

¹Zarathustra in Nietzsche's Typology

Yunus Tuncel

In this essay, I present a reading of Zarathustra as a type within the context of Nietzsche's typology which permeates his works from the first to the last; I claim that there is a line of thought in Nietzsche's philosophy, despite the many turning points in it, which pertains to types and which I call typology.¹ This typology culminates in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which is considered a work of typology, for the purpose of this presentation, without disregarding the other ways it has been interpreted. Moreover, typology as a philosophical area of research has not received sufficient attention in Nietzsche interpretations although there are many commentaries on the overman and Zarathustra.

Before presenting Zarathustra as a type, I will briefly discuss the questions of type and typology in Nietzsche, bring up other types from his works and suggest possible ways of reading his typology.

I

Typology is not only a study of types² which embody certain human traits and tendencies, but is also a philosophical framework which shows how such studies can be done, that is, the method

¹ To the extent of my research, the closest German word to typology, "Typenlehre"—which literally translates as the doctrine or teaching of types and which is translated as "typology" by Walter Kaufmann—appears only in one text, namely Aphorism 186 in *Beyond Good and Evil*. There are, however, many other implicit or explicit hints to the study of types throughout Nietzsche's works.

² Characters in literature can be said to have affinity to types since the former too represent certain traits of human existence in context. In this sense, to read Nietzsche's typology along with the literature of his age, especially the authors whom he calls "the psychologist of types" in *Ecce Homo*, would intensify the reading. Persistence of a philosophical project, however, distinguishes philosophical typology from other typologies.

of doing it. The two are interwoven in Nietzsche's thought. One difficulty with the interpretation of Nietzsche's typology lies in bringing the fragments and the hints together into a sensible whole. Nietzsche himself did not write a work of typology nor call any of his works a work of typology, unlike *The Genealogy*, for instance, where the method of genealogy is presented and used. Another difficulty in dealing with typology alone is the two other philosophies in Nietzsche, which are complementary to it and which are often presented as such: namely, genealogy which studies forces and their originary constellations in specific contexts, and symptomatology which reveals the symptoms of an age, a culture, or an individual. Type, force, and symptom are the *units*, or concepts, of each of these philosophies which, in a larger project, must be dealt with individually and together in order to discover yet another layer in Nietzsche's thought.³ But here we will focus on typology.

It is the latter sense of typology, that is, typology as a method, which separates Nietzsche's typology from other typologies such as psychological typology or character typifications as can be found in the writings of the French moralists or in the nineteenth century novel. Moreover, philosophical typology dwells in a philosophy which pursues philosophical questions; hence, the types that surface there do so within the context of the most persistent project of the philosopher. For instance, the overman appears within the context of Nietzsche's philosophy of transvaluation of highest values and his critique of morality.

³ To illustrate the unity of these three philosophies, let us take the example of the type of the theoretical man within the context of Nietzsche's critique of Socratic rationality in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The force here is the force of rationality as it plays itself out with the other forces of culture in a specific constellation, and the symptom Nietzsche portrays here is hypertrophy, that is, the hypertrophy of the logical instinct.

II

A type is not a person, or better said, there is no one-to-one association between a type and a person. Many types can reside in an individual in different intensities although some types or one type may be predominant among all the others. The relationship between a type and an individual can be described as of appropriation. In what ways, in what typological configuration, does one appropriate a type? And what type is being appropriated? These are some of the questions to be pondered.

In Nietzsche's works, there is a thread of thought regarding type—which is *das Typus* in the German text—from *The Birth of Tragedy* (sec.15) to *Ecce Homo* (“Why I am a Destiny,” sec.4).

The word comes from the Greek ‘tupos’ which means, on the one hand, form in the sense of archetype, model, or origin and, on the other, copy, mark, or stamp—it is in this latter sense that Democritus uses the word in its verb form ‘tupousthai’ in his theory of sight. ‘Tupos’ is another Greek word for ‘form’ which is thought in its ‘opposite’ as ‘atupos’ and which does not have the ontological status given to the concept of ‘idea’ by Plato. In Nietzsche's philosophy, however, it takes on new meanings and is mostly used for typification of human character.

There are instances when Nietzsche uses the word ‘type’ to mean archetype (Ur-typus, which appears rarely in his writings). This is the case, for instance, when he discusses the pre-platonic thinkers, calling them pure types⁴ in the sense of archetypes (this is the word the translator uses) and calling the post-Socratic thinkers mixed types.⁵ What lies in this thought is puzzling. Does it mean that only one type was strong in each of the presocratics, whereas the post-socratics

⁴ KSA 1, p.810.

⁵ *Philosophy in the Age of the Tragic Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Washington: Regney Gateway, 1962), sec.s 2, 4, and 9.

embodied various types in equal measure (e.g. the logician, the ethicist, and the physicist all together)? This would be a poor reading if we did not also add that the archetype that was strong in each of the presocratic philosophers was not arbitrary, but all the archetypes unconsciously formed a complementary circle, a diversity of types which were necessary for the life of their culture and which somehow belonged together. Nietzsche's early works on the preplatonic thinkers and their age show what type was prominent in the philosopher studied and how different types unconsciously entered into a division of philosophical works (from the solitary cosmologist typified by Heraclitus to the reformer-legislator typified by Empedocles).

In addition to the question of archetype, it is necessary at the outset to bring up briefly two issues pertinent to a study of types in Nietzsche: value and power.

Type and value. Under what conditions of valuation does a type exist? What makes a type possible from the standpoint of interpretation and value-schemes? In short, how is a type created? For instance, the spirit of revenge typifies revengefulness, a "natural," primordial feeling. How does this type become a highest, collective type, that is, tied to the highest values? What aspects of human existence does it tap into and dwell in?

Nietzsche's typology floats within the larger context of his philosophy of values. The question "what is a type?" is, therefore, bound with the question "what is value?" Since these questions apply both to the individual and the collective, we can pose further questions: What types are valued by the individual? What types gain collective worth? Or with what types are the highest values of a culture created? Nietzsche's struggle with and interest in such figures as Socrates, Jesus, and Luther is not accidental; this interest is focused on the types which they embodied and

with which they shaped their epochs. Nietzsche is interested in revealing the typological make-up of the value-creator.

Type and power. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,⁶ life teaches Zarathustra that power is affect, commanding and obeying, hierarchy and growth. Life itself is overcoming, a perpetual flow, and procreative, but this is one secret, coming into being and its overcoming: life creates and opposes what it creates. All are subordinate to life and its cycles. This secret, the unity of life and death, individuation and its dissolution, is hidden in the single thought of the eternal recurrence of the same. According to Nietzsche, everything is transient, even the highest values, but this fact of transience is no objection to life and its preciousness; on the contrary, it adds one more charm to it. The way we realize it and live up to it fully in this human life is by “knowing” that we are beings with power, by “knowing” the power of our value-making, and by “knowing” our power and our place in the cosmological hierarchy of power relations.

To understand types in terms of power is to know, for a culture, what types to empower and what types to emaciate, in an epochal context, in order to enhance life. This point will be explored further below by way of a hierarchy of types in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

III

There are, at least, two overlapping paths which can be traversed in Nietzsche’s typology: to inquire into types which typify forces of culture, that is, “cultural typology,” and to investigate types which typify character traits and tendencies, that is, “character typology.” The former deals with such types as the artistic type or the priestly type and the latter with such types as the spirit

⁶ TSZ, trans. Walter Kaufmann in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), P. II, “On Self-Overcoming.”

of gravity or the spirit of revenge. A third path of inquiry, “historical typology,” which is equally applicable to the other two typologies, will also be discussed here within the context of Nietzsche’s notion of history.

Cultural typology. One of the philosophical problems Nietzsche presents in his early works is “what are the forces which constitute culture?” This problem is presented within the context of ancient Greek culture, but with an eye to the problems of his own age. The question is posed again in *The Birth of Tragedy* in relation to tragedy, the tragic world-view, and the Socratic epochal turn. Both in this work and in the other writings of this period, especially in The Philosopher’s Book, Nietzsche thinks through the problem of forces of culture, such as art, science, mythology, philosophy, cosmology, and religion, and what kinds of constellations these forces make, what impacts they have on each other. This project is pursued in different ways throughout Nietzsche’s works.

Cultural types are what embody the forces of culture in their epochal contexts. There are in Nietzsche’s typology, at least, the following types: artistic, philosophical, cosmological-religious, scientific, linguistic, psychological, and somatological, but below I will only explore three cultural types: the type of the theoretical man, the priestly type, and the artistic type of decadence.

The type of the theoretical man, which Nietzsche associates with Socrates, symbolizes the scientific spirit of that epoch and its overestimation of knowledge and rationality. With this type, Nietzsche exposes the fundamental traits in this mode of existence:

...it is enough to recognize in him [in Socrates] a type of existence unheard of before him: the type of the *theoretical man* whose significance and aim it is our next task to try to understand. Like the artist, the theoretical man finds an infinite delight in whatever

exists, and this satisfaction protects him against the practical ethics of pessimism with its Lynceus eyes that shine only in the dark. Whenever the truth is uncovered, the artist will always cling with rapt gaze to what still remains covering even after such uncovering; but the theoretical man enjoys and finds satisfaction in the discarded covering and finds the highest object of his pleasure in the process of an ever happy uncovering that succeeds through his own efforts.⁷

In contrast to the artist who looks forward to the process of uncovering while, at the same time, respecting the covering, the theoretical man remains with what he has uncovered and has a claim to uncover everything and hence to possess truth (to possess the goddess in her nudity). In the same section Nietzsche, borrowing from Lessing, makes a distinction between possession of truth and “search after truth.” What characterizes this type is “the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it.”⁸ Nietzsche calls this faith in thought (abstract thinking is implied here) and knowledge “theoretical optimism.” In short, overestimation of and blind faith in knowledge are what typify the type of the theoretical man.

Nietzsche’s reflections on religion and its types—such as the type of the saint or the sage—go as far back as to the aphorisms of *Human, All Too Human*. Thereafter he dissects what can be called the religious type into its various traits and observes their typifications: the ascetic type, the priestly type, etc. In this typological dissection, he reveals what is problematic and deeply

⁷ BT, sec.15, p.94.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.93-98. This section not only reveals Nietzsche’s critique of Occidental scientific experience since Socrates but also his prospective notion of science, that is, what scientific experience can be, especially when it is imbued with truthfulness and honesty. This and his notes of the same period are the beginning of Nietzsche’s philosophy of science which later would include such notions as *the gay science* and *the will to power* as knowledge. That Nietzsche undermines science, knowledge, abstract thinking, or reason is a misreading; for him the task is to seek context for them in the overall constellation of human existence.

buried in each of these types, in what ways these types persist in his epoch, and also the common ground which binds these types somehow together.

By explaining the type of the saint in terms of religious neurosis, in an aphorism in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche wonders how such a type becomes appealing, even to the philosophers: "...no other type has yet been surrounded by such a lavish growth of nonsense and superstition, no other type seems to have interested men, even philosophers, more." And associating Schopenhauer's philosophy with this type, he asks further: "How is the denial of the will *possible*? How is the saint possible? This really seems to have been the question over which Schopenhauer became a philosopher and began."⁹ In this text, Nietzsche does not so much dive into the make-up of this type as ask why it appeals to "all types and ages." One of the hints he gives regarding the appeal of the saint is "the air of the miraculous that goes with it—namely, the immediate *succession of opposites*, of states of the soul that are judged morally in opposite ways. It seemed palpable that a 'bad man' was suddenly transformed into a 'saint,' a good man."¹⁰ A deeper analysis of this type is presented in the third essay of *The Genealogy* where Nietzsche focuses on the make-up of the ascetic ideal and its type. The denial of the body, sensuality and sexuality, repression of instincts, internalization of the animal man, and making them values are what characterize the type of the ascetic priest; its typological co-phenomenon is the type of the tamed man which Nietzsche sees prevailing in the nineteenth century European culture.

The artistic type of decadence, often exemplified with Wagner, appears in Nietzsche's late works. What interests him the most about Wagner in this period, long after the end of their

⁹ BGE, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), Aphorism 47, pp.61-62.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.62.

friendship, are the problematic traits of the modern age and its artistic experiences as embodied in this type of artist. To Nietzsche, “Wagner sums up modernity. There is no way out, one must first become a Wagnerian.”¹¹ But what are these problematic traits in this type? The list is long, but the following appear frequently: neurosis in art, asceticism (the compromise to the ascetic ideal), flattery of nihilism and morality, acting (for drawing crowds and pleasing one’s ego), romanticism, and pessimism.

In *The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche enumerates the common traits of the decadent artist as follows: “...the decline of the power to organize; the misuse of traditional means without the capacity to furnish any *justification*, any for-the-sake-of; the counterfeiting in the imitation of big forms for which nobody today is strong, proud, self-assured, *healthy* enough; excessive liveliness in the smallest parts; excitement at any price; cunning as the expression of *impoverished* life; more and more nerves in place of flesh...”¹²

Some of the issues which come up in Nietzsche regarding the type of decadent artist lie in the realm of deeper values, issues some of which may not be apparent on the surface: the antithesis between chastity and sensuality (the millennia-old opposition between the angel and the beast); one-sidedness when it comes to one’s own activity and seeking philosophical justification for it, artistic vanity, to be caught up in the problems of the age as one seeks spectators indiscriminately who will glorify the artist and thereby sustain his vanity.¹³ These traits and problems are

¹¹ Preface to *The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), p.156.

¹² *Ibid.*, Second Postscript, p.187.

¹³ GM, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1969), Third Essay, sec.s 2-5.

pervasive in the modern age, and for Nietzsche to understand the type of decadent artist and to understand the problems of the modern age reciprocally imply each other.

These three types (from Greek, medieval, and modern epochs) somehow belong together: they typify trends that are problematic and collective in modern culture and which Nietzsche saw and critiqued. Simply put together, these trends are: overestimation of knowledge and rationality to the detriment of other forces of culture; undervaluation of this-worldly existence and denial of the body, sensuality and sexuality; and the artistic decadence unique to the modern age. These types fit together in the economy of the culture of the modern age.

Character typology. There are trends in culture which have become so because certain traits within the character of a human being gain currency and shape the collective character. Now when these individual traits are problematic, the collective trends also become problematic, even more so, since the problem has multiplied itself onto the collective field. The study of such character traits and trends and the types that typify them can be called “character typology.” This study is by no means confined to the problematic aspects of human existence. Below I will survey a few examples for character typology from Nietzsche’s works in an attempt to understand how he approaches the problem.

One of the first distinct character types that appears in Nietzsche’s works is “the cultural philistine.”¹⁴ The cultural philistine is the type who prescribes that the incongruity between two things must not exist; namely between the complacent belief that one is in possession of a genuine culture and the fact of cultural deficiency. Exposing some of the deficiencies of the

¹⁴ *Untimely Meditations I: David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer*, ed. Daniel Breazeale and trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), sec.2, pp. 7-13.

culture of his times in his first explicit critique of the modern age, Nietzsche makes a distinction between the already-known type of philistine and the type of cultural philistine:

The word 'philistine', as is well known, belongs to the student vocabulary, and signifies, in its wider, popular sense, the antithesis of a son of the muses, of the artist, of the man of genuine culture. The cultural philistine, however—the study of whom [in the original: the study of whose type], and the hearing of whose confessions when he makes them, has now become a disagreeable duty—distinguishes himself from the general idea of the species 'philistine' through a superstition: he fancies that he is himself a son of the muses and man of culture; an incomprehensible delusion which reveals that he does not even know what a philistine, and the antithesis of a philistine, is: so we shall not be surprised to find that usually he solemnly denies he is a philistine.¹⁵

Cultural philistinism is a form of vanity, a not-knowing oneself. One thinks that one is great whereas one is decadent. Nietzsche feels the urgency to understand this type and to bring it to the surface and elaborates on it within the context of modern culture, which has become encyclopedic, a culture of accumulation of knowledge and information about many things but with no creativity commensurate to it, a culture of finders and not seekers. People live off the glory of the greatness of the past, instead of striving for greatness. The cultural philistine is doubly problematic, according to Nietzsche: It is problematic in itself as explained above and is problematic because this type exerts power in culture, that is, it has become a collectively accepted type. Therefore, he asks two related questions: "How is it possible that a type such as the cultural philistine could have come into existence and, once extant, could acquire the authority of supreme arbiter over all the problems of German culture..."¹⁶ These are the two

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.9.

important questions a typologist would ask in general: how is a type possible and what value and power does that type have in culture?

The free spirit, on the other hand, designates a type who can explore, experiment, destroy, and recreate without the hindrances of institutional attachments, ideological bonds, or unconditional faith in custom and tradition. This freedom, though unhindered, is associated with an underlying cosmology which is already implied in the word 'spirit.' Its experience culminates in both greatness and liberation:

One may conjecture that a spirit in whom the type 'free spirit' will one day become ripe and sweet to the point of perfection has had its decisive experience in a 'great liberation' and that previously it was all the more a fettered spirit and seemed to be chained forever to its pillar and corner.¹⁷

To experience the great liberation, it is necessary to push freedom and spirituality to their height. This is one of the teachings of Nietzsche's aesthetic cosmology: freedom and justice are bound with one another, creativity and modesty enrich one another, joy and suffering circularly complement each other. Here this teaching is typified in the type of the free spirit. The closest type to the free spirit in Nietzsche's typology is the wanderer who has his shadow, the background of his existence, in a parallel way that the free spirit has his spirit.

Unique in Nietzsche's character typology are the types he brings to daylight that had hitherto remained unknown or unconsciously active; the way he does this excavation; and the questions he poses pertinent to a typological investigation.

¹⁷ *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Preface, sec.3, p.6.

I have heuristically separated two typologies in Nietzsche's thought that are closely affiliated. I have not, however, tried to establish a link between the two although this link is "inevitable," since the cultural type and the character type collapse into one in the notion of the "Gesamtmensch," the total human being, and lose their boundaries. In other words, there is a way in which a force of culture is coupled with a trait of character within the world-view of an individual.

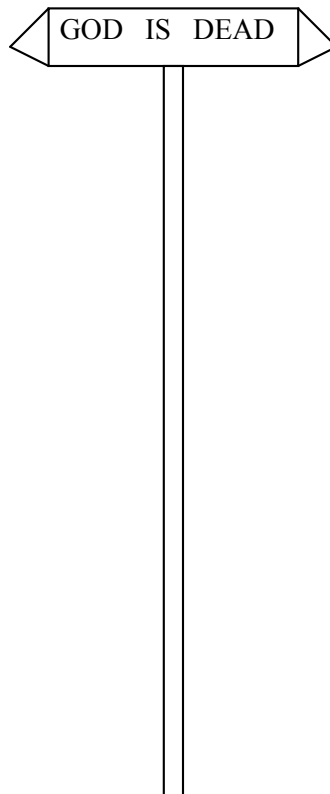
Historical typology: retrospective and prospective types. It is necessary to introduce the notion of history into typology, because types are neither eternal nor universal but rather appear in historical-epochal contexts. In other words, every epoch brings forth certain types, and a hierarchy thereof, which have value and meaning for it. Moreover, it lives and is shaped by these types which are the embodiment of its highest values. Above various types were presented together without an explicit reference to their epochal contexts.

To understand epochal shifts in terms of types, one needs to know the "retrospective" and "prospective" types of that epoch, that is, the types that are receding and the types that are proceeding. One may further inquire into the make-up and hierarchy of these types in order to have a glimpse into the inner constitution of the epoch. Below Nietzsche's typology is illustrated with a sketch. Such a simplification, no doubt, may raise questions, but my intention is to show how these different types are placed vis-à-vis the signpost "God is dead." Not all types are listed, and the ones listed here are only from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Moreover, the separation of types into two categories does not stem from a subjectivistic or a dualistic approach. Types from the two lists can coexist in certain contexts, yielding hybrid types, which, in fact, are numerous in the age of nihilism. There are, for instance, trends which cultivate the body but not the wisdom

of Zarathustra nor the searching of the wanderer nor any free spirituality. Here the higher man must also be mentioned, a transitional type who has questioned the old world-order to some extent and taken small steps towards the new epoch, but who can easily relapse into the old habits (TSZ, Part IV, “The Ass Festival”).

Types of mge

- Higher man
- Last man
- The saint
- The sage who teaches virtue
- The virtuous
- The good and the just
- The rabble
- Despiser of the body
- Priest
- The famous wise man
- Scholar
- The retired (the old man/the old pope)
- The spirit of gravity and the spirit of revenge



Types bge¹⁸

- Zarathustra
- Overman
- Noble soul
- Free spirit
- Wanderer
- Warrior
- Friend
- Enemy
- Convalescent
- Higher man

¹⁸ Mge stands for “morality of good and evil” and bge for “beyond good and evil.” There is a hierarchy of types in these lists and a hierarchy between the lists in which the types beyond good and evil are placed higher than the types of morality of good and evil.

The question of hierarchy is important, because the retrospective types, though receding, are always there and will be there. Even the weak and the herd will return eternally, one of the hardest teachings of Zarathustra. Now if we apply Nietzsche's notion of the historical, as laid out in the second untimely meditation¹⁹ to typology, this question will be somewhat elucidated. The three modes of history, as applied to typology, pertain to a) preservation of all types (the antiquarian history), b) creation of great (or highest) types (monumental history), and c) destruction of problematic types (critical history). If we now read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a typological work, all the types there belong to the antiquarian mode, the prospective types to the monumental mode, and the retrospective types to the critical mode. The idea of the eternal return is already prefigured in this notion of the historical: all types return, however in different constellations and in different degrees of empowerment.

IV

Thus Spoke Zarathustra is the work of typology *par excellence* among Nietzsche's works. Although Zarathustra is the protagonist of the drama, there are many other types whom he encounters in his journey. It is necessary to study all these types in themselves and in relation to one another in order to understand Zarathustra's world, but it is beyond the scope of this essay to do so. In what follows, I will briefly present the make-up of the type of Zarathustra within the context of Nietzsche's typological concerns.

Zarathustra himself is a type: "...It was on these two walks that the whole of *Zarathustra I* occurred to me, and especially Zarathustra himself as a type [again *Typus* in the original]: rather,

¹⁹ *Untimely Meditations II: On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, ed. Daniel Breazeale and trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), sec.s 1-3.

he *overtook me*.”²⁰ Then he goes on to explain, with a lengthy quotation from *The Gay Science* (Book V, 382), how this type can be understood. Here Nietzsche gives away the physiological presupposition of the type of Zarathustra, which he calls “the great health.” In this aphorism, written after *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche sums up the typological make-up of Zarathustra: new ideals; new goals; the expanse of the soul and the wide spectrum of experience (his journey); continual self-creation (his going under); desire to explore the undiscovered and to confront “...a world so overrich in what is beautiful, strange, questionable, terrible, and divine”²¹ (this expression recapitulates Zarathustra’s aesthetic cosmology); discontent with “present-day man” (his nausea over man); playfulness out of overflowing power and abundance (his gift-giving virtue); and “the ideal of a human, superhuman [übermenschlich] well-being and benevolence”²² (the overman, the new meaning of the world, taught by Zarathustra). The aphorism ends with the signs of the new epoch: “the destiny of the soul changes, the hand moves forward, the tragedy *begins*,”²³ what, in *Zarathustra*, are symbolized by the high noon.

Zarathustra is a type who is impregnated with an insight, cultivates this insight in solitude and with a *pathos of distance*, and who, therefore, lives the chaos and the conflict between the old and the new, and is in the process of creation of new values. As Heidegger points out in this context of value-creation, Zarathustra is also a speaker, an advocate (*Fürsprecher*), who “...advocates and is the spokesman. But ‘für’ also means ‘for the benefit, or in behalf, of’ and ‘in

²⁰ *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1969), “Why I Write Such Good Books,” p.298. Here there is a word play with the words *einfallen* and *überfallen* both of which, due to the root verb *fall*, imply that both the work and its main type fell on to Nietzsche (as an insight).

²¹ *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), pp.346-347.

²² *Ibid.*

justification of.’ An advocate is ultimately the man who interprets and explains that of and for which he speaks.”²⁴ This type must traverse the path of overcoming morality of good and evil, both within himself and as an example. In addition, there are traits that Nietzsche borrows from the historical figure Zarathustra; namely, honesty, truthfulness, and the fact that he is a founder of religion. Most of these we learn from the Prologue and what he writes about the work and Zarathustra in *Ecce Homo*.

What is important to note is not only what all these types are and what they stand for, but also what kind of hierarchical power relations they are in. How does Zarathustra as the highest type, “the supreme type of all beings,”²⁵ relate to the other types? How does he speak to them, for instance? Does Zarathustra speak from an empowered position of wisdom and “enlightenment”? If he “cares” for others, how does he care? Needless to say, Zarathustra has different voices and speaks differently with different types (compare, for instance, the way Zarathustra addresses his disciples, on the one hand, and the dwarf or the despisers of the body, on the other). His way of addressing reflects the distance of concentric circles around him. The different voices, the distance that he creates, and the many ways of relating to different types, imbued with a variety of human emotions, imply the hierarchical relationship that he is in with his world. Gadamer observes, referring to Zarathustra: “He speaks to someone, and that means he speaks differently to different listeners.... We must flesh out the auditor and always ask ourselves, Why one would

²³ *Ibid.*, p.347.

²⁴ “Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?” in *The New Nietzsche*, edited by David B. Allison (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1977), p.64.

²⁵ KSA 6, p.344, *Art*, not *Typus*, is used here for type.

...speak in just such a manner to this particular audience?”²⁶ Furthermore, certain types are not given voice, but we can infer their position in the constellation of types from their silence. One such type is the overman.

Before elaborating further on the question of hierarchy of types in Nietzsche, it is necessary to pause and ask the question as to what it is that makes Zarathustra the highest type. Simply stated, it is the height of his self-knowledge (his Apollinian wisdom), which is attained in his solitude, with his self-mastery and insightfulness, and the depth of his ecstasy (his Dionysian wisdom). Now the latter may not be as apparent as the former, but it is as important as the former and is hinted at with Zarathustra’s dance, song and music—referring to *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche himself says “my concept of the ‘Dionysian’ here became a *supreme deed*...”²⁷ —To the extent that Zarathustra “knows himself,” he carries that much “of the cosmos” within himself. That is to say, to the extent that he cultivates himself as an “enlightened” solitary individual, he can, though indirectly, hold all together in their conflict and chiasma.²⁸ He is like a sun which sheds light on all, distant but yet near, since without it there is no life (unlike the pure type of the ascetic saint, Zarathustra carries, within him, all the problematic types, but he has overcome them or placed

²⁶ “The Drama of Zarathustra” in *Nietzsche’s New Seas*, edited by Michael A. Gillespie and Tracy B. Strong (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p.221.

²⁷ EH, p.304.

²⁸ How this is so has to do with the fact that Zarathustra is an agonal type, a point which I have explored in my doctoral dissertation, *The Principle of Agon in Nietzsche’s Thought* (New School for Social Research, 2000):

“Nietzsche himself describes his creation in this fashion: ‘Let anyone add up the spirit and good nature of all great souls: all of them together would not be capable of producing even one of Zarathustra’s discourses. The ladder on which he ascends and descends is tremendous; he has seen further, willed further, been *capable* further than any other human being.’ Greatness of the soul is to have and feel a spectrum of human feelings and to place them on a scale. Opposition, contradiction, conflict; these are no objections to life for an *agonal* soul who can sustain them in new unities. Further on Zarathustra: ‘In every word, he contradicts, this most Yes-saying of all spirits; *in him all opposites are blended into a new unity.*’ (EH, pp.304-5)”

them at the bottom of the hierarchy of his types; this is one of the meanings of his “going under”).

Now back to the question of hierarchy. Regarding the rank and file of types, Nietzsche says: “...he does not conceal the fact that *his* [Zarathustra’s] type of man, a relatively superhuman [more overmanly] type, is superhuman [overmanly] precisely in its relation to the *good*—that the good and the just would call his overman *devil*.”²⁹ It is relatively overmanly, because there is hierarchy of types. This hierarchy exists both within the individual and among individuals. From the standpoint of a Nietzschean typology, it is just as important for an individual to place types and their appropriations in a rank from the lowest to the highest as it is for a culture to place its types in a hierarchy so that what is individually and collectively valued as the highest is the type of the overman. In order to be able to do this, it is necessary to study Nietzsche’s typology from diverse perspectives and also its relation to other aspects of his thought.³⁰

The concepts of higher or highest pertain to Nietzsche’s notion of strife and the idea of one’s perpetual re-creation of one’s self and, at the same time, to making these values in culture. It is necessary to cultivate great types within the context of their hierarchy and to place them on the pedestal of great values. As works of culture, they will serve it to strive higher, and the destiny of a civilization depends on the higher types and their works through which the former is held together and uplifted. Hence, Nietzsche’s concern for the breeding of the higher types:

²⁹ KSA 6, p.370. I would modify this translation by doing a literal translation of the text: “...he does not conceal the fact that his type of man, a relatively more overmanly type, is overmanly exactly in relation to the *good* that the good and the just would call his overman *devil*.” This would bring the *übermenschlich* and the *übermensch* of the original into English.

The problem thus I pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living beings (man is an *end*), but what type [*Typus*] of man shall be *bred*, shall be *willed*, for being higher in value, worthier of life, more certain of a future...

In another sense, success in individual cases is constantly encountered in the most widely different places and cultures: here we really do find a *higher type* [*Typus*], which is, in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of overman. Such fortunate accidents of great success have always been possible and *will* perhaps always be possible. And even whole families, tribes, or peoples may occasionally represent such a *bull's-eye*.³¹

Nietzsche's concern and hope for the future of humanity, which finds its expression here as the breeding of higher types (the issue of breeding can also be read in *The Will to Power*, Book IV: Discipline and Breeding), was misinterpreted (or poorly interpreted), around the turn of the twentieth century, as a form of social Darwinism that propounds the survival of and, mastery by, the strongest and the fittest human beings in their social settings. This is, in fact, the ideology of the bourgeois world-order, not an aspect of Nietzsche's world-view. Indeed, there is a hierarchy of types based on power relations in Nietzsche's philosophy which places, on top of the hierarchy, those higher types such as Zarathustra and the overman and great values such as ecstasy, self-knowledge and self-mastery (not to mention, a balance between all these values); all of these types and values are to be regarded not as fixed conventions, virtues or concepts, but as metaphors, open to be appropriated creatively, constantly recreated, and imbued into the living reality of life.

³⁰ There are two works which can be mentioned here: Jung's lectures on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and Laurence Lampert's comprehensive study, *Nietzsche's Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

³¹ *Antichrist*, trans. Walter Kaufmann in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), sec.s 3-4, pp.570-571.

Moreover, what does it mean that Zarathustra as a type is the teacher of the overman which is yet another type? How do the two types differ? Each type typifies something unique to itself. The overman is the type that embodies the new meaning of this world, the new great values that are ever-becoming, that are ever newly appropriated by on-coming generations, whereas man as a type of the old world-order for which God is the highest value is a bridge to the overman. The overman also symbolizes one's journey for seeking oneself in which there are other stops on the way such as the man, the last man, and the higher man. The use of the word "Mensch" for all of these types is no coincidence; there is a circularity involved or a process implied in the unity of these types.

But then what kind of type is Zarathustra in relation to the overman? He is a teacher, but this word can be taken lightly, since everyone today is a teacher. It is better to say: he is a teacher of teachers. But even this may not be sufficient. He is the one who has seen the light and now sheds his light on the world. If the overman is the torch, Zarathustra is the passage of the torch. What does teaching mean? It is not simply the passing of knowledge for practical skills the way most people experience education in our age. Teaching stands for re-creation of culture in new generations. Teaching, culture, and re-birth of culture hence stand in close contact with one another.

Zarathustra's teaching is no teaching or is a different kind of teaching. He lays bare what is greatest and what is smallest in human existence with parables and dreams from his life. And he expects his disciples to re-create their own paths on the way to seek themselves while learning, only by example, from Zarathustra's journey.

V

So far Zarathustra has been interpreted from the perspective of “character typology;” that is, this type was observed in terms of character traits which it symbolizes. But what does the type of Zarathustra mean in terms of “cultural typology” and “historical typology”?

In the type of Zarathustra various forces of culture and their types come together and are sustained in their difference from one another. As the teacher of the eternal recurrence, he is the cosmological type; as he debates with the afterworldly, the spirit of gravity and the spirit of revenge, he is the type which symbolizes new forms of spirituality; in his polemics with the sages and the philosophers of the past, such as the good and the just, the teachers of virtue, and in his teachings of a different kind of wisdom, we see the philosophical type; the artistic type is present in his dance and singing, in his light-footedness, in his wandering and in the teachings of becoming; even the “scientific” type is sustained within Zarathustra insofar as he is a searcher and an experimenter; the psychological type looks into the human soul, its deep recesses, and explores the unconscious; the physiological type places a new value on the body, the senses, passions, instincts and sexuality.

This multiplicity of types, which Zarathustra symbolically stands for, is hinted at in the aphorism cited above: “...whoever wants to know from the adventures of his own most authentic experience how a discoverer and conqueror of the ideal feels, and also an artist, a saint, a legislator, a sage, a scholar, a pious man, a soothsayer...”³²

That Zarathustra prefigures the artist-philosopher type of Nietzsche’s late period is an understatement: first, there is a multiplicity of forces of culture and their types which are

³² GS, Book V, 382.

necessary for a culture (art and philosophy are only the two of these forces); secondly, what is at stake is the value-creator(s) in this multiplicity; thirdly, Zarathustra symbolically stands for the value-creator in these various realms of culture.

As to the historical analysis of Zarathustra, he stands at an epochal threshold. Its signpost is “God is dead,” and the coming of the new epoch is symbolized by “high noon.” It is at high noon that the unconscious of an epoch is re-created, that is, a new shadow for a transformed culture. From the perspective of *historical typology*, Zarathustra and the types he embodies and teaches, that is, the types that he upholds, symbolize the rise of a new epoch with its new set of values, new mode of valuation, and its own historical unconsciousness. These prospective types are “consistent” with one another; that is to say, they are the signs of a new puzzle, which complement one another. These are now the types to be implanted in the soul so as to allow the old, problematical types that are within us to gradually become weak and pale.

VI

If Zarathustra, the type created by Nietzsche, were to take a living form and speak today, what would he say to those who have ears for him? Would he show up to speak to them or remain in his cave? Despite the many efforts to appropriate the type of Zarathustra since he was born more than a century ago, the challenge still remains to give life to it, that is, to make his wisdom, his art and his sensibility of lightness, a part of the living reality of contemporary culture based on its specific needs.

(C) 2006 YUNUS TUNCEL-NIETZSCHE CIRCLE
