human creativity. But already in his early writings he showed considerable skepticism towards the racist implications of belief in the greatness of the Greeks as a form of Germanic self-glorification. He was led to this skepticism by his deeply felt dissatisfaction with his Christian background and later by his debilitating illnesses, among other things. These facts of his personal life nourished his resolute cosmopolitanism and his wish to live as “a good European.” They made him realize early on that a mere and even near perfect knowledge of ancient Greek and Latin was unable to transform a Reichs-German into a Greek of the tragic age. When later he encountered the ideological progeny of German classicism in the form of anti-semitism as manifest by Wagner’s circle and his own sister and her husband, he felt even more compelled to act and write against these perversions of an-

cient ideals. To be sure, for lesser minds than Nietzsche's, such perversions may have seemed logical consequences of classical ideology, especially since classicism was unclear in establishing quality scales among all human beings. From the beginning of this deceitful enterprise it had been unclear where to place such seemingly high cultures as the Chinese, and especially where to place the so-called "semitic" peoples and their cultures. Were they even able to come close to the summit occupied by the Greeks and their successors, the Reich-Germans?<sup>24</sup> It is a supreme and cruel irony of the "blood stained lunacy" that is Europe's history that Nietzsche, the fighter against the ideology of classicism, could be claimed by its twentieth century proponents as one of their own. That his thinking could be invoked to justify a hierarchy of "race" modeled on earlier distinctions between "Kulturvölker" and "Naturvölker."

Nietzsche's notebooks contain many references to customs and rules of non-Western peoples that contrast favorably with similar rules and customs in Christian Europe, especially in regards to

sexual mores. And the section of *Zarathustra* entitled “On the Thousand and One Goals” contains a succinct theory of culture, of conflict among cultures and of culture changes. It also envisions the necessity for creating a human culture in the future that will be the form of life given to itself by the people of humankind.

A table of goods hangs above each people. See, it is the table of its overcomings. See, it is the table of its will to power. Praiseworthy is what it considers difficult; what is indispensable and difficult is called good; and what liberates it from the highest calamity, the rare, the most difficult, that it praises as holy.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that a people defines itself by a positive scale of values ranging from praiseworthy via good to holy, also means that it defines itself by the corresponding negative terms: blame-worthy, evil, and blasphemous. Good and evil are the greatest powers on earth and are human creations. The differences in valuation be-

tween peoples then lead to misunderstandings and conflicts between them. What is considered good in one is called evil in another. Similarly a change in the circumstances of self-creation and self-overcoming of a people will lead the creativity of these people, first the herd and then individualities, to destroy the old table of values so as to give way to a new table of values: “change of values” that is a change of creators. He who must be a creator, must destroy: creators were first people and only later individuals; truly the individual itself is only the latest creation.”<sup>26</sup> The defenders of the old ways and codes will call themselves good and will call the creators of the new codes evil. Revolutions will always involve bitter wars. Hitherto there have been a “thousand goals” of willing and overcoming, each the voice of a people; each moral code is a fetter given by a people to itself for becoming great and strong, and thus, to be envied and mistrusted by members of other peoples who have given themselves different fetters. In the age of globalization, humanity and its planetary habitat are becoming one and unified: the situation is such that the ensuing “wars like there

have never been wars before,” might lead to the desertification of the planet and the auto-destruction of the human species. As an alternative, one can envision the creation of new moral fetters leading to overcoming by a unified people of humankind that constitutes itself by its table of good and evil, its long obedience to moral codes that defines what is to be chosen and what is to be avoided. In Nietzsche’s view, it will be the task of the “tempter and attempter” philosophers of the future to be the legislator and creators of values for the people of humanity. Meanwhile, free spirits are called upon to reeducate themselves to become autonomous persons and to prepare themselves to become the leaders—a spiritual aristocracy—that will in the future assume the position of guides of the many toward the self-creation of a responsible humanity. The masses of human beings will continue to be governed by the old ways, or more likely, will be guided by their regular political leaders and market forces towards an organization of all resources of the planet, both human and non-human, on socialistic and democratic lines. The latter would seem inevitable as the only sane alter-

native to extinction.

We are now in a position to specify more clearly what is to be understood by culture. To begin with, culture is not something written in books or performed as music, or as film. All of these are means to culture and not culture itself. It is thus not possible for a human being not to have culture. Humans are defined by the fact that they are enculturated and socialized to a particular set of rules, customs, prohibitions, and exhortations. Even the stupidest and most uncultured hillbilly or barbarian still has culture. It is not necessary to appreciate Wagner operas to be considered to have culture. Nietzsche's views are sufficient to destroy all such philistine conceits, the conceits of *Bildungsphilister*.

Culture comprises rules, forbidding some things and enjoining others, that are obeyed over long periods of time. It involves conceptions of good and evil as well as bad that are implicitly believed even if disobeyed. They are embodied beliefs by which the inherited nature of human infants is shaped, molded, and irrevocably changed. These rules function by preserving life, but more impor-

tantly, they change and enhance life. Life is thus the irreducible underlying base, the ever changing *hypokeimenon*, that creates for itself rules for self-preservation and self-enhancement by using the instrumentalities of herds, peoples and individuals as well as philosophers. All of these are “instruments” of life. And very importantly, conditions of survival may change and induce conflict between the modes of action necessary for self-preservation of a given herd, people or individual and the ways of action that become necessary for the self-enhancement of the same herd, people or individual. It is then a question of grow and change or go under, all of it staged by life and in its service. To be sure, such changes in conditions that necessitate the abandoning of old ways and the adoption of new ways may be created by the very action of a form of life, that is, a herd, a people or an individual in pursuit of self-preservation and self-enhancement. Indeed, it is something that is bound to happen sooner or later. Cultures seem to have definitive life spans, just as do individuals. We know this much at least from the study of history. And Nietzsche believes that Western culture is

at such a period of transition, where ethical changes are forced upon us by the unintended consequences of the action of our ancestors and of ourselves.

Every culture shapes human willing by setting goals to striving; these goals permit individuals and groups to establish scales of value and goals whereby an ultimate good defines lesser goods, that are means to higher goods, as well as being goods themselves, and goods that are merely means. Legislators and setters of codes of conduct then define rules of action—things to be done and things to be avoided—that are believed to enable humans to achieve the ultimate aim.

The aim in the case of Christian culture had been the attainment of eternal salvation and the avoidance of eternal damnation. Individuals were promised a deathless existence in the company of God. Every individual had to strive to obey the path of righteousness, as defined by divine and human laws, and to suppress all tendencies judged to be “evil” in her/himself. Awareness of “good” and “evil” tendencies in oneself had to be maintained in an attitude

of constant vigilance. Vigilance was to be exercised both towards one's "inner" life and towards the outer manifestations of oneself and of fellow Christians. Constant vigilance required the examination of conscience, noting lapses, and recording inner resistances in a posture of what Nietzsche calls "conscience vivisection." Lapses had to be atoned for, and cases of doubt had to be submitted to the judgment of God and his ministers. The Christian communities were defined by these attitudes and by these rules. An essential character trait fostered by consistent practice of inner vigilance would then become sincerity. The fruit of the shaping of Christian character is then this sincerity, reinforced by belief in the judgment of God to whom no one can lie.

The posture of sincerity and honesty with oneself and others, might be difficult to sustain. Individuals might believe sincerely that because they should not feel, think, and do something, they in fact were also not thinking and feeling something when they merely refrained from doing it. The obverse side of this honesty would then be hypocrisy and puritan condemnation of others for

their faults. In all cases, however, the requirement of honesty and truthfulness had far-reaching implications. One of these implications came in the scientific study of nature, first external nature and then also history and society. The results of scientific knowledge fostered by honesty and close examination of detail seemed to show a nature devoid of divine providence.

## **Dividuals**

The belief in God and the consequent rules of action that should lead one to attain salvation came to be questioned. The resulting awareness that the ultimate aim was illusory led to the collapse of the entire scale of values with all of its rules. Nietzsche designates this cultural calamity with the symbol of the “death of God,” and the ensuing moral crisis as the twilight of nihilism. Nihilism means that the goal of willing is lacking and that hence human life might be senseless.

Cultures, however, also shape and structure the human soul. They create in each individual an inner “master” and an inner “slave,” that is, a command-obedience structure. Every culture implies and is based upon a “regime of the soul” wherein an individual more or less becomes a self-governing structure divided against and within itself. Human individuals are really individuals.

In an aphorism entitled “Self-division of the Human Being” in *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche describes several seemingly “self-less actions” such as when a woman in love wishes to demonstrate her loyalty, despite the experience of her beloved’s disloyalty, or when a mother gives her child what she denies herself, say, sleep, the best food, sometimes her health, her fortune, or when a soldier desires to sacrifice his life for his fatherland on the ‘field of honor’ Nietzsche then asks:

Are all of these, however, unegoistic conditions? Are these acts of morality miracles, because they are impossible and yet real according to the expression of Schopenhauer? Is it

not clear that in all of these cases a human being loves something of itself more than something else of itself, a thought, a desire, a product; that it thus divides its being and sacrifices the one part to the other? The inclination for something (wish, drive, desire) is present in all of the cases mentioned: to give in to this inclination is certainly not ‘unegoistic.’ In morality a human being treats itself not as an individual, but as a dividual.<sup>27</sup>

It is important to realize that dividualism is not just a characteristic of the slave’s self. Rather it is a feature induced by any morality in every human self. Morality and its prohibitions and exhortations is the instrument by which humans transformed themselves from animals into more-than-animals. Thus, we read in an earlier aphorism of the same text:

The super-animal—the beast in us wants to be deceived.  
Morality is a lie that saves, so that we are not torn apart by

it. Without the error which forms part of the assumptions of morality, human beings would have remained animals. Humans were able to consider themselves as something higher and consequently imposed on themselves stricter laws. Therefore, humans have an aversion against those examples of humanity that remained closer to animality.<sup>28</sup>

Being human thus means to be alienated from a part of oneself, to be divided and to bear the inevitable suffering entailed by self-division. There are, indeed, unavoidable discontents of civilization. It is not possible to go behind this original scission and to recapture a wholeness of undivided self-identity (see chapter on dance below). All human selves are self-punishing and self-administering structures, something which as such already calls for techniques of soul-care and self management, so as to make the implicit self-cruelty bearable. Such teachings are provided by every religion in its meditative practices that help individuals to bear the suffering of existence and to manage it creatively.

The individualism established in Christian culture, however, has features that render it different from other cultures, such as Buddhist ones, due to the nature of the “ultimate good.” The ultimate good of Christianity in eternal salvation establishes for individuals socialized to It, a line of willing with a trajectory that ends in the metaphysical beyond. This means that earthly goods, the “world” as such, the joys of the flesh, etc., are radically devalued. While the goal is still believed, this devaluation of this life in favor of a better life “beyond” is bearable and not yet as destructive as it has become in the condition of nihilism. In the crisis induced by the “death of God,” the self destructive tendencies of Christian individualism become fully manifest as life denials. To be sure, these life denials had also once served the preservation and enhancement of forms of life, that is, the life of slaves—but now they no longer enhance and even threaten to destroy rather than preserve life. Christian millenarian believers in the coming end of time in an Armageddon are armed to the teeth with weapons of mass destruction. These latter have been produced by honest Christian science

which from the beginning had been based on a denial of the value of nature. Science as practiced now constitutes a manifold assault on nature.

The Christian line of willing as the self-affirmation of life by slavish selves included a radical self-denial, a death wish. While Christian metaphysical doctrines were still believed, this death wish remained hidden as simply a necessary part of an individual's *praeparatio evangelica*. Modern philosophers, however, as inspired by science have unmasked all metaphysical worlds "beyond" as illusions. In Kant, and then in Schopenhauer, the beyond reveals itself as either wholly improvable or as a blind and unredeeming will. The ascetic will that had produced the metaphysical beyond as well as its deconstruction in Kant and Schopenhauer now negates itself into nothing. The theoretical optimism nourished by the hope for a better life beyond, now turns into pessimism, because there is no beyond. The disgust for the world and the sins of the flesh that had been the underpinning of this optimism, do not, however, disappear. Modern souls are characterized

by disgust, unmotivated anxiety, regret, and revenge against life.

The Christian will reveals itself as harboring a counter-will. It is a broken will. Nietzsche believes that the doctrine of eternal recurrence will restore the human soul as a structure of self-creation to itself. This teaching is to awaken a will that overcomes “Ekel” (disgust) as well as *akedia* and will-lessness, by going back to the origin of all willing before disgust with life arose in the first place. The total affirmation, including of all negativities, provided by the teaching of eternal recurrence will induce self-affirmation, because it aims to restore the state of willing which is unbroken by a counter-will, a death wish; this is the original will of life.

The period of crisis that we are living now, that is, nihilism as the disaggregation of structures into a multiplicity of counterstriving wills, induces decadence. Decadence is will-lessness, because the overall organization of willing is lacking. But this will-lessness is ambivalent: it points beyond itself to the beginning of new lines of willing. Nihilism is an ambivalent “illness” which in its pathological development already contains therapeutic conse-

quences. It is the pathological state-in-between, the *neutralitas* between illness and a new health. The self-shaping of free spirits is hence a way to mobilize the forces of convalescence contained in the dis-ease of nihilistic willing.

Nietzsche's positive teaching, his yes-saying, is an attempt to awaken these forces of convalescence. The teaching of will to power shows what all willing has always been—both broken and unbroken willing—a search by life for reaching beyond itself for more and higher life. The teaching of eternal recurrence is then an attempt by broken wills to heal themselves. It is meant as a structure for slavish selves to rid themselves of the “fettters disease” and thereby to travel the full trajectory from animality via the super-animal of the moral epoch, to the free human being of the future, ennobled by freedom of the spirit. Thus he writes:

The golden loosing—Human beings have been fettered with many chains, so that they may unlearn to behave like animals: and really, they have become milder, more spiri-

tual, more joyful and more sound-minded than all animals. But now they still suffer from having born chains for so long, from having lacked pure air and free movement—but these chains are, I repeat it over and over again, those grave and meaningful errors of moral, religious, and metaphysical conceptions. Only when this fetters disease is overcome, will the first great goal have been reached completely; the separation of human beings from animals—But now we stand in the middle of our labors to shed the fetters and we need to be most careful with it.<sup>29</sup>

The path for self-shaping by free spirits is therefore indicated. It is to awaken the “health” that dwells under the dis-eased will. Nietzsche’s life and writings suggest techniques for overcoming the will-lessness of decadence. In regards to the disintegration of Christian individualism, the present period is a transition to a possible convalescence from a *dérèglement de tous les sens*. This disintegration on a personal level has to be affirmed in *amor fati* so as

to be overcome by a new order of willing. It is thus an affirmation of chaos that may permit the designing of new forces of order.

I believe that Nietzsche's teaching contains suggestions for five techniques of self-overcoming, so as to traverse the two stages of emancipation. These are: the practice of solitude; the cultivation of agonistic friendships; writing and reading the self; a nutritional askesis that involves extreme care in regard to the ingestion of the various kinds of "food," including not only what one drinks and eats, but also what one breathes, reads, watches, and listens to; and finally, learning again how to dance with one's feet as well as with concepts. The practice of solitude, being the basis of the other four, will be the focus of my argument in the following chapter.<sup>30</sup> Solitude is the most important technique in regard to the first stage of self-emancipation from one's fetters. These fetters are rooted in the emotions and are sustained by participation in the emotional structures of fellow human beings. The most important of these emotions for Nietzsche that enslave human willing are envy, vengeance, and resentment. Since all strong emotions are contagious,

solitude not only enables one to “cleanse” oneself of these maladies but also enables one to avoid being continuously reinfected. Thus the sovereignty of joy may be reestablished in oneself, with which others may then be infected in new forms of friendship. Solitude thereby prepares the dissolution of the slave ego and enables all the other forces, drives and tendencies of the self to assert themselves against the tyrannies of slave moralities. It prepares the foundations on which new orders of the soul may be created.

### **Toward a New Fiction of the Soul**

The pattern of self-shaping has to begin from a recognition of the nature of the self that needs to be cultivated and shaped. If philosophy is the practice of soul care or soul-craft, what is the soul for Nietzsche? Before discussing one of his techniques of self-shaping, a brief review of his vision of the “soul” would seem to be required.

In this respect Nietzsche engages in the profoundest and most radical reconfiguration of what it means to be human. He deconstructs the millennia old division of the human totality into “parts” called “soul,” “body” or “mind” respectively. He reveals this traditional division to be a fiction invented by past philosophical legislators of the soul for meditative and political purposes. His attack on Christianity and the various other Platonisms that have shaped our culture reveals the myth of the immortal soul in a mortal body to be an interpretation and hence a human creation. As such it is an act of will to power and a specific poetical-political fiction that imposes a particular perspective of one form of human soul as the universal truth.<sup>31</sup> As a fiction, it has an origin in time, it has been preceded by other fictional divisions of the human totality and it will be succeeded by new such fictions. And none of these fictions are findings of eternal verities but are themselves only conceptual power strategies in the game of life as an endless process that aims at itself in self-preservation and self-enhancement. All such fictions are, as it were, interpretations of the text of human nature and

not the text itself.<sup>32</sup>

Nietzsche proposes a new fictional conception of the human totality with different subdivisions. He denies the immortal substantiality of what has hitherto been called soul, but is willing to continue the use of the “venerable old hypothesis of the soul.”<sup>33</sup> Instead, he proposes a body-centered division in which the term soul functions as a cover for a multiplicity of drives, affects, wishes, thoughts, and intentions. Time wise these extend into the infinite past and comprise all vegetal, animal, and human strivings that have ever occurred to produce me, this very short duration in time.

Strictly speaking, however, it is not appropriate to call Nietzsche’s new anthropology body-centered. This would already continue the old subdivisions of the human totality into “soul” and “body” as a now surreptitious ontological and existential dualism. Rather, it would be more appropriate to use Nietzsche’s term “Leib” as the new fictional name for the whole human being. German has a distinction between “Leib” and “Körper;” the latter is

closer to the English “body” and the former does not exist in English. The few times that Nietzsche does use “Körper,” it is usually a way of referring to the now useless dualistic conception of human nature that distinguishes an immortal “Seele” from a mortal “Körper,” a word related to the English corpse and thus already implying a downgrading of a part of the living human as a mere “tomb for the soul.” I believe that Nietzsche wishes to avoid all such implicitly or explicitly dualistic ways of thinking and speaking about human beings. Hence he uses “Leib” as a word for a new way of symbolizing the whole living human being.

We may think of the whole human that is “Leib” as a hierarchically structured aggregate of wills to power. It is a name for the visible individual that encompasses all “biological” and “cultural,” “bodily,” and “spiritual,” as well as all aspects of the old “soul.” “Leib” then is a term in a sign-language which is by no means a merely biological metaphor. “Leib” is a perspectival, inner, as well as outer, multiplicity which functions as a symbol for a new way of interpreting natural processes; it is itself such a natural process of

aggregation and disaggregation of wills to power. This process includes as an essential part dying; but nothing is thereby said about death nor about any after-death state. As such it seems very much inspired by the teaching of Epicurus. Rather than introducing a new word into the English language, I shall continue to use the word *body* to refer both to the human totality as well as to a part of this totality, the so-called corpse-in-anticipation. In the latter case, I shall place quotation marks around “*body*.”

Let us now examine some statements about the *body* as the human totality:

Everything that enters consciousness as a *unity* is already enormously complicated: we have always only a semblance of unity. The phenomenon of the *body* is the richer clearer more grasp able phenomenon: methodologically one should begin with it, without saying anything about its ultimate significance.<sup>34</sup>

It may well be that Nietzsche was led to this starting point by his many long and debilitating illnesses. These suggested to him the perspective of the body as a way of conceiving the whole of living processes. Thus, Nietzsche's history of personal suffering has become fruitful and the chaos of a human catastrophe has born fruit in the designing of modes of life for a new age. His experience of helpless exposure to painful episodes, however, always again gave way to new periods of health and well being, coming as if by a miracle. The effort to understand these sufferings in which conscious willing and doing, indeed, all rational ego functions were placed into the position of impotent observers, then suggested the possibility of using the "guiding thread of the body" as the trajectory for at least envisaging a convalescence toward the great health.

Conscious ego functions revealed themselves as mere instruments of incomprehensible processes in the face of which all talk of "doing" and "willing" was sheer presumptuousness. Both falling ill as well as getting healthy again seemed entirely outside any in-

dividual ego's power. They were, to use a felicitous Stoic term, not "up to us." This in turn appeared as a fitting symbol for the whole of human existence, and especially for the sad fact that the greatest human successes, the most magnificent examples of humans, always ended in failure. High and low, winners and losers, we all come and go. But the use of the instruments of the impotent observer also seemed to promise the creation of a future higher body, a spirit body. Painful as the experience of the present imperfect body may be, it nevertheless inspired admiration:

The body is most astonishing: one cannot finish marveling at how the human body has become possible; how such an enormous collection of living beings can live as a unified totality, how it can grow and persist for a while in time—and all of this happens evidently not by any conscious agency.<sup>35</sup>

It can be seen how such a perspective would suggest the impor-

tance of the science of physiology and how the ancient notion of the philosopher as doctor, would again become significant. Here, too, Nietzsche seems to have been inspired by Epicurus as well as by Hippocrates. But the “guiding thread of the body” also has important implications for theorizing the body politic:

The magnificent connection of the most manifold lives, the outer and inner ordered sequence of higher and lower activities, the thousand fold forms of obedience, which is definitely not a blind, far less a mechanical obedience, but a choosing, intelligent, considerate, and even resisting obedience—this whole phenomenon body is, when measured by any intellectual standard, as far superior to our consciousness, our mind, our conscious thinking, feeling and willing, as is algebra to the multiplication table.<sup>36</sup>

It is evident from the above how taking the living body thus conceived as a model for the creation of a future body politic

would imply perspectives that are profoundly critical of all actually existing political forms. Thus, the ruler-ruled structure, the “Herrschaftsgebilde.” seen here, certainly does not fit any existing political order, nor does it fit any dream of any “communist” utopia of a classless society without rulers. Rulers in the body are not .exploiting lords, nor are the ruled oppressed slaves. The entire vocabulary of class rule may very well be appropriate for describing existing political structures, but it does not at all fit the body as so conceived. The “rank order” in the body is not the same as the class order of existing states. Hence one cannot draw from Nietzsche’s perspective a justification for future forms of oppressive class rule. Nor can Nietzsche be invoked as the great hope of present ruling classes against Marxist revolutionaries, nor can he easily be invoked by such revolutionaries. What we know about forms of obedience in the body—choosing, intelligent, considerate, and resisting—simply does not exist anywhere in the modern political world, neither in the coerced forms of self-oppression of the modern armies of workers, nor in the form of highly paid services

of managers who are “voluntary” workaholic slaves, nor yet in the world of the owners of the industrial apparatuses governed by empty rituals and stupid concerns, as well as being at the furthest remove from any heroic virtue.

The future of the developed world may well see vast-scale illnesses and mass break-downs in health, at least partially brought about by the operational mode of technological societies. Hence the “tempter and attempting” perspective offered by Nietzsche of focusing on the body, may provide a guiding thread for finding our way through the long twilight of nihilism and the illnesses associated with it. At the very least it would require of the free spirits that engage in self-cultivation to listen to their bodies and their “soul” as part of their bodies, and to see themselves as temporary links in a long chain of development, in an experiment, that by itself aims to reach a higher species than the human.” A human being is not only an individual but the totality of the organic in one definitive direction. That it exists proves that a species of interpretation—always evolving—has already existed, that the system of

interpretation has not changed.”<sup>37</sup> By listening to themselves and engaging in study and care of the body, that is of all of their parts, free spirits might then find ways of life in the midst of nihilistic disaggregation that preserve and increase health and strength.

However, one should not think of such body work as merely a faddish preoccupation with shaping beautiful appearances. It should be recalled that body refers to the human totality that includes soul, mind, spirit, and whatever other parts someone might choose to have. It should also be recalled that Nietzsche’s perspective is an “attempt and a temptation” and not a doctrine to be held dogmatically. In accordance with this perspective one might then reason as follows: I “am” at present both a war and a peace, a great reason, a plurality with one sense, a herd and a shepherd. And the name for the totality of these manifestations is body. Soul is merely the name of something about my body, and my little reason, that is, my I and my spirit are merely tools and playthings of my “self.” The body is governed by an overall intentionality, a “self,” which is a powerful commander and unknown sage. It

dwells in the body, it is the body. The body and its great reason does not merely say “I,” it does “I.” Thought and reason, as traditionally conceived, are deceptive and hide the fact that they are at all times under the control of something larger and more powerful. This illusion is created by the fact that the “selves” of many bodies are in a downward intention; they wish to go under because they believe they lack the ability to “create beyond themselves.” Hence they despise life and the body and are angry at life. Their cunning gaze hides an “unknown envy” that seeks revenge against life.<sup>38</sup>

It seems evident from such a vision that everything about me is given to me, since I did not create, nor ever govern the entity called “my” body. But my “self” has the ability to create beyond itself, unless my “unknown envy” denies this ability. The ability to create beyond itself, when untrammelled, gives birth to master moralities, that is, conceptual game plans for overpowering resistances to creation. When envy denies this ability partially, the creative energies of the self turn inward in self-denial and self-destruction. Now Nietzsche suggests that the modern soul is a mul-

tiplicity containing both creative and destructive tendencies, being the historical product of the actions of both master and slave moralities. Modern selves are in schizoid divisions between life-affirmation and death-wishes, between ascendant creation and decadent self-destruction. Late Christian decadents, of which Nietzsche was one, thus contain double and contradictory lines of willing.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, this schizoid self-division resides in us as part of an acquired “second” nature that cannot be removed, as has been stated above. The soul has a history, in which an irrecoverable and mostly unknowable “primary” nature manifests itself as shaped by an historical succession of accretions of previous “second” natures. Closed toward the past but open toward the future, all human willing has the potential of infinite creativity as “man is the yet undetermined animal.”<sup>40</sup> We must start from the recognition that moderns are composites containing elements of both master and slave ancestors. We are storage houses for the accumulated wisdom of our ancestors living in and through us, including the “slave” inheri-

tance. From slave morality we derive a much greater intelligence and cunning, cleverness, emotional refinement, and general depth of soul than the ancient subjects of master morality ever had.

Nietzsche insists on the historically established total victory of slave morality in European culture. Slave morality, including its source in self-destructive willings, has been so successful worldwide that it now threatens the very possibility of a human future. The arising of technologies that are both creative and destructive, powerfully reinforces the schizoid self-divisions and pushes human willing into an unconscious race of a power wills toward self-extinction. What Nietzsche proposes is the creation of a new secondary nature that replaces and overcomes that which we now believe to be our second nature but which is merely the latest stage and top layer of our primary nature.<sup>41</sup> Such willing forward would use the self-destructive tendencies of slavishness to abolish themselves while retaining the positive elements for new cultural creation. This process of self-transformation must use the ego-instruments developed by the slavish self, such as intro-section,

self-criticism, rational linear, as well as dialectical thinking, deception, resentment, irony, and “unknown envy,” that is, all the “negative” qualities of slaves.

Yet these things are much easier said and seen than done, for the modern tyrannical slave ego stubbornly believes that it is in charge and refuses to acknowledge its status as a mere instrument of the “great reason” that is the body. The defining characteristic of the slave’s self is to be divided against itself in self-love and self-hatred. It is a self in whom death-instinct and life-instinct are combined in the same movement of the spirit. Some further aspects of this division are the mixtures of honesty with dishonesty, of anxiety with repressed rage, innocent envy and “guilty” guilt, and of course hypocrisy, the favorite virtue of all kinds of “morality screamers,” who so frequently become prominent in the political world. On the positive side of this division we might list industriousness, attention to details, perseverance and great intelligence without much understanding, versatility, motleyness, and jarring disharmonies of thoughts, feelings, and bodily awareness.

Any modern soul care and self-fashioning must begin from a recognition of the double-bind in which the modern spirit is caught: in the spirit a great longing is combined with a great contempt, and every effort of (self) creation is also an effort of (self) destruction. When the ego says “I,” but the body does “I,” and when such doing is also an undoing, then we face a complex of “personality” in which ego and self are so intertwined that an ego illusion, originally produced by the self, is maintained by the ego as “truth” even against the continuous production of other, perhaps more fruitful illusions. The ego has hardened into a complex of fixed modes of thinking, feeling, and doing that merely appear to itself as a form of autonomy, because they are automatisms. Such automatisms are maintained by the very energy of creation/destruction siphoned off from the body, but with the continuous repression of the awareness of destruction into the unconscious, into “unknown envy.” The self has created for itself an ego and has endowed it with tyrannical power that can be maintained only by lack of awareness of what it is doing. The Socratic

counter-tyranny of reason has quite simply become the tyranny of “reason.”<sup>42</sup> The pull on the energy of the instinctual economy of the body must be increased, so as to maintain the double labor of projection and repression. This very bad use of always limited energy then also includes the typical deformations of personality, as given in intellectual overdevelopment, combined with emotional underdevelopment, both housed in a sickly “body.” Truly a “bundle of wild snakes and a heap of diseases.” An “ideal” decadent would thus be someone who has fixed, dogmatic principles, a sharp and cunning intellect, primitive emotions, and a neglected, machine-like body. Such a person with “firm character” and an indomitable “free will” would seem to be a modern norm. But in reality such a person does not think, it thinks in him, nor does he feel, but it feels, and the whole is done with a phenomenal lack of self-awareness. Everything is automatic, and willing is locked into a series of such automatisms. In such a condition, human beings do not live, they are being lived, and the world is perceived in a distorted manner by which the judgments of others about oneself are

taken as one's own judgments. The individual lives in the general "one-does-one-does-not," always anxiously intending the other but always serving the ego in a narrow way, that both inhibits awareness of one's true interests and maintains the "selfishness" of the ego. Pity in such a state comes to be seen as altruism which in general then is merely a form of underhanded egoism. Thinking only of himself, an individual in this condition merely implements a general play of masks automatically prepared for him.

The ego complex of automatic thinking, automatic low feeling and awkward moving, the whole called free will, is so encrusted in the self that ego becomes the self's illusion of mastery. Awareness of the whole is maintained only dimly in the unconscious. The inversion of the body/self-ego relation as one of ruler-ruled into its opposite, is maintained in the false consciousness where the ego thinks it is the ruler and the self and the body are being ruled. The whole, I suggest, should be termed "personality" with the underlying self-structure of the body being the "essence" of a human being.

## **Personality versus Essence**

Personality and essence are in perpetual conflict, whereby personality constantly wins pyrrhic victories over essence. The first step in a creative self-transformation would hence have to be the becoming aware both of one's personality and one's own essence and their mutually destructive war and their co-dependency. This war is being fought by means of the mechanisms of anxiety and guilt. Both of these destructive emotions, already consuming more energy than is required for living, then even take more energy to maintain the thought structures that are needed by ego to feed anxiety and guilt. If we think of anxiety as the dread of punishment at an indefinite time in the future, but still in this life, we may think of guilt as the dread of punishment in the life beyond. into which one may enter at any moment. The dogmatic metaphysical systems that have been erected so as to anchor anxiety and guilt in some

absolutism “beyond” are established and maintained with an enormous expenditure of psychic and political energy robbed from the self’s reservoir of energy left for self-awareness.

Nietzsche posits the virtue of honesty, a further development of Christian examination of the Christian examination of conscience, as the virtue of access to unraveling the nefarious personality structures of the modern self.<sup>43</sup> But how can someone who is honestly dishonest or dishonestly honest ever achieve that moment of impartial self-awareness in which it becomes absolutely clear what is going on? Even if attained in flashes of insight in moments of great danger or in periods of great threats to survival, as in illness, how can this flash of awareness be maintained and structured into a continuous presence of mind to oneself? A continuous act of mental attention to oneself that does *not* judge and does *not* condemn? How is such self-remembering to be achieved? For changes can only be made after a sufficient time of self-awareness, whereby one’s completely particular ego-self configuration becomes known. What can be done and what should be done only reveal

themselves at the point of insight into one's own particular deformation and pathology.

Honesty would have to be slowly acquired in a cultivation of the virtue of sound mindedness, Nietzsche's virtue of virtues, "Besonnenheit," in long periods of solitude, self-observation, the remembering of dreams and daily lapses, and the discernment of patterns in the automatically proceeding functions of thinking, feeling, and doing.<sup>44</sup> And most importantly, an honest showing of oneself in therapeutic conversations to a significant other, a dropping of the strong tendency to hide oneself. Only this way can one's "honesty" be made to remain honest, as it were.

In ancient philosophic schools, such as Epicurus' garden, or the Academy, or later in Christian monasticism, such self-observation could be felicitously combined with the revelation of oneself to an other in some confessional structure. Self-revelation could be practiced without anxiety or the constant desire to please—one was among friends, after all—honesty with others might be forcefully encouraged and dishonesty in self-revelation punished. One would

enter within such a confessional structure for a while into a disciple-master relationship in which the “master” is trusted to “know” more than the disciple; at least he sees what the disciple cannot see. Such loyal following by the disciple of a master would have to last for as long a time as the disciple needed to achieve a sufficient degree of sustained self-honesty and impartial self-awareness. Only at this point could the inner tyranny of the various automatisms of personality begin to be broken and the labor of reassembling the self-ego begun. Throughout all of this the disciple had to continuously subordinate his ego to the ego of the master and to “present his soul” as well as his mental attention to him or her.<sup>45</sup>

The practices of re-education in ancient schools most likely also included a re-education of the “body.” Since the energy for the tyranny of inner automatisms is always taken from the body, these automatisms are also established in the body in patterns of automatic movements and postures. These bodily automatisms would reinforce the ego-self automatisms in such a way that a thought structure would be borne by a conflictual emotional structure, in

turn grounded in physical mechanisms. In principle the work of dissolution of these automatisms could start either at the top end, the thought-structure, at the middle, in the emotions of the spirit, or at the bottom, in the physical habits; or it could begin by working simultaneously on all three levels. The aim would be the breaking of all automatisms of associations between thoughts, feelings, and postures. But in any case, these automatisms always also had to be destroyed in the “body.” We do not have sufficient evidence regarding the kinds of bodywork employed in ancient schools, but they likely included breathing exercises, re-educative gymnastics, and, in general, forms of body work similar to the martial arts or to yoga. Which kind of bodywork would be required would naturally depend on the specific deformation in question and on the type of self to be produced by philosophical reeducation, which was either contemplative or active. But in all cases the spurious rhythms of automatic existence would cede to rhythms of a deeper, more genuine existence.<sup>46</sup>

Nietzsche did not experience such a school, he never even

found an appropriate setting, nor did he ever, as far as I know, found such a school. But he certainly did intend to create such an enterprise out of some of his friendships. But he never succeeded. He was all alone and he had to do it all by himself. And it is amazing, given this paucity of opportunities, how far he actually got. Indeed, the paucity of experience in this regard may even have inspired him to conceive of new modes of self-cultivation and a new form of friendship related to self-cultivation. His utterly solitary existence thus led him to conceive of thoughts and practices that would be required for a reconfiguration of the modern soul.

Nietzsche remained interested in founding a philosophical school à la Plato and Epicurus from the beginning of his career as a philosophical writer to the very end when he was in despair about his inability ever to succeed in such an enterprise. His belief in the need for such an institution arose out of his analysis of the role of the philosopher in modern society in his essay on Schopenhauer as well as his essay on the *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of Greeks*. These continued the intellectual trajectory of his earlier essay on

History. The main terms of this analysis are first his belief that modern society is in a state of a profound spiritual malaise. This belief already set him very much at odds with most of his contemporaries who seemed to be very optimistic about the *progress* of modern societies. This optimism was nourished in Germany by the nationalistic success in founding the empire of the German Reich. For a thinker to openly declare and see the seamy underside of such an “obvious success” would make this thinker very untimely and solitary indeed.

Even more untimely would then be the notion inspired by the example of ancient philosophers who aimed to become orderers of their culture, that the cure for the modern malaise could be given by philosophy. Ancient philosophers were able to do this because, it will be recalled, they united the two sides of being a philosopher, they had the courage to live their visions and thus they were philosophers for themselves. And they were philosophers as well for others, because their cultures were solid enough to seek guidance from men recognized to be philosophers. In the cases of Plato and

Epicurus, and already before in the case of Pythagoras, the “furor philosophicus” had to find the detour to the “furor politicus” via the founding of schools.<sup>47</sup>

Everything about modern culture seemed to militate against such a role for a philosopher to be a physician of culture. The simple fact was that no one would seek a cure from any physician if he did not believe himself to be ill. The leading bearers of culture in the nineteenth century, in Germany as well as in France and England, simply assumed that everything was in the best possible order, as evidenced by scientific progress, the successful building of nations, as most became carried away by nationalistic enthusiasm, as well as by the expansion of European empires. Everything thus seemed to be well-ordered by the infinite wisdom and providence of the Christian god. Where then could someone turn who believed himself to be destined to the high task of the philosopher and who had the courage to live a seemingly “true” pessimistic vision amidst a universal self-glorifying optimism?

Every alliance with the ‘educated’ is to be rejected. There is the greatest enemy, because he hinders the work of the physician and wants to lie away the disease. Now one can only place hope in the classes of the lower, uneducated humans. Those human that still know what is misery will also feel what wisdom can be for them. The greatest danger is when the uneducated classes become infected with the yeast of present education.<sup>48</sup>

Nietzsche was unable to find access to the lower classes in his life-time. He did find such access posthumously, however. He was aware of the first as a fact and later the second as a possibility. His insight into his own pathologies, both spiritual and physical, and his understanding of these as a sign of the times, then made his desire to find an outlet for his “*furor philosophicus*” in a school of like-minded friends all the more urgent. His extreme sensitivity and emotional fragility prevented him, for example, from imitating the revolutionary ways of the youthful Wagner and of figures such

as Marx.

We know from Nietzsche's biography that he attempted unsuccessfully to establish himself as a university philosopher after the failure of his career as a philologist. And a good thing it probably was, for it is hard to see how he could have honestly lived as a professor of philosophy given his views on university philosophers in the Germany of his time. These were by and large men, with some exceptions such as his friends Deussen, Overbeck, Burckhardt, and Rohde, who were unable to live their vision and who engaged in an empty propositionalism. They were never philosophers for themselves, but were employees of the state. The leaders of the state in turn used them as propaganda tools and as icons to manifest a veneer of culture. Eagerly intent on advancing their careers as functionaries, they were constantly engaged in refuting the opinions of their academic rivals and establishing the "truth" of their own. Their entire world seemed to be governed by envy and jealous resentment which were vented in doxographical language games. At best, university philosophers would attempt to live up to the image

of also being scientists, because they sensed the contempt that they received from colleagues that were genuine scientists. Thus, their activities were far removed from the ways of life and action of their ancient predecessors, with whom they only shared the name philosopher. Few had the idea that, for example, an ancient Stoic would, to be sure, wish to refute an Epicurean theoretically and vice versa, but the main proof of either Stoicism or Epicureanism was seen to be in living as a Stoic or Epicurean. Hence Nietzsche writes: “The only critique of a philosopher which is possible and which also proves something—namely to try and see if one could actively live in accordance with it, has never been taught in universities, but always only the critique of words by words.”<sup>49</sup>

Nietzsche does allow that two generations before his time, university philosophers such as Kant and Hegel had remained aware of the ancient calling of the philosopher. They had to some extent managed to live philosophically within the confines of a university career and to use their positions to spread their practical wisdom of a way of life. But Nietzsche’s own time, coming after the royal ex-

ample given by Schopenhauer who, already no longer fit into academic life, proved very bleak indeed in terms of philosophy as a way of life.

### **An Epicurean Academy**

Given these conditions as seen by Nietzsche, it is hence not surprising that he would attempt to turn some of his friendships into the nucleus of a school in the sense of either the Platonic Academy or Epicurus' garden. Indeed, I shall argue that Nietzsche's projected "school" is an attempt to merge the political intentions of the Academy with the practical insight, the scientific bent and the ascetic practices of the Garden philosophy. It is or would (will?) be an Epicurean academy which counsels withdrawal from the actual political life of the day, but only for a limited time and only until healing political action would become again possible at the end of the nightmare of nihilism.

Nietzsche's decision to remain in university teaching, even to the point where his professional activities became life threatening to his fragile nature, seem to have been motivated primarily by pecuniary and economic considerations. Only secondarily was it a decision meant to live his philosophical vision and teach it to students who chanced into his lectures and seminars. But from the very beginning of his academic career, he attempted to entice some of the friends from his youth and his student years to join him in forming a "school."

In writing to Erwin Rohde, a letter dated in Basel in December of 1870, he is responding to Rohde's letter of December 11th, in particular to Rohde's recalling of discussions they had had in the past concerning the founding of a philosophical academy. He is suggesting to Rohde to stick it out a few more years in university teaching, which is to be considered a time of learning through suffering, as a preparation for the true teaching which he considers to be his calling. He refers to Schopenhauer's critique of university wisdom as being accurate, in that nothing really revolutionary

could be expected of the university which is a place that renders a radical pursuit of truth impossible. Only by “being true” could one become “true teachers,” something to which the academic atmosphere is inimical. “Let us therefore throw off this yoke. . .and then we create a new Greek academy to which Romundt (another friend) will certainly belong.” He then suggests a complete break with traditional philology by writing a great *adhortatio* addressed to all “not yet suffocated nature.” Even if they should attract only a few followers, they would certainly be able to reach a small island on which they would no longer need to plug their ears with wax. “We are then our mutual teachers, our books are our fishing rods, so as to win others for our convent-like artistic fraternity. We live, work, and enjoy for one another—perhaps this is the only way in which we are meant to work for the whole.” He then suggests to Rohde to use every not illegal means for the attainment of financial independence, such as restricting expenditures, demanding high honoraria for their books, and playing the lottery. “Should we not be able to create a new form of the academy and should I not’ with

most yearning strength draw forth into life the most single figure, “as Faust says of Helen, Our philosophical school is certainly not an inspired caprice—does not our misery compel us onto this path?”<sup>50</sup> Alas, Nietzsche never reached these “blessed isles,” except later in Zarathustra’s vision. His very hard fate prevented him from founding what appears to describe both the original Platonic Academy and the garden of Epicurus, except posthumously.

Wishing to imitate the ancient philosophers as “masters of truth” and as “tyrants of the spirit,” he aimed like them to become a philosophical legislator and founder of states. Neither his times nor his circumstances were propitious to such a project. Thus he writes in an aphorism entitled “The tyrant of the spirit,” Parmenides also gave laws, probably also Pythagoras and Empedocles; Anaximander founded a city. Plato was the incarnate desire to become the highest philosophical legislator and founder of states.”<sup>51</sup> But we may conjecture that it was more than merely his untimeliness and his pecuniary circumstances that prevented him from living up to these ideals in his own lifetime. It was surely also

his extreme sensitivity and the weakness induced by that half of his nature which he attributed to the inheritance of his father. It was his already having “died as his father but still living and becoming old as his mother,” as he speculated later in his life that made him an expert in questions of decadence and convalescence. This enabled him to “look to healthier concepts and values from the optic of the ill, and then again in reverse to look down from the fullness and self-assurance of a rich life into the secret labor of the instinct of decadence.”<sup>52</sup>

In line with his general understanding of philosophy as a search for health, very much of his thinking was then devoted to an analysis of his disease, as in this lay the source of his insight. But he began to understand his weakness as well as that of his father, as a consequence of his Christian cultural conditioning. The origin of this cultural conditioning in turn lay for him in the corruption wrought upon Plato by Socrates and the dialectical disease with which he had infected him, for Plato founded Platonism and hence “Christianity, the Platonism for the masses.” Nietzsche saw Socra-

tism then lodged in his own second nature, in his *praeparatio evangelica* and more concretely in his preparation from early youth on to become, like his father, a minister of the Lutheran church. His disease came to be seen, hence, more than a merely personal pathology, but as a part of the general movement of Christian culture into nihilism.

But it is evident from what has been said above that Nietzsche's disease as well as the cultural condition of nihilism are conditions where weakness and decadence hide a subterranean preparation for convalescence toward "the great health." They are morally and existentially ambiguous as the state of neutrality between the full outbreak of illness and the movement toward a second health. They are in Nietzsche's own metaphor, illnesses in the sense in which pregnancy is an illness. Nietzsche, in his very strong and "feminine" manliness then came to see his own disease, his physiologically manifest decadence and "bad conscience" as diseases of his Christian slave's self in the manner in which pregnancy is a disease.<sup>53</sup> He used the Platonic metaphor of spiritual

pregnancy to define his own,

character of the contemplative which is related to the feminine character: these are the masculine mothers. These “mothers” say to themselves that their ideal selfishness puts them in a condition that is the “most sacred” in which one can say to oneself that it is something greater than we are that grows here, and be that which is expected, a thought, a deed—we have no other relationship to all essential accomplishing than that of pregnancy, and we should let pass with the wind all presumptuous talk of “willing” and “creating.”<sup>54</sup>

Nietzsche’s dual ancestry as a decadent decline, from his father, and a new beginning strength and health, from his mother, then led him to interpret his suffering existence as the condition for his future and posthumous greatness. The weak and decadent father in him was unable, however, to engage in the heroically manly

activity of founding a philosophical academy. In this, Plato, despite his corruption by the decadent Socrates, had admirably succeeded. Indeed, through founding the Academy, Plato had also succeeded in imposing his “tyrannical” founding will on two thousand years of Christian cultural development. Now Nietzsche, in his desire to imitate and emulate his great friend-enemy, Plato, is as melancholy and dejected as he believed Plato to be for merely founding a school and not an actual state in his lifetime. “Plato, the incarnate desire to become the highest legislator and founder of states, seems to have suffered terribly from the lack of thus fulfilling his essential nature, and his soul became full of the blackest gall toward the end of his life.”<sup>55</sup>

Nietzsche’s inability to even do as much as Plato, namely to found an academy in his life time, then led him not only to falsify the image of Plato but also to attribute the supposed decadence of Plato to the nefarious effects of a decadent Socrates whose image is equally falsified. “It is an idle question if Plato, had he remained free of the Socratic bewitchment, would not have found an even

higher type of the philosopher which has been lost to us forever.”<sup>56</sup>

But it is reasonable to suppose that these strictures do not fit Socrates and Plato, but very much fit as a description of Nietzsche’s decadent side. The decadent Socratism established in him was so deeply rooted that he only could foresee the founding of a “school” or “schools” in his near posthumous future, and to merely hope for the founding of a new order of human culture in his far distant posthumous existence. It is a measure of his heroic endurance that he did not become as full of black bile as he believed Plato to have become for his lesser failure. But his extreme solitude certainly led him to judge his condition with a profound, perhaps exaggerated perceptiveness, and to regret very much his inability to found an academy.

In various personal communications with his friends and his family he expressed his sorrow and his regrets for his solitude and his own inability to gather around himself a permanent circle of like-minded seekers of truth. But like everything about the phenomenon Nietzsche, his loneliness also is thoroughly ambiguous: it

is both the mother of his profoundest insights as well as of his enormous suffering. Thus he wrote to his friend Malwida von Meysenburg:

I would imagine a disciple of mine to be a human being who would swear to me an unconditional vow—and for that there would be needed a long probationary period with difficult trials. For the rest I can bear solitude, while every effort to endure the company of others during the last few years has made me sick.<sup>57</sup>

What seems to be envisaged here is something like a secular convent with Nietzsche as Abbott. This is, indeed, how the friendship with Paul Ree and Lou Salome, which he enjoyed for a few brief months—perhaps the only time in which he came close to realizing his dream—was seen by all three, at least for while. With this intention he wrote to Lou Salome:

I wish very much to be allowed to be your teacher. Finally, to tell the whole truth: I now search for human beings who could be my heirs; I carry something around with me, which cannot at all be read in my books—and for that I search the most beautiful and fertile soil. See my selfishness.<sup>58</sup>

For a while all three friends dreamt of a future state for which they would design the outlines of a new convent with Nietzsche as *pontifex maximus*, since “... already now he could consider himself as the head of an invisible church.”<sup>59</sup> The breakdown of this friendship was then experienced as one of the most disappointing episodes in a life rich in disappointments.

He confessed to his friend Overbeck that in the stillness of his heart he had always assumed that he would “receive vows of friendship from many persons and that [he] had something to found and organize.” But as time passed and his loneliness deepened, he became more and more resigned to having to live and

work entirely for his posthumous existence. Responding to his sister whose incomprehension, lack of fellow feeling, and downright hostility he keenly sensed but always forgave, he wrote in August of 1885:

That I now am isolated in my 41st year, that I have no disciple, and that I sense it daily that I am now in my period of greatest strength so as to engage in the greatest school—activity as a philosopher—put that before your soul. Out with the books from this corner!! They are my fishing rods, if they do not catch me any humans, they have no sense.<sup>60</sup>

One of the most interesting things about the above cited passage is Nietzsche's devaluation of writing as a philosophical activity and its subordination to oral communication. It shows that he always remained loyal to his vision of the philosopher as shaped by his studies of the ancients

The poignancy of his suffering linked to his vision of philoso-

phy, however, reached its height in the sketch of a letter to Overbeck from the beginning of January of 1886:

As far as my situation is concerned, I can no longer recognize anyone as my friend who does not understand the enormous misery of this situation. That a human being who is born for the deepest and most comprehensive effectiveness, should have to spend his best years in such an infertile desert; that a thinker like me, who can never place his best into books but always only in select souls, should be reduced to make ‘literature’ with his half-blind and aching eyes—it is all so crazy; so hard.<sup>61</sup>

Dionysus seems to have been very cruel, indeed, to this, his last disciple! If there are higher powers that decide about our fate, then Nietzsche’s life seems to indicate a definite wish by these powers to shape the human future via his tempting writings. At least, this is how he gradually came to see it.

## **A Lived Vision**

We are now in the position to deal directly with the paradox of a philosophical writer who has written a whole lot, but who also has said that “the concept of ‘philosopher’ should not be narrowed to that philosopher who writes books—or even presents his philosophy in books!”<sup>62</sup> In the above I have tried to show how Nietzsche was led to this seeming contradiction by the circumstances of his life. It can truly be said that in his case, the personal is both the philosophical and the political. Let me now briefly indicate how I believe that the paradox may be resolved.

First, one has to accept that Nietzsche’s “philosophy” is neither in his philosophical books nor in his extensive notebooks, and certainly not in the supposed philosophical main “opus,” cobbled together by his sister with very dubious editorial methods. His “philosophy” cannot be in any of these, because from his writings it is

abundantly clear that a philosophy is an existential aspect of the “being” of a philosopher. It is something that is lived and must express itself in a philosopher’s acting, speaking, and writing. Given the availability of new forms of communication today that were unknown to Nietzsche himself, such as film, it would be reasonable to suppose that a philosopher might in the future avail her/himself of these new media.

Second, following Nietzsche’s own characterization, his writings are attempts to create new kinds of philosophers in the future. These do not yet exist and cannot yet exist, or if they arise, they would remain ineffective, if we believe that his estimations of the approximate duration of the period of nihilism are correct. We have by no means traversed the period of intense cultural conflicts that he predicted, and humanity is not unified into a human people. Indeed, the very survival of the human species appears to be subject to serious doubt. We have by no means succeeded in establishing a healing and life-affirming culture in any part of the planet, far less in the planet as a whole. Rather, we live in societies and are

subjects of cultures that are inimical to life. We have not become responsible managers of planetary resources nor responsible governors of the human future, if, that is, we have a future.

Third, Nietzsche considered his writings fishing rods for the catching of certain types of human beings. Now the first four generations of his “Wirkungsgeschichte” show that these fishing rods have caught a lot of monsters from the deep and dirty waters of the human soul. Many of the fish that might have been meant to be caught have refused to be drawn onto land. The types of human beings he meant to catch are the “free spirits” of the future. Free spirits are not identical with free thinkers and may not yet exist. They are human beings who have experienced more or less painful separations from their established social and cultural environments. They are misfits, “who transpose their condition into the most spiritual form and distance—just this art of transfiguration is philosophy.” Such a spirit (someone like Nietzsche) is necessarily thrown into solitude by a,

decisive experience of a great loosening [a spirit] who has before been an all the more bound spirit. ... This great loosening comes for such a bound spirit like an earthquake: the young soul is all of a sudden shaken loose, torn away from—it does not understand what is happening. A drive, an urge rules and becomes its master like a commander; a will and a desire awakens to leave—anywhere—at all costs, a strong and dangerous curiosity for an undiscovered world in flames all of its senses.<sup>63</sup>

It is for such persons, women and men, who may come from any cultural context, any people, any nation, any class, and any religious background that Nietzsche has written his “tempting” and “fishing” books. Such free spirits in preparation would be able to use Nietzsche’s writings to continue on their paths of liberation and to give direction to their urge to escape. They would find in Nietzsche’s texts the materials with which to shape and to transform themselves, if not into philosophers, then at least into the

stage preparatory to becoming philosophers, namely free spirits. They would recognize their various enslavements on the basis of Nietzsche's insight into *his* enslavement and then would use his deconstructive teaching to free the autonomous and self-possessed human beings hidden under their various layers of slavish selves. They would definitely not engage in any dogmatic or ideological imitation, since this would go counter to such a teaching, which does not aim merely to transmit "doctrines." The rhetorical structure of especially his aphoristic writings is designed in such a way as to render impossible their systematization. While offering a "tempting," synoptic perspective, they force readers to work hard to understand this perspective, that is, they force readers to think for themselves. The inducing of thinking then necessarily provokes readers into self-change (see the chapter on writing below). Readers would be obliged to "search for themselves," to find the ways out of their own labyrinths of existence. Discovery of Nietzsche's "doctrines" is almost incidental to finding access to their own deep structures based on the unknown work of their body.

Fourth, we thus begin to understand Nietzsche's decision to devote almost the whole of the year 1886 to re-edit his previous books, beginning with the *Birth of Tragedy*, and to endow them with retrospective prefaces. These prefaces order the books along the lines of Nietzsche's personal quest for finding free spirits, to provoke their arising and to give them the means to shape themselves. 1886 seems to be the year in which he became reconciled to the irredeemability of his solitude and the possibility that he would be understood and appreciated only by his posterity. Placing his hopes for his philosophical legacy only in his books—that is, in instruments of philosophy, not philosophy itself—he hoped that they would lead to the creation of a “school,” or rather “schools” in his future existence. The combative Nietzschean “academies” would be constituted by the free spirits that are inspired by Nietzsche's teaching to engage in self-shaping and to become the artists of their own lives, so as to prepare the arising of a new humanity after the passing of the epoch of nihilism.<sup>64</sup>

We thus also understand his seemingly odd self-portrayal as a

posthumous being: He is, like Machiavelli, a philosophical captain without an army, obliged to recruit by means of books. “Only the day after tomorrow belongs to me. Some are born posthumously.”<sup>65</sup> In this spirit he clearly separated himself from his books of which he expected that they would be understood only at some indefinite future point in time: “I am one thing. My writings are another. Ultimately one cannot extract by listening from anything, including books, more than one already knows. For what one has no access from his experience, for that one also has no ears.”<sup>66</sup> Notice the emphasis of reading with the ears!

Nietzsche’s writings thus reflect the art of a posthumous human being who has created out of the sufferings of his solitudes new possibilities of living for even remote spiritual descendants. He realized that in his personal life time he would never achieve the stage at which one could admire him as the philosophical physician who had lived up to the task of healing himself. His quest for finding the key to a curative gate out of his own condition, however, led him to find—at the expense of his own immense suf-

fering—a master key for unlocking the gates to the possible health of his free spirited descendants. He recognized that his illness was largely due to his inability to become a philosopher in the high sense of the ancients, but he then used his illness to devise ways to philosophical self-healing for his free-spirited successors, for he also understood his dis-ease as a focal point of the malaise of his culture.

### Notes

1. *BGE* 23; *KSA* 5, 39.

2. My arguments are based primarily on close readings of *Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Joyful Science* and the much-neglected *Dawn of Day*. This essay attempts to develop a vision of an art of living derived from Nietzsche's teachings; while it aims to give a faithful and scholarly interpretation of Nietzsche,

it also necessarily goes beyond the limits of scholarship. There are two reasons for this transgression of scholarly limits: first the art of living cannot have any general rules. There are as many arts of living as there are individuals who attempt to lead the examined life. If such an attempt is informed by a “model” one becomes an epigone and not an individual

Second, Nietzsche bids his “friends” “to loose him and to find themselves: Only when you have all denied me, will I return to you.” *EH* Preface 4; *KSA* 6, 261. The following arguments are hence very much my own readings of the phenomenon “Nietzsche.”

3. The idea of a “free will,” as well as its opposite, may seem problematical in regard to Nietzsche, since he denies both notions as being a part of the Christian metaphysics of sin and punishment. His distinction is between weak wills and strong wills, with freedom of the will functioning as a goal for someone striving to strengthen the will. Strength of the will would be the unification of all psychic forces in a line of willing constituted by a (self-) com-

mand and (self-) obedience structure. Such structures may be oriented to "freedom of the will." It would be a "will to free will." A few passages in Nietzsche in which the notion of a will to free will is discussed are: *HH I* Preface 3, 39, 102, 103, 107; *JS* 127, 356; *BGE* 19,188, *KSA* 1; 17, 62-64, 99-100, 103-106; *KSA* 3, 117, 240, *KSA* 5, 31-34, 108-110.

The most cogent discussions I have found in the secondary literature are in John Richardson, *Nietzsche's System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 211-12; and in Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Task* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 52-54.

4. The concept of a *disciplina voluntatis* is mentioned in Nietzsche's 1886 Preface 2 of *HH II*, *KSA* 2, 371. It also finds a cogent discussion in a note from the 1880's, *S* 3, 450; *WP* 132. Also *HH I* Preface 3; *KSA* 2, 17.

5. Carl Fuchs, July 29, 1888; *KSB* 8, 375-76.

6. *KSA* 7, 714-15.

7. *KSA* 7, 701, 723.

8. KSA 7, 721.
9. KSA 8, 527.
10. KSA 8, 506
11. KSA 8, 423.
12. KSA 7, 738.
13. KSA 7, 738
14. KSA 12, 87.
15. *JS* 290; KSA 3, 530-31.
16. *JS* 335; KSA 3, 563-64.
17. *JS* 301; KSA 3, 540.
18. *WP* 796, S 3, 495.
19. *JS* 299; KSA 3, 538.
20. Letter to Lou Salome, August 1882; KSB 6, 247-48. Also *HH* II 2, 9, 11; KSA 2, 545-46; and *BGE* 87; KSA 5, 89.
21. Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 100.
22. *DD* 453; KSA 3, 274.
23. Claus Arthur Scheier. *Ecce Auctor Die Vorreden von 1886*

(Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1940), LXXXII.

24. James Porter. *Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

25. *TSZ* I; KSA 4, 74.

26. *TSZ* I; KSA 4, 74.

27. *HH* I, 57; KSA 2, 76.

28. *HH* I, 40; KSA 2, 64.

29. *HH* II, 350; KSA 2, 702.

30. The references to solitude in Nietzsche are too numerous to be listed in any footnoting. It should be noted, however, that the practice of solitude is for Nietzsche linked to the practice of friendship. Nietzsche felt condemned to solitude and chose it as his “true” home from which he tirelessly sought for friends.

31. My reasoning here is very much based on the first part of *TSZ*, especially I, 1-9, 13-22, KSA 4, 29-58, 69-103. I have benefited considerably from the excellent study of Nietzsche’s psychology by Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul. Reaches of Nietzsche’s Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

1994), as well as by the commentary on *Zarathustra* by Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

32. Nietzsche's great friend-enemy, Plato seems to have been one of the originators of those fictions of the human soul, that have shaped the history of the West and which Nietzsche deconstructs. Plato may be seen as the thinker that deconstructed and replaced earlier fictions that had provided the foundation for the political orders of the archaic period. See Richard B. Onians, *The Origin of European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

33. *BGE* 12; *KSA* 5, 26-27.

34. *WP* 489; *S* 3, 860.

35. Quoted in Heinrich Schipperges, *Am Leitfaden des Leibes. Zur Anthropologik und Therapeutik Friedrich Nietzsches* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1975), 24; *KSA* 11, 576-77.

36. Schipperges, *Am Leitfaden*, 24; *KSA* 11, 577.

37. *WP* 678; *S* 3, 878-79.

38. My reasoning here is based on *TSZ I*, 3, 4; *KSA 4*, 35-41.

39. *BGE 260*, and the whole of the *GM*; *KSA 5*, 208-212.

40. *BGE 62*; *KSA 5*, 81-83.

41. This seems to be one of the key conceptions of Nietzsche's early essay on the *Use and Abuse of History*, especially section 10. In this section the change from one culturally shaped human nature to a new cultural shaping is described as an education in which a "first generation must educate itself against itself, to a new habituation and nature, away from an old and first nature." It is significant that Nietzsche in this section also invokes Plato's re-founding of culture through a "noble lie" cf. also *DD 455*, 534; *KSA 1*, 324-334; 3, 275, 305-6.

42. On the tyranny of reason see *TI* "The problem of Socrates." 9; 10, *KSA 6*, 71-72.

43. On honesty as a fundamental virtue, cultivated into the human soul by the values of Christian slave morality, see *BGE 227*; *KSA 5*, 162-163.

44. On "Besonnenheit," a close cousin to the Socratic *sophro-*

*sune*, see *HH II*, 2, KSA 2, 685.

45. On philosophy as a way of life, the master-disciple relationship and the practice of philosophical schools see Pierre Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*. (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1957); and his *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique ?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

46. The importance of bodywork for Nietzsche is manifest in his life-long practice of hiking in nature and his swimming.

47. *SE* 7; KSA 1, 409.

48. KSA 7, 719; 717-718.

49. *SE* 8; KSA 1, 417.

50. Letter to Rhode, 15 December 1870; KSB 3, 165-167.

51. *HH I*, 261; KSA 2, 215.

52. *EH* "Why I am so wise" 1; KSA 6, 264, 266.

53. *GM II*, 19; KSA 5, 327.

54. *JS* 72; *DD* 552; KSA 3, 430, 322-23.

55. *HH I*, 261; KSA 2, 215.

56. *HH I*, 261; KSA 2, 216.

57. Letter from the first week of June, 1884; KSB 6, 510.
58. Letter of June 26, 1882; KSB 6, 211.
59. Ree to Nietzsche, November 1877 and July 1879; cited in Schipperges, *Am Leitfaden*, 95; Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds. *Nietzsche Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), II, 6/2, 769, 1142.
60. Letter to his sister, 15 August 1885; KSB 7, 82.
61. Sketch of a letter to Overbeck, beginning of January 1886; KSB 7, 136.
62. *BGE* 39; *KSA* 5, 57.
63. *JS* Preface; and *HH I*, Preface 3; *KSA* 3, 349; *KSA* 2, 15-16.
64. The essential role of the retrospective prefaces is discussed in Claus Arthur Scheier, *Ecce Auctor Ecce. Die Vorreden von 1886*. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1990).
65. *AC* Preface; *KSA* 6, 167.
66. *EH* "Why I write such good books;" *KSA* 6, 298, 299, 300.